

# Westminster Presbyterian Church

May 2, 2021



**A Note from Pastor Shannon: In this particular time, let us be guided by our faith to "love our neighbor as ourselves" as some of us enter into the sanctuary for communal worship again.**

1. As we wear a mask, fully covering our nose and mouth, while in the building, let us do it as a gesture of care to continue to protect others, even as we protect ourselves.

2. Let us sing loudly in our hearts and quietly with our lips, mouthing the words or humming to the hymns. In this way, we protect all who come to worship. Let us remember that not everyone who will come to worship with us on Sunday is allowed to receive the vaccine (anyone under 16 years of age). Let us protect our young families, and anyone not vaccinated, by not singing aloud, along with the soloist.

3. Let us allow the liturgist to speak on behalf of the congregation. Liturgy means "the work of the people." For now, instead of joining your voices with the liturgist, allow the liturgist to voice aloud what you are saying in your heart.

4. Let us be willing to learn new routines around the offering. While we dedicate our offerings to God during worship, we will not be passing the plate but invite you to give online or drop your offering/pledge in a basket on your way out.

5. Let us honor the science that has told us that the two biggest factors that lead to infection are "time + exposure." Therefore, let us practice masking and social

distancing, at all times, while in the building. Let us greet one another in masked and socially distanced ways. Let us allow the ushers to help us exit the building safely, by row, at the end of the service and save our conversations until we are outside.

6. When we partake of communion together, using the prepackaged communion elements at our seat, let us keep our masks on, only moving them down to eat the bread and drink the cup, and then putting our mask back on, again as a way to protect all who are joined together for communion.

## “From You Comes My Praise: Guide My Steps”

Fifth Sunday of Easter

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

### **GATHERING OUR STRENGTH**

**Threshold**

*Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe & Deb Norton*

Leader: We are a resurrection people! Those who seek new life – new beginnings. And we, the church, must be a place of knowing and growing and accepting love. We hear today the question asked by the Ethiopian eunuch: “Here is water. What is to keep me from being baptized?” As we dance into diversity and acceptance, may the Spirit guide our steps for nothing is keeping us from it!

**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!**

*Liturgist:* Dancing requires that we pay attention to the steps, that we watch for the steps of those who have danced this dance of life before – those whose seeking and questioning and dreaming can lead us to seek and hope and dream. Imagine now a dreamer in whose steps you would like to follow. How did they choreograph their dance of life? Now, imagine yourself following their steps with courage and joy!

**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!

Look to the skies be it rain or shine.

***Liturgist: We lift up our heads to meet the day.***

Look around and see that you do not dance alone.

***Liturgist: We fortify our hearts with compassion and action.***

If rain still lingers, open the umbrellas of praise and set out anyway.

***Liturgist: For we are called to dance again!***

### **\*Opening Song of Praise**

*"Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer" GTG 65*

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak, but thou art mighty.  
Hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of Heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more;  
feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield;  
be thou still my strength and shield;

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Cannan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee;  
I will ever give to thee.

### **Prayer**

*Deb Norton*

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation –

Open us to learn new steps of faithfulness.

Give us courage and patience.

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 All Ages**

This week's dreamer: Marian Anderson

... Let's offer a repeat-after-me-prayer:

"We offer thanks	<b>let us become</b>
<b>we offer thanks</b>	dreamers too
for dreamers true	<b>dreamers too</b>
<b>for dreamers true</b>	and bring new life
for all they are	<b>and bring new life</b>
<b>for all they are</b>	to me and you
and all they do	<b>to me and you!</b>
<b>and all they do.</b>	Amen!
Let us become	<b>Amen!</b>

### **A Story for the Ages**

**First Reading: Psalm 22:25-31**

*Deb Norton*

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear God. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Holy One shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord. For dominion belongs to the One who rules over the nations. To this One, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; and I shall live for God alone.

Posterity will serve God; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim God's divine deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that God indeed has done it.

**Second Reading: Acts 8:26-39**

*Deb Norton*

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went.

Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah.

Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. Philip asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The eunuch replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: "Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth."

The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?"

He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing.

## **Sermon**

*Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe*

*"The Spirit & Sacred Reading"*

## **THE BODY MOVES IN RESPONSE**

### **Prayers of the People**

*Rev. Dr. Shannon Smythe & Deb Norton*

**Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,  
teach me to move in the power of your Spirit,  
teach me to [move] in the light of your presence,  
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.**

*Leader:* For the beauty of the world in all its diversity, we give you thanks, O God.

*Leader: Let us pray together...*

**Liturgist: May our gratitude to you fill our days.**

*Leader: We need your healing, O Holy One, for our troubled planet, for our nation,  
for all who are struggling in body, mind, relationships, and spirit.  
We remember those who are suffering...*

*Leader: Let us pray together...*

**Liturgist: Come, O God, and restore our lives.**

**Teach me to pray in the power of Easter,  
following Christ in a life resurrected,  
teach me to act with compassion and justice,  
teach me to dance with the beat of your heart.**

*Leader: Be with each of us now.*

*May the dance of your Spirit ever call us  
to engage with you and with the needs around us.  
Lead us; guide us; surround and fill us.*

*Leader: Let us pray together...*

**Liturgist: Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

**Teach me to love with your heart of compassion,  
teach me to trust in the word of your promise,  
teach me to hope in the day of your coming,  
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.**

## **Offering Our Resources and our Energy** *Deb Norton*

How has the testimony of the people in our lives and through the generations guided our steps into dances of praise at the good news that we are loved and blessed? What transformation is possible as we abide with God and “find our groove” of praise with the congregation? Let us pool our resources and order our steps to bring life and wholeness to the larger community through our offerings this day.

## **Communion**

### **The Invitation**

*Celebrant: Will you open yourselves to the grace of Jesus Christ that is always and already available here at this table? If so, say, “Open us to your grace, Lord.”*

***Liturgist: “Open us to your grace, Lord.”***

Will you open yourselves once again to the call of Jesus Christ?

If so, say, "Open us to your call, Lord."

**Liturgist: "Open us to your call, Lord."**

Will you open yourselves to the possibility of transformation through Jesus Christ?

If so, say, "Transform us, O Lord."

**Liturgist: "Transform us, O Lord."**

*... prayer continues*

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**Liturgist: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**

**Glory to God! Amen!**

## **The Great Thanksgiving**

Jesus is with us!

**Liturgist: With us now and forever!**

So lift up your hearts and voices!

**Liturgist: We lift them up to God!**

Let's join in thanks and praise!

**Liturgist: How right it is to do this together!**

*... prayer continues*

## **Communion**

Communion will be taken at your seat using prepackaged communion elements. Pastor Shannon will facilitate this process.

## **Communion Song**

*"This is the Moment Come, Won't You Dance?"*

Music by D'Anna Chance, Arranged by Chuck Bell

## **STEPPING OUT**

### **\*Song for Stepping Out**

*"Lead Me, Guide Me" GTG 740*

*Refrain:* Lead me, guide me, along the way, for if you lead me, I cannot stray.

Lord, let me walk each day with thee. Lead me, O Lord lead me.

I am weak and I need your strength and power

to help me over my weakest hour.

Help me through the darkness your face to see.

Lead me, O Lord Lead me. *Refrain*

## **Benediction**

### **Postlude**

Thank you to those involved in worship today: Ushers: Lois Ann Rayner and Charlotte Jacobs; Liturgist: Deb Norton; Musician: Sally Waugaman; Soloist: Glen Pruitt

### ***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](mailto:k_dixon221@hotmail.com).**