

MARCH 14, 2021  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

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**PRELUDE** — *Take Us As We Are, O God*

ENDLESS FEAST

*Take us as we are, O God, and claim us as your own.  
As once you chose to tell your love in human flesh and bone,  
so let our lives be used to make your saving purpose known.*

*Bless us for your service, Lord; no power we devise  
will ever give us strength enough or make us truly wise,  
yet by your promise we can know the peace your grace supplies.*

*Break us open to disclose how brokenness can heal,  
wherever broken loaves suffice to give a crowd a meal  
and graves break open to release new life from death's dread seal.*

*Give us to the world you love as light and salt and yeast,  
that we may nourish in your name the last, the lost, the least,  
until at length you call us all to your unending feast.*

**CALL to WORSHIP**

Pastor Rachel Rhodes

One: In the darkness

**All: We voice our hope.**

One: In the darkness

**All: We give control to our dreaming.**

One: In the darkness

**All: We share secrets, make memories, and explore the caverns of belonging. Let us worship God together!**

**PRAYER of CONFESSION**

Rev. Jack McAnlis

God of wisdom, from the beginning you declared that it was not good for us to isolate ourselves. Yet with the brokenness, deceit, and hurt of the world we confess to wall ourselves off from greater exploration. We make relationships difficult, cling to easy answers, and seek control of our surroundings. We ask you, O God, to fill us with your Holy Spirit that secures us and stretches us. Make us a people of openness and curiosity to grow with one another in love.

*(Time for silent prayer and confession.)*

**PROMISE of FORGIVENESS**

One: Our God is merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. God hears our cries and graces us with God's mercy. Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel: in Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

**All: Thanks be to God for this good news! In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!**

**RESPONSE to GOD'S GRACE** — *Glory to the Father*

GLORIA PATRI

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.  
Amen. Amen. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE READING — *Psalm 42:1-6a*

As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God.  
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When shall I come and behold the face of God?  
My tears have been my food day and night,  
while people say to me continually, "Where is your God?"  
These things I remember, as I pour out my soul:  
how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God,  
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival.  
Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?  
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

## MEDITATION

Pastor Alex Lester-Abdalla

## AFFIRMATION of FAITH — *Apostles' Creed*

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

## MUSICAL MEDITATION — *Called as Partners in Christ's Service*

BEECHER

*Called as partners in Christ's service, called to ministries of grace,  
we respond with deep commitment fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
May we learn the art of sharing, side by side and friend with friend,  
equal partners in our caring to fulfill God's chosen end.*

*Christ's example, Christ's inspiring, Christ's clear call to work and worth,  
let us follow, never faltering, reconciling folk on earth.*

*Men and women, richer, poorer, all God's people, young and old,  
blending human skills together gracious gifts from God unfold.*

*Thus new patterns for Christ's mission, in a small or global sense,  
help us bear each other's burdens, breaking down each wall or fence.*

*Words of comfort, words of vision, words of challenge, said with care,  
bring new power and strength for action, make us colleagues, free and fair.*

*So God grant us for tomorrow ways to order human life  
that surround each person's sorrow with a calm that conquers strife.*

*Make us partners in our living, our compassion to increase,  
messengers of faith, thus giving hope and confidence and peace.*

## POSTLUDE — *The Church of Christ in Every Age*

WAREHAM

*The church of Christ in every age,  
beset by change but Spirited,  
must claim and test its heritage  
and keep on rising from the dead.*

*Across the world, across the street,  
the victims of injustice cry  
for shelter and for bread to eat,  
and never live before they die.*

*The let the servant church arise,  
a caring fever in our blood,  
and teach us how to share our bread  
and feed the starving multitude.*

*We have no mission but to serve  
in full obedience to our Lord:  
to care for all, without reserve,  
and spread Christ's liberating word.*

### **QUESTIONS *for* REFLECTION *at* HOME**

- When have you known God's presence?
- When have you known God's absence?

### **OTHERS PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE**

Tim Carpenter – Director of Music

Pat Guth – Organist

Video Ministry Volunteers

Photos may be found on [unsplash.com](https://unsplash.com)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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***\*Please note all announcements for Sunday bulletins are due by noon the Tuesday before they are to be published. Please email announcements to [Bulletin@MPCusa.net](mailto:Bulletin@MPCusa.net).***

### **ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES**

Adult Education Sunday school will have a great opportunity to engage in a Lenten series with Barbara Brown Taylor's book *Learning to Walk in the Dark*. Our Sunday school classes are based on a chapter from Taylor's book that corresponds to our Lenten sermon series. Each week we will have the opportunity to gather around a reading, lesson, and sermon! Please let Pastor Alex know via email at [alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net](mailto:alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net) if you are interested in following along with the book, so you can get a copy and have the ability to participate. The cost of the book is \$15, which may be donated to the MPC Education Budget, or you may buy the book on your own. If you would rather not read the book, that is okay too! Each week's class will be accessible and meaningful whether you read the chapter or not. Please join us in this unique Lenten opportunity!

MPC Adult Sunday School is currently being held every Sunday morning over Zoom from 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. Please contact Pastor Alex at [alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net](mailto:alexlester-abdalla@mpcusa.net) if you are interested in joining any Adult Education classes. You will be added to the email chain which includes the Zoom link for each session.

### **MPC SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE**

Calling all high school seniors and college students – did you know MPC provides six scholarships to high school seniors and college students? Scholarship information and applications are now available on the MPC website. Scholarship application deadline is April 15, 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Alex.

## **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY IS COMING TO BRISTOL BOROUGH!**

*How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!* - Psalm 133:1

MPC has a history of supporting Habitat for Humanity, both financially and “hands on”, especially being a huge supporter of *Faith Build 2019*. *Faith Build 2021* is a project of Habitat Humanity and has designated Bristol Borough as one of its locations. This will be an opportunity for faith groups and congregations based in Bucks County to come together and put their faith into action. Let's make MPC one of those congregations!

There are many ways and levels in which MPC (that's you!) can get involved. It may be providing a prayer early in the morning for the crew that day, assisting with a lunch for the day, joining a construction crew for the day, painting with friends, supporting the project financially, and the list goes on. The *Faith Build 2021* will take place soon as the current site is being prepared with the dedication planned for this Fall! Opportunities abound with the Habitat Restore locations as well. In the meantime, prayerfully consider how you may become a part of this most worthwhile, faith project. There will be a lot more information coming soon, including sign-up opportunities. If you have questions, please contact Ray Hendrickson at 215 495-3114.

## **EASTER MEMORIALS & HONORARIUMS ORDER FORM**

Have you considered honoring, celebrating, or remembering a family member, friend, or loved one this Eastertide? Contributions to our Memorial Fund can be made, not just for remembering a loved one who has passed, but also for honoring someone in your life now. **Please fill in the tear-off below and return it with your check in the total amount of your option(s).**

**Easter Plants**—Please note changes to the Memorial donation for Easter Plants. The Plants purchased will be for Deacons to deliver to homebound members during the Lenten season.

**Music Fund**—Memorial contributions to this fund help to supplement the music ministry program. In the past these funds have been used to invest in ORFF instruments for enhancing the children's music program, hand bell equipment, guest clinicians, and additional musicians for special music offerings. Contributions of any amount are welcome. **To be listed in bulletin, please submit your form by Sunday, March 21.**

**Deacons' Food Basket Program**—In addition to free-will donations received by the Deacons, you are welcome to contribute to the Food Basket Program as a gift or memorial to loved ones by using the form below. **To be listed in the bulletin, please submit by Sunday, March 21.**

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### ***Easter Memorial & Honorarium Contributions***

*Please do not add the memorial contribution amount to your pledge payment! Make checks payable to MPC with the type of memorial noted on the memo line.*

I would like to purchase an Easter plant for the Deacons to deliver to a homebound member during the Lenten season.  
The cost is \$9.00 per plant

\_\_\_\_\_ **Easter Plants**      Number of Plants: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount attached \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) wish to make the following contribution(s) to:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Music Fund** Please find \$ \_\_\_\_\_ attached for this fund.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Deacons' Food Basket Program.** Please find \$ \_\_\_\_\_ attached for this fund.

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

“In loving memory of”    “In celebration of”    “To give thanks for” (circle one)

***Please print exactly as you wish it to appear in the bulletin and return to the Church Office.***  
***Deadlines for Submission: Flowers, Music and Food Basket Contributions-Sunday, March 21, 2021***