*Mountain Spirit Metropolitan Community Church*

*A spiritual community born out of LGBTQIA+ Appalachia*

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

*Ps. 139.14*

**Easter Sunday 3**

May 4, 2025

**Prelude**

**Welcome and Protocol Honoring Home** Rev. Pressley Sutherland, Liturgist

**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.**

**Gathering Song Leaning on the Everlasting Arms** Rev. Pressley and Christine W

What a fellowship, what a joy divine

Leaning on the everlasting arms

What a blessedness, what a peace is mine

Leaning on the everlasting arms

Leaning, leaning

Safe and secure from all alarms

Leaning, leaning

Leaning on the everlasting arms

What have I to dread, what have I to fear

Leaning on the everlasting arms?

I have blessed peace with my Lord so near

Leaning on the everlasting arms

Leaning, leaning

Safe and secure from all alarms

Leaning, leaning

Leaning on the everlasting arms

**Invocation**  Christine W., liturgist

One: O Mystery, how can that which is dead be alive? How can pain and suffering become hope and joy again?

**All: As long as we embody the Christ of justice, love, and healing, there will be resurrection!**

One: O Mystery, how can the one who was known so well, so personally, suddenly begin appearing in many forms and ways?

**All: As long as we embody the Christ of justice, love, and healing, there will be resurrection!**

One: O Mystery, how can a story of injustice and violence, so long ago and far away, be happening again and again? Is there no hope, no better future for humanity?

**All: As long as we embody the Christ of justice, love, and healing, there will be resurrection!**

One: Then, let it begin with us! Let Spirit breathe new life into the places of desolation - in us, through us, and for all the world. Let the Way of Christ, the Way of Love, not empire, be our path and practice.

**All: Our joy in liberating, compassionate Love will be our solace and resistance. The Ways of Death will not hold us in the ground.**

One: Come, rising Christ, come any way you want. Just come!

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

**Worship Songs Rev. Pressley S**, musician

**1. You have my heart and I am Yours forever**

You are my strength, God of grace and power

And everything, you hold in your hand

Still you make time for me, I can’t understand

(Chorus) So I’ll praise you God of earth and sky

How beautiful is your unfailing love, unfailing love

And you never change, God, you remain the Holy One

And my unfailing love, unfailing love

You are my rock, the one I hold on to

You are my song, and I’ll sing for You

And everything, you hold in your hand

Still you make time for me, I can’t understand (chorus)

**2. When the darkness fills my senses,**

When my sadness keeps me from Your touch,

Jesus come.

When my burden keeps me doubting,

When my memories take the place of You,

Jesus come.

And I'll follow You there

To the place where we meet,

And I'll lay down my pride

As You search me again.

Your unfailing love,

Your unfailing love,

Your unfailing love over me again.

3. **You call me out upon the waters, the great unknown, where feet may fail**

And there I find you in the mystery, in oceans deep, my faith will stand

And I will call upon your name, and keep my eyes above the waves

My soul will rest in your embrace, for I am yours, and you are mine.

Your grace abounds in deepest waters, your sovereign hand will be my guide

Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me, you’ve never failed and you won’t start now

And I will call upon your name, and keep my

eyes above the waves

My soul will rest in your embrace, for I am yours, and you are mine.

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders

Let me walk upon the waters, wherever you would call me,

Take me deeper than my feet could ever wander

And my faith will be made stronger in the presence of my Saviour.

**Welcoming Communion** Rev. Pressley S, celebrant, Angel P., 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**

**Reading Hechos/Acts 9:1-19** Angel P. and Cari M., lectors

*(Espanol/Spanish)*

Mientras tanto, Saulo, respirando aún amenazas de muerte contra los discípulos del Señor, se presentó al sumo sacerdote **2**y le pidió cartas de extradición para las sinagogas de Damasco. Tenía la intención de encontrar y llevarse presos a Jerusalén a todos los que pertenecieran al Camino, fueran hombres o mujeres. **3**En el viaje sucedió que, al acercarse a Damasco, una luz del cielo relampagueó de repente a su alrededor. **4**Él cayó al suelo y oyó una voz que le decía:

—Saulo, Saulo, ¿por qué me persigues?

**5**—¿Quién eres, Señor? —preguntó.

—Yo soy Jesús, a quien tú persigues —contestó la voz—. **6**Levántate y entra en la ciudad, que allí se te dirá lo que tienes que hacer.

**7**Los hombres que viajaban con Saulo se detuvieron atónitos porque oían la voz, pero no veían a nadie. **8**Saulo se levantó del suelo, pero cuando abrió los ojos no podía ver, así que lo tomaron de la mano y lo llevaron a Damasco. **9**Estuvo ciego tres días, sin comer ni beber nada.

**10**Había en Damasco un discípulo llamado Ananías, a quien el Señor llamó en una visión:

—¡Ananías!

—Aquí estoy, Señor.

**11**—Anda —le dijo el Señor—, ve a la casa de Judas, en la calle llamada Derecha, y pregunta por un tal Saulo de Tarso. Está orando **12**y ha visto en una visión a un hombre llamado Ananías que entra y pone las manos sobre él para que recobre la vista.

**13**Entonces Ananías respondió:

—Señor, he oído hablar mucho de ese hombre y de todo el mal que ha causado a los que creen en ti en Jerusalén. **14**Y ahora lo tenemos aquí, autorizado por los jefes de los sacerdotes, para llevarse presos a todos los que invocan tu nombre.

**15**—¡Ve! —insistió el Señor—, porque ese hombre es mi instrumento escogido para dar a conocer mi nombre tanto a las naciones y a sus reyes como al pueblo de Israel. **16**Yo le mostraré cuánto tendrá que padecer por mi nombre.

**17**Ananías se fue y cuando llegó a la casa, le impuso las manos a Saulo y dijo: «Hermano Saulo, el Señor Jesús, que se te apareció en el camino, me ha enviado para que recobres la vista y seas lleno del Espíritu Santo». **18**Al instante cayó de los ojos de Saulo algo como escamas y recobró la vista. Se levantó y fue bautizado. **19**Luego comió y recobró las fuerzas.

 +++++ Palabra de Dios **Te alabamos Dios**

*(English)* Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2**and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” He asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The reply came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.” The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing;[a] so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, “Ananias.” He answered, “Here I am, Lord.” The Lord said to him, “Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision[b] a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.” But Ananias answered, “Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.” But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; **16**I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

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

**Response Precious Lord, Take My Hand** Paul W. and Christine W., musicians

Precious Lord, take my hand

Lead me on, let me stand

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;

Through the storm, through the night

Lead me on to the light:

Take my hand, precious Lord,

Lead me home

When my way grows drear,

Precious Lord, linger near,

When my life is almost gone,

Hear my cry, hear my call,

Hold my hand lest I fall:

Take my hand, precious Lord,

Lead me home

When the darkness appears

And the night draws near,

And the day is past and gone,

At the river I stand,

Guide my feet, hold my hand:

Take my hand, precious Lord,

Lead me home.

**Sermon Grace and Mercy** Rev. Pressley S., preacher

**Community Prayers**  Christine W., liturgist

**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**

**Offertory Amazing Grace** Christine W., liturgistRev. Pressley, musician

Amazing Grace! (how sweet the sound)

That saved a soul like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was bound, but now I’m free.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

And grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear,

The hour I first believed.

When we've been there ten thousand years,

Bright shining as the sun,

We've no less days to sing God's praise

Than when we first begun.

Amazing Grace! (how sweet the sound)

That saved a soul like me!

I once was lost, but now am found,

Was bound, but now I’m free.

**Announcements** Rev. Pressley S, liturgist

* **New Book Group: The Gospels They Didn’t Want You to See! - Exploring Ancient Extra-canonical Gospels and Writings. The Secret Gospel of Thomas**, Tuesday, May 6, 7:30pm on Zoom.
* **Hendersonville Pride is coming up!** Please see Christine to begin organizing our booth and presence.
* **Prayers for our denomination as our Governing Board has decided go ahead with our in-person General Conference and it will be online as well**.
* **Next week, Rev. Dr. Lea Brown will begin a monthly summer sermon series called, “The Bible for Red State Revival!”** Featuring essential and sometimes shocking! Details never taught in Sunday School. Part 1 will be on “The Ten Commandments.”

**Benediction** Rev. Dr. Lea B., liturgist

**All will be well; and all will be well; and all manner of thing will be well;**

**All will be well, be well.**

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

 **In the name of the Creator, Christ, Comforter, and All that are Wise and Good. Amén/Amen**