

MAY 17, 2020

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

PRELUDE — *The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace* - Taizé Chant

CALL to WORSHIP

One: Where is God when fear seeks to unravel individuals and communities?

All: God is leading us in the darkness, against all the odds of the world.

One: Is anything impossible with God?

All: Nothing is impossible with God. God can transform the hearts of persecutors and bullies and set their feet on the path of compassion. God can bring light into the deepest darkness.

One: For what can we hope and pray?

All: That scales fall from every eye and the compassion of Christ fills every heart.

One: What does the Lord require of us?

All: That we will do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God. May we see each other with the eyes of God and love one another with the heart of God. Let us worship God together.

PRAYER of CONFESSION

God of endless Grace, you laid your hands on Ananias that he might lay his hands on Saul. You asked Ananias to love the unlovely intimately. You asked Saul to retreat from his old worldview and take on yours. And you ask these same things of us. But our greed and our lust for power create enemies where we should find friends. We fail to offer comfort and aid to those who are afraid and beat down by the burdens of life. We are as blind and willful as Saul to the pain and the destruction of our wrongdoings and our well-meaning crusades. How many times do we write someone off as hopeless or useless or too dangerous? How often do we believe that your mandate 'to love others as we love ourselves' is meant for someone else? Forgive us, merciful One. Give us sight to see with your eyes, and hearts to love with your love. Cleanse our minds of judgment and our hearts of stinginess. Prepare us to see others as Jesus did and to love others as Christ loves us.

TIME for YOUNG DISCIPLES

In the coming week, we invite you to add your own prayers to our prayer garden at MPC! Please maintain appropriate social distance from one another and wait to add your prayers if another family is there at the time. While you're there, take a picture of you or your family at the garden and send it to damonmiller@mpcusa.net if you're comfortable with it being used in our worship or social media publications in the future. We would also love if you posted your photo on Facebook or Instagram and tagged the church!

OLD TESTAMENT READING — Micah 6:6-8

⁶ 'With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?' ⁸ He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING — Acts 9:1-19

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?' He asked, 'Who are you, Lord?' The reply came, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' The men who were travelling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, 'Ananias.' He answered, 'Here I am, Lord.' The Lord said to him, 'Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.' But Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.' So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

One: This is the Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

INVITATION to GIVE — *Behold the Savior* - H. Willan

Many of you have sent in your gifts through the mail or through our online giving portal on our website and we encourage you to continue to utilize those options. Additionally, given the ongoing need in our community, the Session of Morrisville Presbyterian Church has approved the creation and function of a Covid-19 Relief Fund at MPC. This fund has been developed as a means to provide aid to the most pressing needs in our community today. With unemployment rates rising, food insecurity growing, and many people struggling in our neighborhood to make ends meet, we are committed to being the church in whatever way we can in this uncertain time.

As part of the Covid-19 Relief Fund, we are also collecting funds to support the Morrisville School District so that they can purchase Chromebooks for students who do not otherwise have access to the technology needed for their basic schooling.

Gifts for either of these efforts can be mailed to the MPC Office with their designation in the memo line: "Covid-19 Relief Fund" or "Chromebooks". Or you may add this designation to the note section of your online gift. Thank you for giving so generously to our church and to our wider community and world.

PAUSE *for* PRAYER

At this time, we invite you to take out a piece of paper and a pen, or talk with the people you are worshipping with today, and answer at least one of the following questions as we prepare to turn to God in prayer.

- 1) When have you felt the hardness of your own heart this week?
- 2) When have you felt your heart soften this week?
- 3) How might you open your heart more fully to the compassion and mercy of God in the week ahead?

POSTLUDE — *Come! Live in the Light!* - David Haas

*Come! Live in the Light!
Shine with the joy and the love of the Lord!
We are called to be light for the kingdom,
To live in the freedom of the city of God.*

*Refrain:
We are called to act with justice;
We are called to love tenderly;
We are called to serve one another,
To walk humbly with God.*

*Come! Open your heart!
Show your mercy to all those in fear!
We are called to be hope for the hopeless
So hatred and violence will be no more.*

*Refrain
Sing! Sing a new song!
Sing of that great day when all will be one!
God will reign, and we'll walk with each other
As sisters and brothers united in love.*

Refrain

PARTICIPATING IN TODAY'S SERVICE

Rev. Rachel Rhodes – Senior Pastor
Rev. Alex Lester-Abdalla – Associate Pastor
Tim Carpenter – Director of Music
Ron Workman – Liturgist
Prelude – Sara Carpenter
Offertory & Young Disciples – Mark Shockey
Postlude – MPC Congregation; Jason Vodicka, pianist
Damon Miller – Communications Coordinator
Photos provided by: Tim Carpenter, Dawn Flook, Luisa Herrera Gonzalez,
Damon Miller, Pastor Rachel Rhodes