

Westminster Presbyterian Church

April 25, 2021



"By This We Will Know: The Dance of Love"

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Prelude

Welcome

GATHERING OUR STRENGTH

Threshold

Easter is the unstoppable, unpredictable expression of God's love for humankind! The call of Jesus is to live fully in the power of that love – alive in each of us. We learn about that divine

love as it is embodied in the person and ministry of Jesus, the one who is compared to a good shepherd. As we look to him to learn how to love, may our hearts praise the One who raised Jesus and raises us to abundant life and love!

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,
Dare to dance again!**

If we are to dance with abandon, we learn and follow – then we can begin to lead. We can learn the steps to the dance of love through the lead of Jesus and those who have gone before us. May we dare to dance even as we continue to learn the way of love.

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,
Dare to dance again!**

This is the call!

We lean into this day with the strength we have.
People: We lift up our heads to meet the day.
God sends out a call that will not let us go.
We fortify our hearts with compassion and action.
If rain still lingers, open the umbrellas of love and set out anyway.
For we are called to dance again!

Opening Song of Praise

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us” GTG, 187

Savior, like a Shepherd lead us; much we need your tender care.
In your pleasant pastures feed us; for our use your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us: we are yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have brought us; we are yours.

We are yours: in love befriend us; be the guardian of our way.
Keep your flock: from sin defend us; seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, hear your children when we pray.

You have promised to receive us, poor and sinful though we be;
You have mercy to relieve us, grace to cleanse, and power to free.

Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, early let us turn to you.

Early let us seek your favor, early let us do your will.
Blessed Lord and only Savior, with your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us; love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus, you have loved us; love us still.

Prayer

Faith Duncan

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation –
We know your voice, the sounds of your steps.
Your love gathers us, urges us, encourages us.
Come and dance with us, engage with us, as we seek you –
so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ.
Be with us now, we pray. Amen.

Affirming the Peace Among Us

The peace of the risen Christ is with you!
And also with you!

You are invited to turn to the people around you
and wave as a sign of graceful greetings this day.

LEARNING THE STEPS

A Story for the Ages

First Reading: John 10:11-17

Faith Duncan

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down their life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away--and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as God knows me and I know God. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So, there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason, the Holy One loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again.”

Second Reading: 1 John 3:16-18, 23-24

Faith Duncan

We know love by this, that Christ laid down his life for us--and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees another in need and yet refuses help?

Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action. This is God's commandment, that we should believe in the name Jesus and love one another, just as Christ has commanded us. All who obey his commandments abide in him, and he abides in them. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit that he has given us.

Sounds of Resurrection

Dance with the Spirit, words and music by Jim Strathdee

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe

“Daring to Enact Solidarity”

THE BODY MOVES IN RESPONSE

Ordination & Installation of Elder John Witmer and Deacon Nancy Tompkins

Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe, Charlotte Jacobs, Clerk of Session, and Elder Silvia Ritchie

Sentences of Scripture

Statement on Ordination

Clerk of Session, Charlotte Jacobs: Representing the one holy catholic and apostolic church, the session of Westminster Presbyterian Church ordains John Witmer to ministry as an elder and installs him to active service in this congregation. The session also installs to active service in the ministry of deacon, Nancy Tompkins, who has been previously ordained into the office of deacon.

Profession of Faith

As God calls some to particular forms of ministry,

God calls us all to bear gladly the yoke of Christ given in the covenant of Baptism.

Let us, therefore, reaffirm our baptismal vows, renouncing all that opposes God and God's rule and affirming the faith of the holy catholic church.

Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world? **I do.**

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love? **I do.**

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love? **I will, with God's help.**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith. Do you believe in God the Father?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Constitutional Questions

Elder Silvia Ritchie: Do we, the members of the church, accept John as a Ruling Elder and Nancy as a Deacon, chosen by God through the voice of this congregation to lead us in the way of Jesus Christ? **We do.**

Elder Silvia Ritchie: Do we agree to pray for them, to encourage them, to respect their decisions, and to follow as they guide us, serving Jesus Christ, who alone is Head of the Church? **We do.**

Prayer of Ordination and Installation

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

[prayer continues]. . .

Declaration of Ordination and Installation

Welcome

Charge to the Newly Ordained and Installed

Offering Our Resources and our Energy *Faith Duncan*

How do we know the rhythm and dance of our lives is faithful? Drummer of the Grateful Dead, Mickey Hart wrote "To fall in love is to fall in rhythm." It is love for each other by which we know we are followers of Jesus, the ever-attentive shepherd. In the face of societal rules and attitudes that strive to foster "everyone for themselves," our hope is that others will know we are Christians by our love. Let us "fall in rhythm" with our neighbors and our planet in order to build up the whole through our offerings this day.

STEPPING OUT

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" *GTG, 300*

We are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord;
we are one in the Spirit; we are one in the Lord,
and we pray that all unity may one day be restored:

refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love,
By our love; yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We will walk with each other; we will walk hand and hand;
We will walk with each other; we will walk hand in hand,
And together we will spread the news that God is in our land: **refrain**

We will work with each other; we will work side by side;
We will work with each other; we will work side by side,
And we'll guard human dignity and save human pride: **refrain**

All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
And praise to Christ Jesus, God's only son,
And all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: **refrain**

Benediction

What would your life look like
if you sought each day to dance the dance of love?
To dance to the rhythm of the love of God moving in our lives?
May we hear the music of the Spirit
and follow in the steps of Jesus
whose love sets us free to dance with abandon.

And may the Loving God,
Risen Christ,
and Dancing Spirit
fill you with all you need
for the days ahead.

And all God's people said,
"Amen!"

Remember in Prayer

Pray for all those touched recently by violence and natural disasters, the healing of national hostility and mistrust, efforts to feed the poor and provide shelter for the homeless in our area, and the following people:

Mike Sant Angelo - brother of Mary Boyer, a friend, has passed. Keep the family in prayer.

Lois Baldwin - prayers as she recovers from surgery on her broken wrist.

Linda Book – for continued strength to fight the side effects of multiple myeloma cancer.

Rev. Kim Brinkmeyer – continued healing and recovery.

Chuck Burton – extended family of Lois Rayner, dealing with Cancer issues.

Pauline Cottingham – dealing with health issues causing her to be uncomfortable

Peter Culin – for Sue Culin's brother-in-law, as he continues with chemotherapy.

Susan Frost – Sally Waugaman's daughter, struggling with side effects from chemotherapy for pancreatic cancer.

Margie Huntzinger's - brother entered life triumphant. Keep family in close prayer.

Hull McLean – Recovering from shoulder surgery

Lacey Meade – daughter of Betty Pratt, undergoing chemotherapy at Tunnell Cancer Center.

Mekenzie – the 21 year old grandniece of Don & Dee Austin, has a long recovery ahead to heal from broken leg and sprained ankle

Pat Mossel – Thanksgiving for feeling more like herself as she continues using a walker.

Rev. Larry Neumark - friend of Karen & Glenn Dixon who has a recurrence of prostate cancer.

Betty Pratt - swelling in her legs greatly reduced as she undergoes massage therapy.

Janet Waugaman – Sally's Waugaman's daughter, continues to lose mobility due to Multiple System Atrophy.

Our church has a prayer chain of members who will pray for any person you ask. Contact Karen Dixon by phone at 302-858-8968 or email at k_dixon221@hotmail.com.