

Woodbury United Methodist Church

May 17, 2020
6th Sunday of Easter

PRELUDE *It Is Well with My Soul* Philip Bliss
Jeff and Barb Hunt, handbells

GREETING Rev. John Thomason

OPENING HYMN *Easter People, Raise Your Voices* James/Smart
led by Venetia and Morgan Phillippe

**Easter people, raise your voices, sounds of heaven in earth should ring.
Christ has brought us heaven's choices; heavenly music, let it ring.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Easter people, let us sing.**

**Fear of death can no more stop us from our pressing here below.
For our Lord empowered us to triumph over every foe.
Alleluia! Alleluia! On to victory now we go.**

**Every day to us is Easter, with its resurrection song.
When in trouble move the faster to our God who rights the wrong.
Alleluia! Alleluia! See the power of heavenly throngs.**

OPENING PRAYER David Karraker, Liturgist
from *The Abingdon Worship Annual 2020*
based on Acts 17, Psalm 66, John 14

Hear our prayers, O God, as we come to sing your praises. Bless us with your steadfast love, in times of peace and in times of trial. Make your presence known to us this day, for we seek to know you better. Enliven us with your Spirit of truth, and increase our faith, even as we place our hope and trust in you. **Amen.**

CHILDREN'S TIME led by Tacy Nettleton

THE LORD'S PRAYER (unison)

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS Rev. Thomason

THE CHURCH AT PRAYER David Karraker

SCRIPTURE READINGS read by: David Karraker
Lessons for the 6th Sunday of Easter
from *The Revised Common Lectionary*

Acts 17:22-31 (NRSV)

Paul in Athens

Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we too are his offspring."

Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead."

I Peter 3:13-22

Suffering for Doing Right

Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil.

For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit, in which also he went and made a proclamation to the spirits in prison, who in former times did not obey, when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, during the building of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were saved through water. And baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers made subject to him.

John 14:15-21 (NRSV)

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

HYMN OF PREPARATION

Hymn of Promise

Sleeth

**In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

**There's a song in every silence, seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness, bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future; what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

**In our end is our beginning, in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing; in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection; at the last, a victory.
unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.**

SERMON

An Accounting of Our Hope

Rev. Thomason

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

THE OFFERING OF OUR GIFTS

SPECIAL MUSIC

Via Dolorosa
Venetia Philippe, soloist

Billy Sprague

BENEDICTION

Rev. Thomason

POSTLUDE

Sonata in F
Christopher Shay, keyboard

Mozart