



Venice
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST
God is still speaking,



Stay With Us

**Third Sunday of Easter
April 19, 2026**

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Third Sunday of Sunday

April 19, 2026

Singing Prelude

*Lift Us Up*¹

Yarrow

**Lift us up. Make our stand
Let love triumph in our land.**

**Lift us up. Make us strong.
Give us courage — to right the wrongs.**

(A) guitars (B) guitars-choir (C) choir (A, B, A) all *Lift Us Up Yarrow*

Lift us up, make our stand.
Let love tri - umph in our land. (in our land)

Lift us up, make us strong.
Give us cour-age to right the wrong.
God, our coun-try's hopes and dreams are tru-ly all at
stake. Let not the hate di-vide us, let
not our spir-it break. Let not our courage fal-ter, let
not our brav-ry fail. Let u - ni-ty bring vic-to-ry
Let love pre-vail. back to A

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¹ Permission to use this song today for non-commercial purposes has been granted by the Family of the late Peter Yarrow.

Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space during this season of Easter. I am Pastor Barb, and Jane Chittick will be our liturgist. Many thanks to all of our staff and volunteers for all that they do so that we can come together to worship God as together we walk the season of Easter with Jesus.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by Sharon and Gary Leidheiser: "Celebrating Love and Family on Our 28th Anniversary".

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know. Call us, drop us an email, or follow the prayer request button in the app, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an

exciting new gift for you, so please stop by the Welcome Table if you haven't already to pick it up. As a Wise Congregation for Mental Health, we invite everyone to wear a name tag, so that we can call each other by name.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,
as Venice United Church of Christ,
we empower and invite everyone
to join us in this divine place
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,
no matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
and no one is turned away.

Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for coffee and fellowship across the lane in Naar Hall. Thank you to Deb Woudenberg and Jane Chittick, who are our hosts this week.

Then, after grabbing some snacks, any and everyone who wants to learn more about our congregation or who would like to find out more about membership is invited to join us for a meet and greet following worship. This special meeting will be held in the Conference Room off of Naar Hall. We hope to see you there.

There are a few additional events of which to take note.

On Monday, SpiritFed. Members and friends will be playing Bridge in the Parlor at the usual time. Our Wednesday Bible

Study. The Men are meeting Friday morning at Panera. Knit Wits Parlor. Men's Breakfast on Saturday.

Announcement from Sharon. Annual Meeting.

There are many ways to get involved here at Venice UCC, whether through activities, volunteering for special projects or helping with our mission projects, or serving on a team or committee. Please check out the information table to explore new ways to become connected to the ministries of our church.

The past four months, we have been engaging in monthly sermon series that have focused on the four great Acts of Joy. This month, our series draws to a close as we turn to the book which inspired it all: The Book of Joy. This week, we are reflecting on how our gratitude reveals the foundation for Joy, that Christ is with us even when we don't recognize his presence.

And now, we come to celebrate Christ's Resurrection and worship our extravagantly generous, steadfastly loving God. May our worship align us again with God's holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

We Approach God's Presence

Bringing in the Light of Christ

On the Journey to Emmaus

Gaelic

Responsive Call to Worship

We walk many roads—
roads of sorrow, roads of wonder, roads of waiting.

And still, Christ comes alongside us.

We bring our questions, our weariness, our hope.

And still, Christ opens the way.

In the breaking of the bread, in the sharing of the story,
in the burning of our hearts—

We recognize that Christ stays with us still.

So come, with grateful hearts and open lives —

For Christ is here. Alleluia!

*Hymn

Christ is Alive!

Edwards/Wyeth

**Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
The cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
Love, drowned in death, shall never die.**

**Christ is alive! No longer bound
To distant years in Palestine,
But saving, healing, here and now,
And touching every place and time.**

**Christ is alive and comes to bring
Good news to this and every age;
Till earth and sky and ocean ring
With joy, with justice, love and peace.**

Christ Is Alive!

1 Christ is a - live! Let Chris - tians sing. The cross stands
 2 Christ is a - live! No long - er bound to dis - tant
 3 In ev - ery in - sult, rift, and war, where col - or,
 4 Wom - en and men, in age and youth, can feel the
 5 Christ is a - live and comes to bring good news to

emp - ty to the sky. Let streets and homes with
 years in Pal - es - tine, but sav - ing, heal - ing,
 scorn, or wealth di - vide, Christ suf - fers still, yet
 Spir - it, hear the call, and find the way, the
 this and ev - ery age; till earth and sky and

prais - es ring. Love, drowned in death, shall nev - er die.
 here and now, and touch - ing ev - ery place and time.
 loves the more, and lives, where e - ven hope has died.
 life, the truth, re - vealed in Je - sus, freed for all.
 o - cean ring with joy, with jus - tice, love, and praise.

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WORDS: Brian Wren (1936-)
 MUSIC: Thomas Williams' *Psalmodia Evangelica*, 1789
 Words © 1975, 1995 Hope Publishing Company

TRURO
 L.M.

***Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Let us pray:

God who walks beside us,

We confess how often we fail to recognize you.

You meet us in ordinary moments—

in conversation, in kindness, in shared meals—

Yet we are distracted, hurried, or closed off.

We cling to what is missing

instead of giving thanks for what is present.

We focus on disappointment instead of noticing grace.

When our hopes falter, we assume you are absent.

When the road feels long, we forget that you are near.

Forgive us.

Open our eyes to your presence.

Open our hearts to gratitude.

Teach us to say, even in uncertainty,

“Stay with us.”

And in that staying, transform us—

that we may be people of welcome,

people of generosity,

people whose lives reflect thanksgiving.

In Christ, who never leaves us, we pray.

Amen.

***Words of Grace**

Hear the Good News:

The risen Christ does not abandon the journey.

Even when we do not recognize him, he walks beside us,

listens to us, and stays with us.

God’s grace is not distant—it is present, persistent, and near.

In Jesus Christ, we are made new, whole, and never alone.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

***Response**

Open Our Eyes, Lord

**Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch him,
And say that we love him.**

**Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord,
We want to see Jesus.**

Open Our Eyes

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "O - pen our eyes, Lord, we want to see Je - sus, to reach out and touch him, and O - pen our eyes, say that we love him. Lord, we want to see Je - sus." The score includes first and second endings. The first ending leads to the second ending, which concludes the piece.

WORDS: Bob Cull (John 12:21; Eph. 1:17-18)
MUSIC: Bub Cull

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We Encounter God in the Word

Contemplative Lesson² *The Book of Joy* 14th Dalai Lama, Tutu, Abrams

Hear these words of contemplation:

“Every day, think as you wake up, ‘I am fortunate to be alive. I have a precious human life. I am not going to waste it.’” — 14th Dalai Lama

“The Dalai Lama’s ability to be grateful for the opportunities that exist even in exile was a profound shift in perspective, allowing him not only to accept the reality of his circumstances but also to see the opportunity in every experience. Acceptance means not fighting reality. Gratitude means embracing reality. It means moving from counting your burdens to counting your blessings, as the Archbishop had recommended, both as an antidote to envy and a recipe for appreciating our own lives.

“I have been able to meet many spiritual leaders like you,” the Dalai Lama said, when the Archbishop had been awed by his ability to find gratitude even in fifty years of loss for himself and his people.

“It is much more enriching, much more useful. Even suffering helps you to develop empathy and compassion for others. ... When you are confronted with the reality of suffering, all of life is laid bare. Even a king when he is suffering cannot pretend to be something special. He is just one human being, suffering, like all other people.”

God is Still Speaking. **Thanks be to God!**

Anthem

The Prayer

Sager/Foster/Fetke

² *The Book of Joy*. From the chapter on Gratitude.

13-35 That same day two of them were walking to the village Emmaus, about seven miles out of Jerusalem. They were deep in conversation, going over all these things that had happened. In the middle of their talk and questions, Jesus came up and walked along with them. But they were not able to recognize who he was.

17-18 He asked, “What’s this you’re discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They just stood there, long-faced, like they had lost their best friend. Then one of them, his name was Cleopas, said, “Are you the only one in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard what’s happened during the last few days?”

19-24 He said, “What has happened?”

They said, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene. He was a man of God, a prophet, dynamic in work and word, blessed by both God and all the people. Then our high priests and leaders betrayed him, got him sentenced to death, and crucified him. And we had our hopes up that he was the One, the One about to deliver Israel. And it is now the third day since it happened. But now some of our women have completely confused us. Early this morning they were at the tomb and couldn’t find his body. They came back with the story that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of our friends went off to the tomb to check and found it empty just as the women said, but they didn’t see Jesus.”

25-27 Then he said to them, “So thick-headed! So slow-hearted! Why can’t you simply believe all that the prophets said? Don’t

you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory?” Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him.

²⁸⁻³¹ They came to the edge of the village where they were headed. He acted as if he were going on but they pressed him: “Stay ... with us. It’s nearly evening; [have supper with us]; the day is done.” So he went in with them.

And here is what happened: He sat down at the table with them. Taking the bread, he blessed and broke and gave it to them. At that moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him. And then he disappeared.

³² Back and forth they talked. “Didn’t we feel on fire as he conversed with us on the road, as he opened up the Scriptures for us?”

³³⁻³⁴ They didn’t waste a minute. They were up and on their way back to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and their friends gathered together, talking away: “It’s really happened! The Master has been raised up—Simon saw him!”

³⁵ Then the two went over everything that happened on the road and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

The Word of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray:

For the wisdom revealed through story,
for the courage to listen deeply,
and for the Spirit who opens our eyes to the Word of God,
we give you thanks and praise.

Amen.

(As the capstone of our focus this year of building the spiritual capacity of joy, this morning’s story is drawn from the *Book of Joy*, the chapter on Gratitude.)

“Anthony Ray Hinton spent thirty years on death row for a crime he did not commit. Not only did he not commit the crime, but he had been locked in at the factory where he worked at the time. The arresting officers? They told him they picked him because he was black.”³

Thirty years.

In a five-by-seven-foot cell.

In near total isolation.

Allowed out only one hour a day.

Fifty-four men around him were executed during those years. Guards came and went. Time stretched and folded in ways most of us can barely imagine. And yet, in that place—where hope might reasonably disappear—something else took root.

³ The Book of Joy. Chapter on Gratitude.

Hinton became a companion to others. A counselor. A friend. Not only to fellow inmates, but even to the guards.

When he was finally released—after a unanimous Supreme Court ruling—he stepped out into a world that had moved on without him. And one of the first things he said was this:

“People run out of the rain. I run into the rain. How can anything that falls from heaven not be precious?”

After thirty years without feeling rain on his face, every drop became a gift.

When *60 Minutes* asked how he could not be angry at those who had put him in jail, his answer was simple: “If I’m angry and unforgiving, they will have taken the rest of my life.”

In a later conversation, he continued... “The world didn’t give you your joy, and the world can’t take it away. You can let people come into your life and destroy it, but I refused to let anyone take my joy. I get up in the morning... blessed to see another day, and when you are blessed to see another day that should automatically give you joy.”

This is not denial.

This is not naivety.

This is a profound reorientation—a way of seeing life not through what has been lost, but through what is still being given.

Gratitude.

Joy.

Right in the middle of a life that had every reason to be defined by death, despair, and confusion.

In our scriptural passage this morning, Luke does not take us back to the empty tomb. Instead, we encounter two of Jesus' followers on a road trip— and drop in on the middle of a conversation also shaped by death, despair, and confusion.

They have heard the reports—the empty tomb, the testimony of the women—but they cannot yet integrate these into their lived reality.

So they leave Jerusalem on a seven mile trip.
Seven miles — from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

This journey is not just geographical—it is theological. It is a movement away from the center of hope, away from community, into a place of private interpretation and unresolved grief.

“We had hoped...”

That phrase carries the weight of everything.

Hope is now past tense. The weight of Jesus' death, their hope that he might be the revolutionary who would free them from the bondage of Rome, the confusion of the account of the woman who claim to have seen Jesus alive — it's just too much. And none of it is making much sense.

So they set out on a journey. Yes, towards Emmaus. But more than that, away from where Jesus' followers gathered in that upper room.

And it is in that very moment—on that road—that Jesus joins them. For a while, he simply walks with them. He hears their lament, their grief, their pain. The fragility of their hope.

And then he invites them into a deeper conversation:
“What is this that you speak about so intently?”

Perhaps, in today's terminology, it's a way of saying:
“What is so important that you haven't even recognized me as walking here with you?”

So intent on each other and their own grief and confusion, they couldn't see anything, anyone else.

And so, turning to this stranger now walking with them, they express their disbelief that he could have so little awareness of the momentous events taking place in Jerusalem, and then filled him in on the story.

And then Jesus responds—not by correcting them outright, but by reframing their story within the larger arc of Scripture. By opening the scripture up to them in a way that they could understand it.

Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus shows them that the suffering of the Messiah is not the end, it is merely a part of God's redemptive, restorative work of resurrection.

Even Still—they do not recognize him.

Because recognition, in Luke, is not merely intellectual.

It is relational.

It is communal.

It is sacramental.

As they reach Emmaus, Jesus appears ready to continue on.

But having welcomed him into their conversation, they do not want the connection they have just made to end. So they urge Jesus, saying, “Stay with us.” “Have supper with us.”

And in that act of welcome, grace unfolds.

At the table, Jesus takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and shares it with them. And in that moment of eucharist — in that moment of gratitude and thanksgiving — in that ordinary moment of eating together made holy, their eyes were opened to the presence of God, the one called Immanuel, God with Us — seated at their table with them. The one present in their struggle to understand.

And then he vanishes.

And with the opening of their eyes came the opening of their hearts and their understanding. “Were not our hearts burning within us... didn’t we feel on fire as Jesus spoke to us along the road?”

From out of their suffering, from out of their story of death, despair and confusion, A new story emerged. A story of life, and hope, and encounter. Of gratitude for bread that is blessed, broken and shared.

This is the language of awakening.

Of recognition.

Of gratitude.

Of looking back and realizing—he has been with us all along.

A new story to share, they immediately get up and return to Jerusalem — for they, too, are filled with Good News that must be shared. And resurrection always moves us back into community, into witness, into a shared journey of life together.

Sometimes, stories of resurrection, restoration, and hope take a little bit longer than an afternoon stroll. Anthony Ray Hinton's story unfolded over a period of thirty years.

And yet, one gets the sense that for Anthony Ray Hinton, resurrection was not simply a matter of finally receiving justice — rather, it was a matter of getting up each day, blessing and giving thanks each day for one more day of life. His vision primarily confined to the walls of his cell, what he describes is not the absence of his suffering—rather, it is a transformation of perception. His field of vision may have been restricted by his environment, but the vision of his heart and the compassion for others that emanated from him, allowed him to see and care for

the lives of those around them, helping them to reframe their field of vision, as well.

In *The Book of Joy*, this kind of gratitude is described as the ability to recognize life as gift—even in circumstances that seem to deny that possibility.

Brother David Steindl-Rast writes, “It is not happiness that makes us grateful. It is gratefulness that makes us happy.”

Hinton embodies this.

Nothing about his circumstances for thirty years suggested joy.

And yet, he speaks of rain as precious. Of waking up as blessing. Of choosing gratitude as a way of remaining alive to the present moment.

The research echoed in the by the Greater Good Science Center confirms that gratitude does not erase hardship. But it shifts awareness. It opens us to connection, to meaning, to life that is still unfolding.

This is what happens on the road to Emmaus.

They move from “we had hoped” to “our hearts were burning.”

From absence...to presence.

From grief to gratitude.

And from that gratitude, joy emerges—not as denial, but as recognition.

Biblical scholar R. Alan Culpepper, in his reflection on the revelation of Christ that happened along the road to Emmaus, reminds us that understanding unfolds in community. We need one another to interpret our experiences, to help us see where God has been present.

The disciples tell their story to Jesus.
Jesus reframes their story within God's story.
And then the disciples return to Jerusalem, eager to tell the new story.

This is the rhythm of faith.
It is also the practice of gratitude.
Because gratitude often comes in hindsight.

We say, "I didn't see it then..."
"But now I know..."
"God was there..."

This is not revision.
It is revelation.
It is the slow opening of our eyes to the presence that has been with us all along.

And yet, in the middle of the story there is a plea that I don't think that we should rush past too quickly.

When they approached the village, the disciples invited the one who had opened their eyes to the Word of God revealed through Moses and the prophets to "Stay with us."

They offered all sorts of reasons — because evening was approaching, because of the safety of staying together, to simply share their meal.

They were making space: Space for presence. Space for relationship. Space for recognition.

So this week, I invite you to practice staying.

Stay in the conversation a little longer.

Stay at the table.

Stay present to the person in front of you.

Stay open to the moment you might otherwise rush past.

Because it is often in the staying that recognition happens.

It is in the staying that we begin to notice:

Christ is here.

Grace is here.

Life is still being given.

Because it is when we stay —just long enough —in those places of grief, despair, and confusion, we make space for transformation, recognition, and gratitude. We make space for joy.

Just don't get stuck there. Or if you do, get help.

After 30 years, Anthony Ray Hinton needed help to get reoriented to the changes that had happened in the world while he was locked in that 5x7 foot cell. But that didn't mean that he chose to remain in his cell. Instead, he now runs into the rain because he knows what it is to have lost it. He runs into the rain because: "How can anything that falls from heaven not be precious?"

So too, the disciples run back to Jerusalem because they now know what they almost missed. Christ, risen. Their lives, transformed.

So stay. Stay long enough to notice.

Stay long enough to recognize.

Stay long enough to discover that Christ has been with you
all along.

And then run. Run to share the joyful good news that has been shaped within you.

Amen.

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Joys

Joyful for the many migrating birds stopping in our area so we can see their rare beauty.

What a wonderful world with God in it. English butter toffee, sisters, our volunteers, healthy family, being here, for moms, this church, phone calls with loved ones, friends, lovely holidays, beautiful weather, getting up each morning, grateful to learn about life from my grandma, fellowship, thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be, waking up to spouses and loved ones, for heartfelt messages of joy, belief in God, for everyone gathered in our sacred space this morning

Music, kindness, our volunteers who do so much, my healthy family, to be alive, those who light up our lives, love, my belief in God, wonderful friends, visiting family far away and the joy of coming home, grateful for learning to live a life of joy, coffee and baked goods, playing golf, a place to live, good health, everyone who is here today, the awe of each new day.

Sunshine, rain, quiet still mornings, family, healthy family, wonderful friends, church friends, fog turned to sunshine, friends and neighbors who are like family, sisters, being able to come to church, my dog, being alive, beautiful weather, lovely holiday, getting up in the morning, health, spouse, place to live, the love between spouses and soulmates, grapes and fellowship, belief in God, being able to express ourselves to God, a van that works, love, everything, the beauty of the palms, sunrise, banyan trees, diversity of the congregation, God's new morning painting, the awe of the moon shining through the clouds and pointing to the star, music, kindness, learning to walk backwards, sunshine through the window and a peaceful household

Each beautiful new day, slow mornings, gorgeous sunsets, that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy reminds us that we share the same source of our joy, the depth of human creativity and spirit, skilled medical professionals, friendship, safe travels, gathering together to study God’s word, rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us as we ask tough questions of God and each other, those who pitch in and help out, birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

Intercessions:

For the family and friends of Susan

Fred

Barbara

Anthony

Steve

For the family and friends of Marge

Bill

Jackie

Emily

Cerenity

Rev. Ryan’s family

Jimmy, Christine, Mark, Helen, Gay, Stacy, Vicki, Pam, Jack, Rock, Clark, Barbara, Pastor Atilla

Kip

Ellen

Nancy

Larry

Robin

Those who are struggling with a cancer diagnosis.

We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes

We pray for everyone to be healthy,
Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that
choose violence and war instead of diplomacy; all essential
workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted
by recent hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and flooding;
and

The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra
Leone, Immokalee Farm Workers, black and brown fathers and
their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of
all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all
who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and
depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service
men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's
work in dangerous places.

(Third Sunday: trespasses)

Silent Prayer

Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer

Ever-with-us God,

We give you thanks for this day—for breath, for life, for the ways
you meet us along the road. When we are distracted or
discouraged, draw near and stay with us. Open our eyes to
recognize You in the simple gifts of life: in shared conversations,
in moments of kindness, in the breaking of bread. Shape in us a
practice of gratitude that notices what is here, that trusts what is
given, and that responds with joy.

Stay with us when the road feels long and our hearts grow weary.
Stay with us when hope flickers and the day fades into

uncertainty. Teach us to welcome you not only in moments of clarity, but also in confusion, in grief, and in waiting. And as you stay with us, make us into people who stay—with one another, and with those who suffer—so that your love may be made known through us.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we sing the prayer that you have taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory.
Forever. Amen.**

Musical Response *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus*

Lemmel

**Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in his wonderful face;
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim
in the light of his glory and grace.**

We Share God's Love

Invitation to Generosity

On the road to Emmaus, two weary travelers offered simple hospitality: "Stay with us." And in that moment of welcome, their lives were transformed. Gratitude invites us to do the same— to open our lives, to share what we have, to make room for Christ among us.

Our gifts today become that welcome—a way of saying to the world: Stay. You belong here. There is enough. Let us give with grateful hearts.

(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)

***Song of Gratitude**

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above, ye heavenly host,
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

***Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication**

Generous God,

We give because you have given us the greatest gift — life eternal. Even when we feel like flickering candles, You walk with us, feed us, and stay with us. Receive these gifts. Use them to welcome the stranger, nourish the hungry, and build communities of hope. May our giving reflect our gratitude, and our gratitude overflow into love.

In Christ, who stays with us,

Amen.

We Go to Carry the Light

*Hymn

He Lives!

I serve a risen Savior, he's in the world today;
I know that he is living, whatever others say.
I see his hand of mercy, I hear his voice of cheer,
and just the time I need Him he's always near.

He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart.

In all the world around me I see his loving care,
And though my heart grows weary, I never will despair.
I know that he is leading, through all the stormy blast;
the day of his appearing will come at last.

He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart.

Rejoice, rejoice, O Christian, lift up your voice and sing;
eternal hallelujahs to Jesus Christ we bring!
The Hope of all who seek him, the help of all who find;
None other is so loving, so good and kind.

He lives, he lives, Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me along life's narrow way.
He lives, he lives, salvation to impart!
You ask me how I know He lives?
He lives within my heart.

***Blessing and Benediction**

How we long to stay.

Stay in the moment where the Word of God,
Christ, the anointed, the Risen One
Is revealed to us.

But we are the ones who are sent.

Sent out with grateful hearts, sent out with compassion and generous
hearts.

‘So as we go, running with the disciples to share the good news,
remember... We may no longer see the visage of the Risen Lord before
us, but God is with us. And goes with us along the way.

Go in peace. Amen.

***Sending Blessing** *Because He Lives* Gaither

**Because he lives, I can face tomorrow;
because he lives, all fear is gone;
because I know....he holds the future,
and life is worth the living just because he lives.**

***Postlude** *Lord of the Dance* Shaker

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude as the
Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

Supporting Our Service Today

Liturgist: Jane Chittick

Welcome Table: Marilyn Schwab

Greeters: Char Raitt

Acolyte: Bella Clapham

Head Usher: Dee Rogers

Usher Team: Nancy Bennet,

Mel Burrowes, Phil Ensue,

Chet Hamlin, Helen Markus

Technology Team

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,

Maria Groody, David Jack,

Linda Newton, Wally Davis,

Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated

by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are given

by Sharon and Gary Leidheiser:

"Celebrating Love and Family on

Our 28th Anniversary"

The **Church Sign** was changed by

Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian:

Helen Markus



Senior Minister

Rev. Barbara Dickason, BCC

Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Barb Quinn: *Office Assistant*

Music Staff

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston: *Bella Handbell*

Director

This Week at a Glance

Monday, April 20

SpiritFed at noon

Pack a lunch and join us **on ZOOM** for prayer, study and connecting with each other. It's a come-as-you-are space designed to help us confront the loneliness epidemic while growing closer to God.

Click on the link below to join.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83576594637?pwd=U2024sKmOPiy3CyMqV4OarYUtofaom.1>

Meeting ID: 835 7659 4637

Passcode: 913882

6:00 PM Bridge — P

Tuesday, April 21

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

4:00 PM Vision Team— P

6:00 Audubon

6:00 PM Girl Scouts

Wednesday, April 22

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours

10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

11:30 Finance Team —P

3:30 PM Shamrock Ringers

6:30 Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, April 23

2:00 Human Resources — P

4:00 Bell Choir Rehearsal

6:00 Daisies

Friday, April 24

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera

9:00 AM Knit Wits — P

Saturday, April 25

8:30 AM Men's Breakfast — NH

Sunday, April 26

Fifth Sunday in Lent

9:00 AM Choir Rehearsal — S

9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour

10:00 AM Worship

Annual Meeting Follows

11:00-11:15 AM Library Time

Coming Events

The church office is open

M-Th, 9-1.

Would you like to donate to VUCC online?

Use this link:

<https://veniceucc.org/give>

Or...Use your Smart Phone to scan the QR code: and it will take you directly to our donations page.

It is really easy!

