



FIFTH AVENUE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
323 South 5th Avenue, West Bend WI 53095

Sixth Sunday of Easter ~ May 5, 2024

Sandy Blumenberg, Liturgist
Dave Bertelsen, Congregational Song Leader
Deanna Gibeau, Accompanist
Rev. Clarissa Martinelli, Senior Pastor

JOIN US IN PERSON OR ONLINE ~
Sundays, 9:30 A.M.

WELCOME TO FIFTH AVENUE UMC

We Are Glad You Are Here! We are so thankful that you have joined us today for Worship. We would love to get to know you and help you get to know us. Join us following worship for Fellowship Hour. There will be yummy refreshments and coffee and lots of *friendly faces*.

***Note: L - denotes worship "Leader";
P - denotes "People"**



~GATHERING GOD'S PEOPLE~

PRELUDE: "Benedictus" Sigfrid Karl-Elert

GREETING:

Pastor: We welcome you to this time of worship in the name of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, who draws us, through His Body, the Church, into friendship with God and with one another. In this time of worship, let us still our minds and claim the divine promise: "Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations; I am exalted in the earth" (Psalm 46:10). Come beloved brothers and sisters as we praise and worship God together.

~MEDITATION FOR GATHERING~

CENTERING MUSIC: "Let Us Offer To The Father" Parker and Martinez

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Who is wise and understanding among us?

Those who seek wisdom and understanding each and every day. Those who delight in God and meditate on God's law.

Come, learn more about the wisdom from above, a wisdom that yields a harvest of righteousness.

O God, your wisdom is more precious than jewels! We draw near to you.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

All: O God, we want to have our cake and eat it, too: we want to be a friend of the world and still be your friend. Yet, Jesus taught us: "No one can serve two masters." Give us strength and courage to get our priorities straight: help us to seek your Kingdom first. Help us to live faithfully and joyfully in the world, and

to be friends with the people you call us to serve. Help us also to remember that our best relationship is the one we have with you. We draw near to you, O God, source of all understanding, and ask you to draw near to us. Teach us your wisdom from above, that we may bear good fruit in our lives. Root us beside the streams of your wisdom, that the green leaves of our goodness, fed by your insight, may not wither. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS:

L: “The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy” (James 3:17). In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, and we are given a new way to live. Let us accept God’s grace, and live new lives of faith, obedience, and joy.

P: Alleluia! Amen.

SHARING THE PEACE:

Pastor: “A harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.” (James 3:18) Let us make peace, by sharing the peace of Christ with one another.
The peace of Christ be with you.

All: And also, with you.

***OPENING HYMN:** “Make Me a Channel of Your Peace” TFWs 2171

~WE PROCLAIM~

***PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION – James 3:13-18**

L: Loving God, you teach us that if we are lacking in wisdom, we should turn to you and ask for what we need, because you give to all generously and ungrudgingly. We know that we have so much to learn about your way; open wide your word to us and give us wisdom to understand the things you want to teach us. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen. **Amen.**

All: Who is wise and knowledgeable among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom. But if you have bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not be arrogant and lie about the truth. This is not wisdom that comes down from above but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where there is envy and selfish ambition, there will also be disorder and wickedness of every kind. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

L: The Word of God for the People of God.

P: Thanks be to God.

CHANCEL CHOIR: “Firm Foundation” Dave Bertelsen, Director

SERMON: “WHO IS WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOU?” Pastor Clarissa

~GOD’S RELENTLESS INVITATION~

L: The Holy One be with you.

P: And also, with you

L: Open your hearts to the One who is Love

P: We open our hearts to you, O God

L: Let us give thanks to God, our life-breath

P: To the One who sustains us, we rejoice in your presence!

L: With gratitude, O God, we remember that it is through you we are made truly alive. Every creature and creation – the tiny ones, the scaly ones, the human ones, the leafy ones – all that is has been shaped by you. There is nothing on this earth that has not been touched by your Sacred hand. In your love for us, you claim us – individually and as a whole – as your beloveds. You will for us life abundant and you invite us into co-working with you towards a world where harmony among all life is restored.

And yet, daily, we turn away from you and one another. Destructive and divisive powers lure us away from connection and relationship. We forget that we need each other. We pretend that our lives are not deeply entangled. When injustice threatens our neighbors, we too easily cower or hide. Like those who turned on Jesus when things became too difficult, we too are tempted to desert those most vulnerable.

Pastor: But you do not abandon us to our fear or sin gracious God. In the life of Jesus, Love enfleshed, we are shown that the invitation to join in your work of transforming and healing and restoring is always open. No matter our past. No matter our regrets. No matter the wrong done to us or the wrong we have done to others, you keep calling us back to you.

This relentless invitation of yours that entices with freedom and joy and forgiveness is such a threat to the secular life that it still attempts to crucify every incarnation of your love today. And so, we are reminded of the example given to us in the person of Jesus.

On the night of his arrest, he gathered around table with his companions. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to his disciples and said, “This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

He did the same with the cup after the supper, saying, “This cup that is poured out is the new covenant.”

And so, in remembrance of the One who never gave up on love, we pray that the Spirit would make us one in our commitment to the liberation of all your creatures and creations. Pour out your Spirit on this bread and this cup, that through these ordinary gifts, we might taste a glimpse of your Kingdom. May they be for us a reminder of what we are capable of becoming and what we are capable of accomplishing together. **Amen.**

[Invitation to the table]

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: (Unison)

All: Forgiving God, I pray that this Holy Communion may not be for my judgment and condemnation, but for my pardon and salvation. Let this Holy Communion be to me an armor of faith and a shield of good will, a cleansing of all vices, and a rooting out of all evil desires. May it increase in me, love, patience, humility and obedience, and all divine virtues. May it be a firm defense against the evil designs of all my visible and invisible enemies; a perfect quieting of all the desires of soul and body. May this Holy Communion bring about a perfect union with You merciful God as you send me out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

~PRAYERS, JOYS & CONCERNS~

Pastor: Lord in your mercy:

People: hear our prayer.

~PASTORAL PRAYER~

Pastor: O God, we live our lives as best we can—dealing with difficult relationships and situations, putting failures and disappointments behind us, and moving into each new day with as much energy, goodwill, and optimism as we can muster. But here, right now, we seldom have the right answers, we seldom seek your higher wisdom in our lives, we just move ahead.

Forgive us for not asking for your insight. Fill us with your wisdom, that we may live lives of goodness and peace. As your broken people we come before you O' God in humility and honesty; draws near to us with forgiveness and renewed blessing.

And now with the confidence of beloved and forgiven children of God, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

All: Our Father who art in heaven hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

~INVITATION TO SHARING OUR GIFTS, TITHES, & OFFERINGS~

***DOXOLOGY: "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" UMH 94**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia! Praise God, the source of all our gifts! Praise Jesus Christ, whose power uplifts! Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

OFFERTORY PRAYER:

All: God of joy, we offer our gifts this day, as we reflect on the wisdom of your Word. Jesus urges us to hold onto Him, to stay connected to His example, presence, and the fulfillment He brings. He reveals that our joy finds completeness when it is woven into His divine joy. Help us abide in Him through love, obeying His commandment to love one another. In acts of service, healing, and selfless generosity, may our joy be sustained, a shared and everlasting gift from the source of all joy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. (John 15:9-17)

***CLOSING HYMN: "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" UMH 400**

~SENDING FORTH/BENEDICTION~

L: Beloved, may God bless you with the strength to love one another as God loves each and every one of you, that you may find the complete, total, and everlasting joy that comes when we abide together with God who is Love. Amen.

Pastor: Are you longing for more wisdom in your life? Do you face conflicts that need answers, tough situations that require special insight? Do you need more peace in your life? Do you long to bear good fruit in your life? Draw near to God, the giver of wisdom, and God will draw near to you. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

***POSTLUDE: "The Risen Christ" Jane Carter**

Please join us for Fellowship Hour in the Lounge