

THE CHURCH ON THE AVENUE



**ST. JOHN**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

# THE SUNDAYS OF EASTER

*Seven Weeks of Celebration, Resurrection and Joy!*

*Because you have raised Jesus from the dead and because you have raised us up to be a diverse, inclusive, and just community of faith through Christ, we praise you with joy.*

Fourth Sunday of Easter  
May 8, 2022

---

## **Welcome!**

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here.**

Masks are required when you enter, move about, or sing in the Church house.  
Masks are optional when you are seated in a pew and physically distanced.

As a courtesy to others silence your phone.

Assistive listening devices are available in the back.

Sign Language interpretation is available in the front.

Offering plates are in the front and rear of the Church.

Remember to offer your contact data at the door to help contain virus transmission.

## **Gathering Music & Lighting Candles** (10:20a)

Steve Milloy, piano; Adeline Palm, Acolyte

"More Love to Thee, O Christ" -*W. H. Doane, arr. Mark Hayes*

"God, Give Us Christian Homes" -*B. B. McKinney, arr. Cindy Berry*

"Grateful" -*Mark Hayes*

## **Call to Worship** (10:30a)

Melissa Stephens

One: Praise God, who brings life out of death and hope out of despair.

**All: Praise God, who raised Jesus Christ from the dead.**

One: Praise God, who gathers up the fragments left by human destruction and creates new possibilities.

**All: Christ has risen!**

One: Christ has risen indeed!

**(Masks on and all may sing together.)**

**Opening Hymn, 301** (Rise in body or spirit.) “Crown with Your Richest Crowns”

## **Opening Our Hearts**

Melissa Stevens

One: With all the signs of new life in Christ around us,  
We still cling to our old ways.

Let us confess our sin to God and to one another.

**All: When we do not accept as our siblings in Christ those who are different from us, forgive us, O God.**

**When we oppose you by opposing those who disrupt our routines and challenge our assumptions, forgive us, O God.**

**When we willfully disobey you and lose faith in your future, forgive us, O God.**

**God, in your mercy, restore us to newness of life.**

**Bind together your church universal through the coming of your Holy Spirit.**

**Empower us to witness with courage to the presence of Jesus Christ among us. Amen.**

## **Assurance of Grace**

Melissa Stephens

One: Take heart:

**All: God’s Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life.**

One: Our sins are forgiven.

**All: Let us forgive one another and give ourselves to one another in the joyful community of the risen Christ. Amen.**

## **Instrumental**

Steve Milloy, piano

“The Lord’s My Shepherd” -*James L. Bain, arr. Lloyd Larson*

## **Community Prayer and The Prayer Jesus Teaches**

One: ...And we praise your name for ever; through Jesus the Christ who taught us to pray...

**ALL: Great Giver, in whom heaven is found, holy is your name.**

**May your commonwealth of peace and freedom flourish on earth.**

**Give us this day bread for our journey and make us hungry to see the whole world nourished.**

**Forgive us and help us forgive one another.**

**Strengthen us for the challenges that lie ahead.  
Let us hear your prophets and deliver us from our privilege.  
For your love is the only power, the only home, the only honor we need  
in the world and in the world to come. Amen.**

## **Acts 9.36-43**

Lonnie Fields

<sup>36</sup> Now in Joppa there was a disciple, a woman named Tabitha - "Dorcas," in Greek - who never tired of doing kind things or giving to charity. <sup>37</sup> About this time she grew ill and died. They washed her body and laid her out in an upstairs room.

<sup>38</sup> Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples sent two couriers to Peter with the urgent request, "Please come over to us without delay." <sup>39</sup> Peter set out with them as they asked.

Upon his arrival, they took him upstairs to the room. All the townswomen who had been widowed stood beside him weeping, and showed him the various garments Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

<sup>40</sup> Peter first made everyone go outside, then knelt down and prayed. Turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, stand up." She opened her eyes, then looked at Peter and sat up. <sup>41</sup> He gave her his hand and helped her to her feet. The next thing he did was to call in those who were believers - including the widows - to show them that she was alive.

<sup>42</sup> This became known all over Joppa and, because of it, many came to believe in Jesus Christ. <sup>43</sup> Peter remained awhile in Joppa, staying with Simon, a leather tanner.

## **John 10.22-30** (Rise in body or spirit.)

Lonnie Fields

<sup>22</sup> The time came for Hanukkah, the Feast of the Dedication, in Jerusalem. <sup>23</sup> It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the Temple area, in Solomon's Porch, <sup>24</sup> when the Temple authorities surrounded him and said, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you really are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

<sup>25</sup> Jesus replied,

"I did tell you,

but you don't believe.

The work I do in my Abba's name

gives witness in my favor,

<sup>26</sup> but you don't believe

because you're not my sheep.

<sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice.

I know them, and they follow me.

<sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life,  
and they will never be lost.  
No one will ever  
snatch them from my hand.

<sup>29</sup> God, who gave them to me, is greater than anyone,  
and no one can steal them from God.

<sup>30</sup> For God and I are One.”

One: Here ends the reading inspired by God.

May God grant to us wisdom and courage for interpretation.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

## **Sermon**

“BELIEVE!”

Melissa Stephens

## **Ministry of Music**

“I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say” -*Edwin Hawkins*

St. John Ensemble

## **Ignite Moment**

“Anti-Racism Engagement”

Anthony Palm

## **An Invitation to Share our Gifts** -Matthew 5.14-16

Lonnie Fields

One: “You are the light of the world. You don’t build a city on a hill, then try to hide it, do you?”

**All: No!**

One: You don’t light a lamp, then put it under a bushel basket, do you?”

**All: No!**

One: No, you set it on a stand where it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, your light must shine before others so that they may see your good acts and give praise to your God in heaven.”

**All: May it be so!**

One: Offering plates are available at both the front and back of the Sanctuary. You may place your offering there as you leave. May God bless you as you give your gifts generously to continue this ministry of justice, diversity, and inclusion, a beacon of hope and inspiration.

## **Unison Blessing of our Gifts**

Lonnie Fields

**God, we present these offerings that they may be used to extend your liberating reign. With them, we offer our varied ministries in the days ahead that each of us may be part of your answer to the cries of the world. Amen**

**(Masks on and all may sing together.)**

**Closing Hymn, 82** (Rise in body or spirit.)

“Go, My Children with My Blessing”

**Send Out** (Rise in body or spirit.)

Melissa Stephens

May the living Christ go with you,  
before you to light the way,  
behind you to encourage you,  
beside you to befriend you,  
beneath you to sustain you,  
above you to watch over you,  
and within you to give you peace. Amen.

**Going Forth Music**

Steve Milloy, piano

“How Firm a Foundation” -*Charity Book Putnam, based on an American hymn tune*

---

**Stay Connected at St. John Church!**

For more information about St. John Church go to: [www.StJohnChurch.net](http://www.StJohnChurch.net).

To receive *The e-Weekly* or Prayer List, email [Office@StJohnChurch.net](mailto:Office@StJohnChurch.net).

To meet with the Pastor call: 859.261.2066, ext.202; email [Pastor@StJohnChurch.net](mailto:Pastor@StJohnChurch.net).

To make a prayer request for the Prayer List, email [PrayerList@StJohnChurch.net](mailto:PrayerList@StJohnChurch.net).

No online connection? Call the office at 859.261.2066, ext. 201.

Office hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00am to 4:00pm.

**Contact Tracing Information**

In an effort to keep everyone healthy, contact the Church office at 859.261.2066 ext. 201 or [Office@StJohnChurch.net](mailto:Office@StJohnChurch.net) if you are diagnosed with COVID after this service.

**Copyrights, Notes & Acknowledgments: All items are used with permission. All rights reserved. OneLicense #A-712481.**

**Preface** from the *Book of Worship* © 1986 United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, p. 500; **Call to Worship** from the *Book of Worship* © 1986 United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, p. 494; **Opening Our Hearts/Assurance of Grace** from the *Book of Worship* © 1986 United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, p. 499-500; **The Prayer Jesus Teaches** by Parker Palmer, from Claremont United Church of Christ, Claremont, CA; **Acts 9.36-43 & John 10:22-30** from *The Inclusive Bible* © 2007 by *Priests for Equality*; **An Invitation to Share our Gifts** Matthew 5.14-16 from *The Inclusive Bible* © 2007 by *Priests for Equality*; **Unison Blessing of Our Gifts** from the *Book of Worship* © 1986 United Church of Christ Office for Church Life and Leadership, p. 551-H; **Send Out** by Lloyd John Ogilvie, adapted by Keith M. Haithcock.

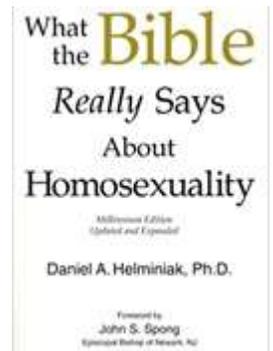


*A mother's love is unconditional  
And reflects the love of God,  
Bringing warmth and serenity  
To the home in which she dwells*  
-M.S. Lowndes



The Open and Affirming Team of Ignite 2022 invites you and your family and friends to engage what the Bible really has to say about homosexuality and engage Lighthouse Family Services to learn about and experience their LGBTQI+ homeless youth program and how St. John Church can be supportive of their work.

There will be four discussion sessions using the book, *What the Bible Really Says About Homosexuality*, by Daniel Helminiak. This small volume is packed with insight about how we might better understand the “clobber” passages of the Bible frequently used to condemn LGBTQI+ people. Helminiak offers the opportunity to engage with these sacred texts in new ways integrating faith, spirituality, religion and psychology.



**Zoom Discussions:**  
**There's still time to register for our final session on**  
**Thursday May 12 - 6:30p to 7:30p.**  
**Register at the ONA table in the rear of the Sanctuary.**