*Mountain Spirit Metropolitan Community Church*

*A spiritual community born out of LGBTQIA+ Appalachia*

*QUEERFULLY and WONDERFULLY MADE!*

*“I praise you for I am fearsomely and wonderfully made.”*

*Psalm 139:14*

**Lent 5**

**April 6th, 2025**

**Prelude:** Paul W., musician

**Welcome and Protocol Honoring Home** Rev. Pressley S., pastor

**All: We bless these mountains in which we gather, and all the animals, plants and elements for whom this is home;**

**We bless all who have walked this land and called this place home long before us;**

**We bless and honor Congregation Beth Israel for sharing their home with us;**

**And we pray that we will be a blessing in this place.**

**May peace be among us. Amen.**

**Invocation from a prayer by Thomas Merton** Rev. Pressley S., liturgist

One: My God, I have no idea where I am going.

**Many: I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will**

**end.**

One: Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

**Many: But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.**

One: And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do

anything apart from that desire.

**Many: And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may**

**know nothing about it.**

One: Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow

of death.

**Many: I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face**

**my perils alone.**

One: Siblings and friends, let us together invoke the presence of the Holy One among

us.

**All: Come Holy Spirit. Come any way you want. Just come. Amen/Amèn**

**Gathering Song This is My Creator’s World** Paul W., musician

This is my Creator's world,

And to my listening ears

All nature sings, and round me rings

The music of the spheres.

This is my Creator's world:

I rest me in the thought

Of rocks and trees, of skies and seas--

His hand the wonders wrought.

This is my Creator's world:

The birds their carols raise,

The morning light, the lily bright,

Declare their Maker's praise.

This is my Creator's world:

She shines in all that's fair;

In the rustling grass I hear Her pass,

She speaks to me everywhere.

This is my Creator's world:

O let me ne'er forget

That though the wrong seems oft so strong,

God is the Ruler yet.

This is my Creator’s world:

Why should my heart be sad?

With praises sing: let the heavens ring!

God reigns; let earth be glad!

**Reading Daniel 6:4-24 (The Message)** Rev. Dr. Joan S., lector

The vice-regents and governors got together to find some old scandal or skeleton in Daniel’s life that they could use against him, but they couldn’t dig up anything. He was totally exemplary and trustworthy. They could find no evidence of negligence or misconduct. So they finally gave up and said, “We’re never going to find anything against this Daniel unless we can scheme up something religious.”

The vice-regents and governors conspired together and then went to the king and said, “King Darius, live forever! We’ve convened your vice-regents, governors, and all your leading officials, and have agreed that the king should issue the following decree:

For the next thirty days no one is to pray to any god or mortal except you, O king. Anyone who disobeys will be thrown into the lions’ den.

“Issue this decree, O king, and make it unconditional, as if written in stone like all the laws of the Medes and the Persians.” King Darius signed the decree.

When Daniel learned that the decree had been signed and posted, he continued to pray just as he had always done. His house had windows in the upstairs that opened toward Jerusalem. Three times a day he knelt there in prayer, thanking and praising his God.

The conspirators came and found him praying, asking God for help. They went straight to the king and reminded him of the royal decree that he had signed. “Did you not,” they said, “sign a decree forbidding anyone to pray to any god or man except you for the next thirty days? And anyone caught doing it would be thrown into the lions’ den?” “Absolutely,” said the king. “Written in stone, like all the laws of the Medes and Persians.” Then they said, “Daniel, one of the Jewish exiles, ignores you, O king, and defies your decree. Three times a day he prays.”

At this, the king was very upset and tried his best to get Daniel out of the fix he’d put him in. He worked at it the whole day long. But then the conspirators were back: “Remember, O king, it’s the law of the Medes and Persians that the king’s decree can never be changed.” The king caved in and ordered Daniel brought and thrown into the lions’ den. But he said to Daniel, “Your God, to whom you are so loyal, is going to get you out of this.”

A stone slab was placed over the opening of the den. The king sealed the cover with his signet ring and the signet rings of all his nobles, fixing Daniel’s fate. The king then went back to his palace. He refused supper. He couldn’t sleep. He spent the night fasting.

At daybreak the king got up and hurried to the lions’ den. As he approached the den, he called out anxiously, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve so loyally, saved you from the lions?” “O king, live forever!” said Daniel. “My God sent his angel, who closed the mouths of the lions so that they would not hurt me. I’ve been found innocent before God and also before you, O king. I’ve done nothing to harm you.”

When the king heard these words, he was happy. He ordered Daniel taken up out of the den. When he was hauled up, there wasn’t a scratch on him. He had trusted his God. Then the king commanded that the conspirators who had informed on Daniel be thrown into the lions’ den, along with their wives and children. Before they hit the floor, the lions had them in their jaws, tearing them to pieces.

Let us hear Living Words. **Thanks be to God.**

**Response Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel Rev. Pressley S., musician**

(Chorus)

Didn’t my God deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel, deliver Daniel

Didn’t my God deliver Daniel, then why not a everyone?

V1. God delivered Daniel from the lion’s Den,

 Jonah from the belly of the whale

And the Hebrew children from the fiery furnace

And why not everyone? (To chorus)

V2. The moon run down in a purple stream

The sun forbear to shine

And every star disappear

Yes, Jesus shall be mine. (To chorus)

V3. I set my foot on the gospel ship

It began to sail

It landed me over on Canaan’s shore

And I’ll never come back anymore. (To chorus)

**Daniel 6:4-24 (Reina Valera Contemporánea)**

Por eso los gobernadores y los sátrapas buscaban la ocasión de acusar a Daniel en lo que tuviera relación con el reino, pero no podían hallarla, ni tampoco acusarlo de ninguna falta, porque él era confiable y no tenía ningún vicio ni cometía ninguna falta. Finalmente, dijeron: «Nunca vamos a hallar la ocasión de acusar a este Daniel, a menos que la busquemos en algo que tenga que ver con la ley de su Dios.»

Dicho esto, los gobernadores y los sátrapas se presentaron juntos ante el rey, y le dijeron: «¡Que viva para siempre Su Majestad, el rey Darío! Todos los gobernadores, magistrados, sátrapas, príncipes y capitanes del reino han acordado por unanimidad pedir a Su Majestad que promulgue un edicto real, y que lo confirme, ordenando que cualquiera que en los treinta días siguientes demande el favor de cualquier dios o persona que no sea Su Majestad, sea arrojado al foso de los leones. Tenga a bien Su Majestad confirmar este edicto, y firmarlo, para que conforme a la ley de Media y de Persia, no pueda ser revocado.»

El rey firmó el edicto y la prohibición. Y cuando Daniel supo que el edicto había sido firmado, entró en su casa, abrió las ventanas de su alcoba que daban hacia Jerusalén, y tres veces al día se arrodillaba y oraba a su Dios, dándole gracias como acostumbraba hacerlo. Pero aquellos hombres se juntaron y hallaron a Daniel orando y rogando en presencia de su Dios, así que fueron ante el rey y, haciendo referencia al edicto real, dijeron: «¿No es verdad que Su Majestad ha confirmado un edicto, el cual ordena que cualquiera que en los treinta días siguientes pida el favor de cualquier dios o persona sea echado en el foso de los leones? ¡A menos, claro, que pida el favor de Su Majestad!»

El rey respondió: «En efecto. Y conforme a la ley de Media y de Persia, ese edicto no puede ser revocado.» Al instante, ellos respondieron al rey: «¡Pues Daniel, que es uno de los cautivos de Judá, no respeta a Su Majestad ni acata el edicto que Su Majestad ha confirmado! ¡Al contrario, tres veces al día pide el favor de su Dios!»

Cuando el rey oyó esto, se puso muy apesadumbrado y resolvió librar a Daniel. Hasta la puesta del sol hizo todo lo posible por ponerlo a salvo, pero aquellos hombres lo rodearon y le dijeron: «Su Majestad seguramente sabe que, según la ley de Media y de Persia, ningún edicto o decreto confirmado por el rey puede ser abrogado.» El rey dio entonces la orden de que llevaran a Daniel al foso de los leones, y lo arrojaran allí. Sin embargo, le dijo a Daniel: «El Dios a quien tú sirves sin cesar habrá de librarte.»

Enseguida trajeron una piedra y la pusieron sobre la entrada del foso, y el rey la selló con su anillo y con el anillo de sus príncipes, para que la orden acerca de Daniel no fuera alterada. Después de eso, el rey se fue a su palacio y se acostó sin comer nada. Tampoco permitió que tocaran para él instrumentos de música, y hasta el sueño se le fue.

Muy de mañana, el rey se levantó y lo primero que hizo fue dirigirse al foso de los leones. Cuando estuvo cerca del foso, con voz triste pero fuerte llamó a Daniel y le dijo: «Daniel, siervo del Dios viviente, a quien tú sirves sin cesar, dime: ¿pudo tu Dios librarte de los leones?»

Daniel le respondió: «¡Que viva Su Majestad para siempre! Mi Dios envió a su ángel para que cerrara las fauces de los leones y no me hicieran daño. Y es que delante de Dios soy inocente, y aun delante de Su Majestad, pues no he cometido ningún mal.»

Al escucharlo, el rey se alegró mucho, y mandó que sacaran del foso a Daniel. Y cuando lo sacaron, salió ileso porque había confiado en su Dios. Entonces el rey mandó traer a los que habían acusado a Daniel, y que los arrojaran al foso de los leones junto con sus hijos y sus mujeres. Y aún no habían llegado al fondo del foso cuando los leones ya se habían lanzado sobre ellos y les habían despedazado todos los huesos.

La palabra de Dios. **Te alabamos Dios.**

**Response In the Midst of New Dimensions** Paul W., musician

In the mist of new dimensions,

In the face of changing ways,

Who will lead the pilgrim peoples

wandering in their separate ways?

*(Chorus)*

*God of rainbow, fiery pillar,*

*Leading where the eagles soar,*

*We your people, ours the journey*

*Now and ever, now and ever*

*Now and ever more*

Through the flood of starving people,

Warring factions and despair,

Who will lift the olive branches?

Who will light the flame of care?

(To chorus)

As we stand a world divided

By our own self seeking schemes,

Grant that we, your global village,

Might envision wider dreams.

(To chorus)

We are people of all genders,

All persuasions, old and young,

Each a gift in your creation,

Each a love song to be sung.

(To chorus)

Should the threats of dire predictions

Cause us to withdraw in pain,

May your blazing phoenix spirit

Resurrect the church again

(To chorus)

**Reflection Rewilding Our Spirits: Lions & Tigers & Bears, Oh My!**

Sharilyn Steketee, M.Div, preacher

**Offertory Be Not Afraid**  Cari M., exhorter Rev. Pressley S., musician

V1. You shall cross the barren desert,

But you shall not die of thirst

You shall wander far in safety,

Though you do not know the way,

You shall speak your words in foreign lands

And all will understand.

You shall see the face of God and live.

(chorus)

Be not afraid

I go before you all ways

Come follow me

And I will give you rest

V2. If you pass through raging waters

In the sea you shall not drown.

If you walk among the burning flames,

You shall not be harmed.

If you stand before the power of hell

And death is at your side,

Know that I am with you through it all.

*(to chorus)*

V.3 Blessed are your poor,

For the Kingdom shall be theirs,

Blest are you that weep and morn

For one day you shall laugh,

And if wicked ones insult and hate you

All because of Me,

Blessed, - blessed - are you

**Community Prayers** Rev. Dr. Lea Brown, liturgist

**Our Mother Prayer**

**Our Mother who lives within us, we celebrate your many names.**

 **Your wisdom come, your will be done, unfolding from the depths within us.**

 **Each day you give us all that we need.**

 **You remind us of our strengths, and we embrace them.**

 **You support us in our power, and we act with courage.**

 **For you are the dwelling place within us,**

 **the empowerment around us,**

 **and the celebration among us, now and forevermore. Amen**

**Welcoming Open Table Communion** Rev. Pressley S., celebrant Kris W., acolyte

C: God is with you. **All: And also with you**

C: Let us open our hearts. **All: We open them to God**

C: Let us give God thanks and praise **All: It is a good and joyful thing to do**

**Santo, santo, santo**

**Mi corazón te adora**

**Mi corazón sabe decir**

**Santo eres tú**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**My heart, my heart adores you**

**My heart knows how to say to you**

**You are holy, God**

(Distribution)

**Announcements:**

* **Book Group, Tuesday 7:30pm,** Living Buddha, Living Christ by Thich Nhat Hanh, through Ch. 9, Zoom
* **Founding Committee, Wednesday, 7pm**, Zoom. All are welcome to attend.

**Benediction** Rev. Pressley, liturgist

All will be well, and all will be well

And all manner of thing will be well

All will be well. Be well.

**All:** **Go out with peace. Go out with kindness. Go out with Love,**

One: In the name of the Creator, Christ, Comforter, and All that are Wise and Good.

**All: Amén/Amen**