**Saginaw First Free Methodist Church**

**Sixth Sunday Of Easter**

**May 17, 2020**



*“’If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.’” (John 14:15-17)*

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**SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**May 17, 2020**

**The mission of Saginaw First Free Methodist Church is to be faithful to God and to make known to all people everywhere God’s call to wholeness in Jesus Christ.**

**Prelude**

**Greeting/Announcements**

**Call to Worship** (*spoken responsively*)

L: The God of heaven and earth calls us together

**P: We come to the Creator, who gives us breath and life**

L: We love God by keeping God’s commandments

**P: We will do what is righteous, even if we suffer**

L: The Spirit of Truth, our advocate, lives in us

**P: By God we live and move and have our being**

L: We know that God lives in us

**P: Because we love God and keep God’s commandments**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee”

**Joyful, joyful, we adore thee**

**God of glory, Lord of love**

**Hearts unfold like flowers before thee**

**Opening to the sun above**

**Melt the clouds of sin and sadness**

**Drive the dark of doubt away**

**Giver of immortal gladness**

**Fill us with the light of day!**

**All thy works with joy surround thee**

**Earth and heaven reflect thy rays**

**Stars and angels sing around thee**

**Center of unbroken praise**

**Field and forest, vale and mountain**

**Flowery meadow, flashing sea**

**Chanting bird and flowing fountain**

**Call us to rejoice in thee**

**Thou art giving and forgiving**

**Ever blessing, ever blest**

**Well-spring of the joy of living**

**Ocean depth of happy rest**

**Thou our Father, Christ our brother**

**All who live in love are thine**

**Teach us how to love each other**

**Lift us to the joy divine**

**Mortals, join the mighty chorus**

**which the morning stars began**

**Father love is reigning o'er us**

**Brother love binds man to man**

**Ever singing, march we onward**

**Victors in the midst of strife**

**Joyful music leads us sunward**

**In the triumph song of life**

**Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: God of compassion and mercy, You left us your Spirit so we would never be alone. You have abided with us, by the spirit who comforts and advocates on our behalf. We have been in need of your help many times in our lives, now others need us to be their comforter and advocate. Guide us in righteousness, that we may bring justice to the sick and comfort to those who mourn. Teach us to suffer for others, how you suffered for us, as we pray together the prayer that Jesus taught His disciples…

**P: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come; your will be done in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver**

**us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Gloria Patri**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Acts 17:22-31

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, “Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, ‘To an unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.

The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things.

From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him--though indeed he is not far from each one of us.

For ‘In him we live and move and have our being’ as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we too are his offspring.’ Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals.

While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

**Prayer of Confession**

L: God calls us to worship the creator, not the created. We easily let ourselves worship idols. We worship other people, objects of wealth and comfort. For our times of weakness, let us confess…

**P: Creator God, we confess we have loved our own way more than we’ve loved You. We abandon the Spirit of Truth to follow falsehoods that make us feel superior and protected. We neglect the poor, the ill, the weak, so we can selfishly have the wicked desires of our hearts. We would rather have our own way than be advocates for those in need. We ignore oppression when it benefits our wellbeing. We witness to the ways of this world and the thief; the ways destruction and division. Spirit speak to us, that we may follow Your commandments, seek abundant life, and love our neighbor and enemy. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 66

**P: Bless our God, O peoples, let the sound of God’s praise be heard, who has kept us among the living, and has not let our feet slip. For you, O God, have tested us; you have tried us as silver is tried. You brought us into the net, we went through fire and through water; yet you have brought us out to a spacious place. I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows, those that my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble. Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for me. I cried aloud to God, and God was extolled with my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; God has given heed to the words of my prayer. Blessed be God, because God has not rejected my prayer or removed steadfast love from me.**

**\*Hymn of Affirmation: “**My God, I Love Thee”

**My God, I love Thee not because, I hope for heav’n thereby**

**Nor yet for fear that loving not, I might forever die**

**But for that Thou didst all mankind, upon the cross embrace**

**For us didst bear the nails and spear, and manifold disgrace**

**And griefs and torments numberless, and sweat of agony**

**E’en death itself and all for man, who was Thine enemy**

**Then why most loving Jesus Christ, should I not love Thee well**

**Not for the sake of wining heav’n, nor any fear of hell**

**Not with the hope of gaining aught, nor seeking a reward**

**But as Thyself hast loved me, O ever loving Lord**

**E’en so I love Thee and will love, and in Thy praise will sing**

**Solely because Thou art my God, and my eternal King**

**New Testament Scripture Lesson:** 1 Peter 3:13-22

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.

For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water.

And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you--not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

**Special Music:** Micki Martin

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson**: John 14:15-21

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you.

In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

**Sermon**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response:** “O How I Love Jesus”

**There is a name I love to hear**

**I love to sing its worth**

**It sounds like music in my ear**

**The sweetest name on earth**

**O how I love Jesus, O how I love Jesus**

**O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me!**

**It tells me what my Father hath**

**In store for every day**

**And tho’ I tread a dark-some path**

**Yields sunshine all the way**

**O how I love Jesus, O how I love Jesus**

**O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me!**

**It tells of one whose loving heart**

**Can feel my deepest woe**

**Who in each sorrow bears a part**

**That none can bear below**

**O how I love Jesus, O how I love Jesus**

**O how I love Jesus, because he first loved me!**

**Invitation of Offering**

L: God rules over all things. When we give of our possessions, we give in righteousness. Even if we suffer for doing right, we are blessed. Don’t make idols of gold or silver. Let God rule over your heart, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**Prayer**

**Closing Hymn**: “O for a Heart to Praise My God”

**O for a heart to praise my God**

**A heart from sin set free**

**A heart that always feels Thy blood**

**So freely shed for me**

**A heart in ev’ry thought renewed**

**And full of love divine**

**Perfect and right and pure and good**

**A copy Lord of Thine**

**Thy nature gracious Lord impart**

**Come quickly from above**

**Write Thy new name up on my heart**

**Thy new best name of Love**

**Benediction**

L: The Spirit lives inside us. We are one with God and Christ. The Holy Trinity is our comforter and our advocate. Be the comforter and advocate for those in need, and for all God’s creation. Love the world as Christ loved you, as you go in peace to love and serve. Amen.