**First Free Methodist Church of Saginaw**

**Fourth Sunday of Easter**

**May 8, 2022**



*“My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me."*

*(John 10:27)*

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**Prelude**

**\*\*Greeting/Announcements**

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

L: A wife of noble character, who can find?

**P: She is worth far more than rubies**

L: She is like the merchant ships

**P: Bringing her food from afar**

L: She opens her arms to the poor

**P: And extends her hands to the needy**

L: Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting

**P: But a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised**

**\*Opening Hymn:** “God of Grace and God of Glory” #720 (vv.1-4)

**God of grace and God of glory**

**On Thy people pour Thy power**

**Crown Thine ancient church's story**

**Bring her bud to glorious flower**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**For the facing of this hour**

**For the facing of this hour**

**Lo! the hosts of evil round us**

**Scorn Thy Christ, assail His ways!**

**Fears and doubts too long have bound us**

**Free our hearts to work and praise**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**For the living of these days**

**For the living of these days**

**Heal Thy people's warring madness**

**Bend our pride to Thy control**

**Shame our wanton, selfish gladness**

**Rich in things and poor in soul**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal**

**Lest we miss Thy kingdom's goal**

**Set our feet on lofty places**

**Gird our lives that they may be**

**Armoured with all Christlike graces**

**In the fight to set men free**

**Grant us wisdom, Grant us courage**

**That we fail not man nor Thee**

**That we fail not man nor Thee**

**\*Invocation and Lord’s Prayer**

L: Mighty God, in whom we know the power of redemption, you stand among us in the shadows of our time. As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life, uphold us with knowledge of the final morning when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son, we will share in his resurrection, redeemed and restored to the fullness of life and forever freed to be your people. Restore all things in your glory, as we pray 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**

**Glory be to the Father​**

**And to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.​**

**As it was in the beginning​**

**Is now and ever shall be.​**

**World without end. ​**

**Amen. Amen.​**

**First Scripture Lesson:** Acts 9:36-43

 Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, “Please come to us without delay.”

 So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, “Tabitha, get up.” Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up.

 He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

**Prayer of Confession**

L: God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, also grants in us that same Spirit to be truly wise and ever rejoice in the consolation of Christ. May our hearts be rekindled, our spirits grow calm, our vision be clear, and our purpose be unified...

**P: O merciful God, grant that I may desire ardently, search prudently, recognize truly, and bring to perfect completion whatever is pleasing to you for the praise and glory of your name. Grant that I may know what you require me to do. Bestow upon me the power to accomplish your will, as is necessary and fitting for the salvation of my soul. Grant to me that I may not falter in times of prosperity or adversity. May all work, O Lord, delight me when done for your sake and may all repose not centered in you be ever wearisome for me. Grant unto me that I may direct my heart to you, and that in my failures I may ever feel remorse for my sins and never lose the resolve to change. Amen.**

**Affirmation of Faith:** Psalm 23

**P: The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.**

**Hymn of Affirmation:** “He Leadeth Me” #99 (vv.1-4)

**He leadeth me: O blessed thought**

**O words with heavenly comfort fraught**

**Whate'er I do, where'er I be**

**Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,**

**Sometimes where Eden's flowers bloom,**

**By waters calm, o'er troubled sea,**

**Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**Lord, I would clasp thy hand in mine**

**Nor ever murmur nor repine**

**Content, whatever lot I see**

**Since 'tis my God that leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**And when my task on earth is done,**

**When, by thy grace, the victory's won,**

**E’en death's cold wave I will not flee,**

**Since God through Jordan leadeth me**

**He leadeth me, he leadeth me**

**By his own hand he leadeth me**

**His faithful follower I would be**

**For by his hand he leadeth me**

**Second Scripture Lesson:** Revelation 7:9-17

 After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, “Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!”

 And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, singing, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”

 Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, “Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?”

 I said to him, “Sir, you are the one that knows.” Then he said to me, “These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

**Children’s Sermon**

**Passing of the Peace**

**Prayers of the People**

L: Lord in Your Mercy…

**P: Hear our prayer.**

**Gospel Lesson****:** John 10:22-30

 At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

 Jesus answered, “I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.”

**Guest Speakers**

**Prayer of Response**

**Hymn of Response****:** “In Christ Alone”

**In Christ alone, my hope is found**

**He is my light, my strength, my song**

**This cornerstone, this solid ground**

**Firm through the fiercest drought and storm**

**What heights of love, what depths of peace**

**When fears are stilled, when strivings cease**

**My comforter, my all in all**

**Here in the love of Christ I stand**

**In Christ alone, who took on flesh**

**Fullness of God in helpless babe**

**This gift of love and righteousness**

**Scorned by the ones he came to save**

**‘Til on that cross as Jesus died**

**The wrath of God was satisfied**

**For every sin on him was laid**

**Here in the death of Christ I live**

**There is no ground his body lay**

**Light of the world by darkness slain**

**Then bursting forth in glorious day**

**Up from the grave he rose again**

**And as he stands in victory**

**Sin’s curse has lost its grip on me**

**For I am his and he is mine**

**Bought with the precious blood of Christ**

**No guilt in life, no fear of death**

**This is the power of Christ in me**

**From life’s first cry to final breath**

**Jesus commands my destiny**

**No power of hell no scheme of man**

**Can ever pluck me from his hand**

**‘Til he returns or calls me home**

**Here in the power of Christ I’ll stand**

**Invitation of Offering**

L:Draw us forth, God of all creation. Draw us forward and away from limited certainty into the immense world of your love. Give us the capacity to even for a moment taste the richness of the feast you give us, as we collect this morning’s tithes and offerings.

**\*Doxology**

**\*Prayer**

**\*Closing Hymn**: “Redeemed” #357 (vv.1,3-4)

**Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it**

**Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb**

**Redeemed through His infinite mercy**

**His child, and forever, I am**

**Redeemed, redeemed**

**Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb**

**Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it**

**His child, and forever, I am**

**I think of my blessed Redeemer,**

**I think of Him all the day long;**

**I sing, for I cannot be silent;**

**His love is the theme of my song**

**Redeemed, redeemed**

**Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb**

**Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it**

**His child, and forever, I am**

**I know I shall see in His beauty**

**The King in whose law I delight**

**Who lovingly guardeth my footsteps**

**And giveth me songs in the night**

**Redeemed, redeemed**

**Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb**

**Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it**

**His child, and forever, I am**

\*Benediction

L: May the veil of darkness be transformed to the brightest light of your mind. May the most dreadful end become the most beautiful beginning in your heart. The depths of despair fade to reveal hope everlasting in your flesh. The curse of death has been defeated by eternal life. Go in peace to love and serve. Amen.