



Oaklette United Methodist Church

"God's Body in this Community"

"Oaklette United Methodist Church through worship, education, and outreach, seeks to make the gospel of Jesus Christ real, as we minister to all people."

April 6, 2025

Fifth Sunday of Lent



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SHARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

BREAKTHROUGH PRAYER

Loving, sustaining God, like the mighty oak, may our branches at Oaklette church embrace those around us in this community. Use us as an instrument to welcome and shelter your people. Deepen our roots so that our branches are strong. Let the Holy Spirit flow like a river through our church, so that we may do your will. In Jesus' holy name. Amen.

OPENING SCRIPTURE:

Isaiah 50:4-9a

My Sovereign GOD gave me a skilled tongue, to know how to speak timely words to the weary. Morning by morning, [GOD] rouses me, rousing my ear to give heed like disciples. My Sovereign GOD opened my ears, and I did not disobey, I did not run away. I offered my back to the floggers, and my cheeks to those who tore out my hair. I did not hide my face from insult and spittle. But my Sovereign GOD will help me – therefore I feel no disgrace; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know I shall not be shamed. My Vindicator is at hand – who dares contend with me? Let us stand up together! Who would be my opponent? Let them approach me! Lo, my Sovereign GOD will help me – who can get a verdict against me?

PRELUDE

"Were You There"

DANA MOODY

MESSAGE FOR GROWING CHRISTIANS

CALL TO WORSHIP: (responsively)

The one who parted the waters to save Israel will set our feet on dry land.

We will walk forward in faith.

The one who restored the fortunes of Zion will fill our mouths with laughter.

We will dream of life renewed.

The one who raised Jesus from the dead will do a new thing in our lives.

We will rest in the peace of Christ.

Come, let us worship the God of our salvation.

OPENING PRAYER

Lead us, Lord, into the mystery of your presence. As we gather in this time of worship, free us from the fears that bind us, that our hearts may be filled with joy and our tongues may sing your praises. Teach us the glory of knowing your son, and help us know the joy that comes from loving freely. Guide us in your ways and renew our hope, that we may perceive signs of your Spirit springing forth from your abundant love. With joy-filled trust, we pray. Amen.

Beu, B.J.; Scifres, Mary. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2019: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (pp. 75-6). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

HYMN

“Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above”

#126

1. Sing praise to God who reigns above, the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love, the God of our salvation.
With healing balm my soul is filled and every faithless murmur stilled:
to God all praise and glory.
2. The Lord is never far away, but through all grief distressing,
an ever present help and stay, our peace and joy and blessing.
As with a mother’s tender hand, God gently leads the chosen band;
to God all praise and glory.
3. Thus, all my toilsome way along, I sing aloud thy praises,
that earth may hear the grateful song my voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart, both soul and body bear your part:
to God all praise and glory.
4. Let all who name Christ’s holy name give God all praise and glory,
let all who own his power proclaim aloud the wondrous story!
Cast each false idol from its throne, for Christ is Lord, and Christ alone:
to God all praise and glory.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

All: Like Judas, God of new things, we like to complain about your generous ways, rather than living in your grace. The poor are always with us, we believe, which justifies our ignoring them. In our memories, we focus on a perceived golden past, and so we ignore the new things you do in our midst. We are so enamored with our achievements that we are not willing to throw them away in order to follow Jesus. Forgive us, Restoring God, and help us to notice the kingdom springing forth in our

midst. By your grace, may our fears turn to faith, our seeds of grief produce a bumper crop of joy, and our tears turn into torrents of tenderness as we journey with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, to Jerusalem.

Silence is kept.

Making a way through all the foolishness and mistakes of our lives, God leads us into new life, where we are restored to grace, to hope, and to peace.

Do we notice what God has done for us, what God is doing in us? This is good news for everyone. Thanks be to God, we are forgiven! Amen.

Adapted from Thom Shuman, posted at <https://pilgrimwr.unitingchurch.org.au/?p=2008>.

ANTHEM

“I Will Praise You Jesus”

CHANCEL CHOIR

SCRIPTURE (responsively)

Psalms 31:9-16 [TANAKH]

Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in distress; my eyes are wasted by vexation,

My life is spent in sorrow, my years in groaning; my strength fails because of my iniquity, my limbs waste away.

Because of all my foes I am the particular butt of my neighbors, a horror to my friends; those who see me on the street avoid me.

I am put out of mind like the dead; I am like an object given up for lost.

I hear the whisperings of many, intrigue on every side, as they scheme together against me, plotting to take my life.

But I trust in You, O LORD; I say, “You are my God!”

My fate is in Your hand; save me from the hand of my enemies and pursuers.

Show favor to Your servant; as You are faithful, deliver me.

SERMON

“Really Look for Jesus”

Rev. Ned Alderman

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (responsively)

This table is open to all who have found their way here. No one will be excluded from this divine care. This table is a sanctuary for all who call upon the name of the Lord seeking safety. Come and find shelter, and a fellowship meal.

We admit that we are afraid. We are afraid of strangers; those we don’t understand; and who may see the world differently than we do. We confess that our love is not perfect yet. We find it difficult to emulate your generosity and fearless openness. We have built walls around our hearts, our lives, and we fear loss. Deepen our love. Help us follow your example as we seek to embrace the whole world and sacrifice ourselves, to give to others the abundant lives you promise. Hear our prayer as students of your gospel and followers of Christ. Amen.

All of you have received a spirit of adoption. This very Spirit of God bears witness with your spirit that you are joint heirs with Christ himself. You are now family, forgiven by the gracious love of Jesus Christ.

You too have received this spirit of adoption. The very Spirit of God also bears witness with your spirit that you are a joint heir with Christ himself. You are family too, forgiven by the gracious love of Jesus Christ.

God provides for the sojourner and the stranger.

We are to treat them, and all, with hospitality and mercy.

God empowers us to be generous with all we find in need.

We never need to turn anyone away.

This graciousness causes everyone it touches to shout for joy.

Bathed in these divine mercies we declare our praise.

We are bathed in your mercy. Your great compassion is extended to all who are in need. Your strength is given to each of us in our weakness. Your respite given to all who are weary of their emotional and physical burdens. No one is turned away from your abundance. No one is turned away empty handed, for your blessings belong to all, your fullness, pressed down and overflowing. Out of this, your abundance of blessings, we are enabled to be just as generous as you are with us. We join together with your beloved community gathered from the east and the west, the north and the south to rejoice in your goodness as one family, and with all the hosts of heaven to proclaim:

Generous, Compassionate, full of mercy is the one who created everyone. Those in heaven and all of us on earth reflect your presence. Blessed are those we touch with your love. May your salvation be experienced by all.

You are Generous, Compassionate, and merciful, and You have expressed these graces through Jesus Christ. Jesus fed the hungry.

And so shall we.

Jesus met the needs of foreigners.

And so shall we.

Jesus cared for the families of his enemies.

And so shall we.

Jesus showed compassion to sojourners and strangers.

And so shall we.

Jesus washed the feet of deniers, betrayers, and cowards.

And so shall we.

Jesus celebrated the Passover, blessing the bread, recalling your care for the needs of the oppressed, as he broke it he shared it with those present saying: “You are encouraged to eat, for this is my body, broken and given for you.”

We too remember their plight of the oppressed.

Jesus celebrated the Passover, blessing the wine he poured, recalling sin-hardened hearts, as he shared this cup with those present saying: “You are encouraged to drink, this cup is my blood, poured out in sacrifice as a testimony to the power of God’s eternal covenant, proclaiming the good news of forgiveness, not only to us but to the whole world.”

We too remember our sin hardened hearts.

We do remember how God treated us when we were sojourners and strangers. And we celebrate the Gospel of Jesus with all the world as we proclaim together:

Christ died on a cross. Christ arose from the tomb. Christ lives forever in victory over sin and death.

Sojourner, Stranger, Rejected by our world; rest upon these gifts of bread and wine, your presence makes them to be for us the body and blood of Christ, Immanuel, God with us. Sojourner, Stranger, Rejected by our world; rest upon the gift of our mercy, generosity, and grace, your presence makes them for the world your church, the sacrificed body and faithful bride of Christ, Immanuel, God with us.

Sojourner, Stranger, Rejected by our world; rest upon the United Methodist Church around the world and within our communities. Open the doors of your church to provide a sanctuary to sojourners and strangers, the unhoused and all those fleeing violence at home and abroad. Open the shared purse of your disciples to provide sustenance for those who are hungry, cold, lost and alone.

Open the hearts of your people to deepen their concerns for those struggling around them and fill them with your compassion and mercy for all.

We ask this so we might reflect the presence of Jesus in our world. We ask this so we might bear all the fruits of the Spirit, your gift to our world. We ask to be used as your voice, your hands and feet, most divine Love. We hope that our lives will forever bring to our God, love, honor, glory and praise. Amen.

Now let us pray according to the pattern given to us by Jesus:

God of the refugee, the migrant, the stranger, and every foreigner, Compassion is your Name. May your mercy be shared, your grace and your care, on earth as it is in heaven. Provide for us every day, the food and shelter we need and enough to share with others. Forgive the sins we commit against others, with the same willingness we show when we forgive every sin others have committed against us. Give us the courage not to be self-centered, but the freedom to be generous with all who are in need. For you are compassionate, merciful, and kind to all. Amen.

HYMN

“Womb of Life”

TFWS #2046

1. Womb of life, and source of being, home of every restless heart,
In your arms the worlds awakened; you have loved us from the start.
We, your children, gather ‘round you, at the table you prepare.
Sharing stories, tears, and laughter, we are nurtured by your care.
2. Word in flesh, our brother Jesus, born to bring us second birth,
You have come to stand beside us, knowing weakness, knowing earth.
Priest who shares our human struggles, Life of Life, and Death of Death,
Risen Christ, come stand among us, send the Spirit by your breath.
3. Brooding Spirit, move among us; be our partner, be our friend.
When our memory fails, remind us whose we are, what we intend.
Labor with us, aid the birthing of the new world yet to be,
Free of servant, lord, and master, free for love and unity.
4. Mother, Brother, Holy Partner; Father, Spirit, Only Son:
We would praise your name forever, One in three, and Three in one.
We would share your life, your passion, share your word of world made new,
Ever singing, ever praising, one with all, and one with you.

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

As it is written in Deuteronomy: “Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, ‘Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor....’”
Through our tithes and offerings, we can give generously and remember the poor. As we open wide our hands, we attend to Christ himself, who is present especially among

those considered the least and the lost. Let us offer to God these gifts for ministry in Christ's name.

Beu, B.J.; Scifres, Mary. The Abingdon Worship Annual 2019: Worship Planning Resources for Every Sunday of the Year (p. 72). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

OFFERING PRAYER

Abundant God: You cause water to flow in desert places. You give wine to flow at a wedding feast, and food to feed five thousand on a grassy mountainside. Your generosity astounds and humbles us. We bow before you in gratitude and awe, asking you to receive what we have brought in response. May these gifts be a pleasing and fragrant offering, for the sake of the world you came to save. We pray in your holy name. Amen.

Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1 © 2012 Westminster John Knox Press

DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

HYMN

“Stand By Me”

#512

1. When the storms of life are raging, stand by me; (stand by me)
When the storms of life are raging, stand by me. (stand by me)
When the world is tossing me, like a ship upon the sea,
Thou who rulest wind and water, stand by me. (stand by me)
2. In the midst of tribulation, stand by me, (stand by me)
In the midst of tribulation, stand by me, (stand by me)
When the host of hell assail, and my strength begins to fail,
Thou who never lost a battle, stand by me. (stand by me)
3. In the midst of faults and failures, stand by me, (stand by me)
In the midst of faults and failures, stand by me. (stand by me)
When I've done the best I can, and my friends misunderstand,
Thou who knowest all about me, stand by me. (stand by me)
4. In the midst of persecution, stand by me; (stand by me)
In the midst of persecution, stand by me. (stand by me)
When my foes in war array undertake to stop my way,
Thou who saved Paul and Silas, stand by me. (stand by me)
5. When I'm growing old and feeble, stand by me; (stand by me)
When I'm growing old and feeble, stand by me. (stand by me)
When my life becomes a burden, and I'm nearing chilly Jordan,
O thou Lily of the Valley, stand by me. (stand by me)

SENDING FORTH

We rejoice with you in being brought together to celebrate this holy mystery. You have opened our hearts and lives to your generous spirit and your compassionate heart. Now send us out to welcome the stranger, the released captives, and all those you have set free to find safety at our doors. May all find the same saving grace, we have found in the Christ who has welcomed all. Amen.

GOING FROM VILLAGE TO VILLAGE

POSTLUDE

“Lenten Supplication”

DANA MOODY

Today's service is being broadcast on Facebook Live at 11:00 am. You can access the service through the Oaklette Church Group on Facebook. You can also access the sermon through the Oaklette UMC Facebook page. If you are unable to use Facebook Live a link can be sent to you by email after the Facebook Live Worship has been recorded, but we will need your email address to do this. The Facebook Live service will also be downloaded to our website on Monday morning.

*The flowers on the altar today are presented to the glory of God by Jerome Perry
in memory of his mother, Hilda Perry.*

The Food Basket on the altar is presented to the glory of God.



PARTNERS IN MINISTRY TODAY

Members of the Church

Prayer Partner: Barbara Bennett

Lay Reader – Monica Whitehurst

Audio–Visual Operator – Rob Castellow

Facebook Live Recorder: Bright Tsevi

Greeter: Joanne Rooks

Pastor: Rev. Ned Alderman

Administrative Assistant: Eileen Ballance

Financial Secretary: Edna Bess

Coastal Virginia Dist. Superintendent: Rev. Beth Givens

Resident Bishop, Richmond Area: Bishop Sue Hauptert–Johnson