

## *Psalm 133*

<sup>1</sup>*How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!*

<sup>2</sup>*It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.*

<sup>3</sup>*It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life forevermore.*

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Last Sunday, the empty tomb cast light on the most joyous celebration in the Christian year. What a tough act to follow. What can possibly be said in response to the text our entire faith is based upon; “Because He lives, we live also!” I chose to focus on Psalm 133 because it offers us a path forward from the Garden. Jesus’ resurrection leads to a resurrection for our entire Christian community. *We need to live together in unity!*

Living peacefully seems a daunting task. Yet the ancient Psalmist provides two examples of such living, anointing with oil and the morning dew, both gifts from God. In the ancient world, oil poured out onto someone was a sign of blessing and hospitality. Such oil was often strongly perfumed and therefore signaled to anyone within nose-shot that an extravagant moment of blessing was taking place. God chose this act to be the one that the prophets would perform to designate God’s anointed one, the king of Israel. Likewise, dew was associated with blessing and restoration. It was something God gave in the mysterious early morning hours before sunrise, like manna in the wilderness.

Living the way Jesus and the early disciples lived was a radical witness and challenge to the social mores of the day. Worldly possessions only got in the way of sharing God’s love and grace. “Things” were for meeting needs and need trumped greed. So, how do we live in the unity Psalm 133 depicts? Let’s go to the motto of the United Church of Christ taken from the Gospel of John; “*I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word,* <sup>21</sup>***that they may all be one.*** *As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.*”

Blessings, Pastor Fred

**Prayer:** Unite us as one, graceful God, and send out to care for your world together. Amen.

**April 7, 2024**  
**Second Sunday of Easter**

Welcome/Announcements

Westminster Chimes and Prelude

“Great Are you Lord/Great Is Thy Name”  
~Derek Reed

\*\* Song: “Old Church Choir” ~Zach Williams

\*\* Call to Worship

Lector: "Let's gather together to worship our risen Savior."

**Congregation: "With joy, we're here to meet Him."**

Lector: "May His resurrection power transform us today."

**Congregation: "We lift our praises to Him, filling us with gratitude."**

Lector: "Let's worship Him together, giving Him all our honor and praise."

**Congregation: "Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!"**

\*\* Opening Prayer:

**Gracious God, We gather before you today with thankful hearts. Bless this time of worship with your presence. Open our hearts to receive your word and fill us with your peace. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

\*\* Sharing the Peace of Christ

Poem: “Blessed to Believe” ~Patti Miller

\*\* Hymn: “He Lives”

#220

Joys and Concerns

Praying for Others

Lord's Prayer

Prayer of Confession/Silent Reflection/Assurance of Grace

Thank you for sharing your tithes and offerings

\*\* Doxology

#625

\*\* Prayer of Dedication

Special Music: “We Have Seen the Risen Lord” (Pethel)  
~Derek Reed

\*\* A New Creed\*

Time for the Young at Heart

Hymn: “Thine Is the Glory”

#227

Scripture Readings: Acts 4:32-35 (The Message)  
John 20:19-31 (The Message)

Message: “Doubt to Peace”

\*\* Song: “All the People Said Amen” ~Matt Maher

\*\* Final Blessing

Please remain standing to sing “A Choral Benediction”

Postlude “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today”

(Williams/Broughton)

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\*On the screen

\*\* Please stand, if you are able.

### Announcements

#### **Church Financials**

General pledge Feb.2024: \$7,058

General pledge Feb.2023: \$6,496

YTD income: \$22,676

YTD expenses: \$34,389

YTD deficit: \$11,713

~Thanks to Derek Reed for his special music today!

### Upcoming Events

- APRIL: UCC ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING OFFERING (during the entire month of April)
- Monthly Movie @3pm: Friday, April 12th
- Town Hall Meeting #1: Sunday, April 14<sup>th</sup> @ 10AM
  - Topics:
    - Revisiting our covenant with each other and the United Church of Christ
    - How can Grace help you on your faith journey?
    - What do you need to heal, trust, and move forward?
  - NO FACEBOOK LIVESTREAM for this service
- P-A-L April 20<sup>th</sup>
- Bible Study Movie @1pm: Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup>
- Car Show: May 4<sup>th</sup> from 10am-2pm

# Doubt to Belief: Encountering Christ's Peace



Grace United Church of Christ

100 Fourth Street

Hanover, Pennsylvania 17331

717-632-1146

*In case of inclement weather, please check Facebook or call the Prayer Line 717-634-8865*

## **Blessed to Believe**

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” John 20: 29

We live in times of skepticism,  
Of doubt and disbelief.  
We see life through a broken prism,  
Distorted by our grief,  
And just like Thomas, we mistrust  
What we have not observed.  
True faith is built on solid trust,  
Submission unreserved.

Such faith demands no evidence,  
No proof that can be measured;  
Demands no pay or recompense,  
But is a trust that's treasured.  
Faith is just one ingredient  
In life's sweet recipe,  
Where effort is not vainly spent  
To doubt what we can't see.

We do not see the air we breathe  
Or light waves of the day,  
Yet still we know and do believe  
The life they bring our way.  
Thus, even more, let's trust the Lord,  
Believe, put doubts to rest,  
And then with faith we are assured  
That we will be so blessed. Patti Miller



# Struggling with thankfulness

*Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

Scottish minister Alexander Whyte was known for his uplifting prayers in the pulpit. That's because he always found something for which to be grateful. One Sunday morning the weather was so gloomy that one church member thought to himself, "*Certainly the preacher won't think of anything for which to thank the Lord on a wretched day like this.*"

Much to his surprise, however, Whyte began by praying, "*We thank Thee, O God, that it is not always like this!*"



Tough circumstances often make giving thanks a real challenge. And today, on a day when thankfulness is in so much focus, people around our nation and our world are experiencing unspeakable pain. So how, then, can we fulfill the mandate laid out in today's Scripture?

While our situation might make it difficult to give thanks to God, one thing we must always remember is that God is good. And because of that, we have confidence in tough times that it won't always be like this. A better day is coming.

When that becomes your hope, thankfulness is a natural response. **So give thanks today not because of your circumstances, but because you have a God who loves you and gives you hope for better days ahead!**

## ***Prayer Challenge***

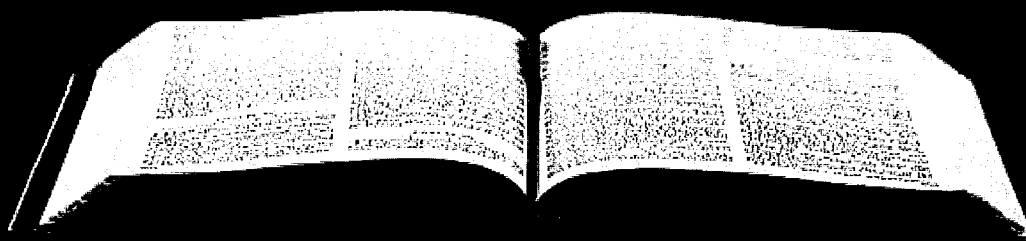
Ask God to give you encouragement and hope on days when it's hard to be thankful.

## ***Questions for thought***

As you pause to give thanks today, where are you struggling and waiting for God to come through?

How does the hope of a better day ahead make you feel?

# John 20:19-31



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ASCENDING  
 BRETHREN  
 CLOTHS  
 DISCIPLE  
 FATHER  
 GLAD  
 JESUS  
 PEACE  
 PETER  
 RECEIVE  
 SCRIPTURE  
 SIMON  
 STONE  
 TOMB  
 WEeping

# Spring Word Search

BLOSSOM

BLOOM

FLOWERS

RAIN

SHOWERS

EASTER

SPRING BREAK

GRASS

HATCH

BIRDS

SUNSHINE

SEASON

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

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