*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 4**

May 11, 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 We Are the Church Alive** Paul W. and Christine W

We are the Church Alive,

Christ's presence on this earth

We give God's Spirit body in

The act of our new birth.

As yielded open channels

For God's descending dove,

We shout and sing, With joy we bring

God's all-inclusive love.

We are the Church Alive,

Our faith has set us free;

No more enslaved by guilt and shame,

We live our liberty!

We follow Christ's example

And freedom now proclaim,

Destroying myths of doubt and fear

In Jesus' mighty name.

We are the Church Alive,

The body must be healed;

Where strife has bruised and battered us,

God's wholeness is revealed.

Our mission is an urgent one;

In strength and health let's stand,

So that our witness to God's light

Will shine through every land.

We are the Church Alive,

All praise to God on high!

Creator, Savior, Comforter!

We laud and magnify

Your name, almighty God of love;

Pray give us life, that we

May be your church, the Church Alive,

For all eternity.

**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. There's nothing worth more,** that will ever come close

No thing can compare, You're our living hope

Your Presence God

I've tasted and seen, of the sweetest of loves

Where my heart becomes free, and my shame is undone

In Your Presence God

(Chorus)

Holy Spirit You are welcome here

Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere

Your Glory God is what our hearts long for

To be overcome by Your Presence God

(Bridge)

Let us be come more aware of Your Presence

Let us experience the Glory of Your Goodness (3x)

God

**3. This is how I fight my battles**

**(repeat several times)**

It may look like I’m surrounded,

But I’m surrounded by You

(repeat several times)

**Reading excerpts from Exodus 20**  Joey D., lector

And God spoke all these words: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.  You shall have no other gods before me.  You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below…You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses this name…Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy…Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you...

You shall not murder…You shall not commit adultery…You shall not steal…You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor…You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

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

**Reading Mark 12:28-34** Susan P., lector

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other.  To love God with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, “You are not far from the dominion of God.” And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

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

**Response Our God is Like An Eagle** Paul W. and Christine W., musicians

When Israel camped in Sinai, then Moses heard from God:

“This message tell my people, and give them this, my word:

From Egypt I was with you, and carried on my wing,

The whole of your great nation from slavery I did bring.

Just like a mother eagle, who helps her young to fly,

I am a mother to you, your needs will I supply;

And you are a as my children, the ones who hear my voice,

I am a mother to you, the people of my choice.”

If God is like an eagle who helps her young to fly,

And God is also Father, what then of you and I?

We have no fear of labels, we have no fear of roles—

If God’s own being blends them, we seek the selfsame goals.

Our God is not a woman, our God is not a man,

Our God is both and neither, our God is I WhoAm.

From all the roles that bind us, our God has set us free.

What freedom does God give us? The freedom just to be.

**Sermon The Bible for Red State Revival! : The 10(?) Commandments(?)**

Rev. Dr. Lea B., preacher

**Community Prayers**  Rev. Dr. Joan S., 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 Be Not Afraid** Christine W., liturgistRev. Pressley, musician

1. 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 always.

Come follow me, and I will give you rest.

2. 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 pow'r of hell, and death is at your side,

Know that I am with you through it all. (Chorus)

3. Blessed are your poor, for the Kin\_dom will be theirs,

Blest are you who weep and mourn, for one day you shall laugh,

And if wicked ones insult and hate you, all because of me,

Blessed-blessed, are you (Chorus)

**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**

**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 Gospel of Mary Magdalene**, Tuesday, May 13, 7:30pm on Zoom.
* **Hendersonville Pride is coming up!** Please see Christine to begin organizing our booth and presence.

**Benediction** Rev. Pressley S., 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**