

SOJOURNERS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

"A safe place to begin. A safe place to begin again."

May 9, 2021

In the morning at 10:00am

Sixth Sunday of EASTER MOTHER'S DAY

Imagine What Love Can Do



"We are a community of faith called and empowered by the Holy Spirit to walk in the way of Jesus, by including all peoples in all walks and ways of life, in our life of worship and celebration, nurture and growth, love and service."

~ Covenant of Sojourners Congregation

Gathering Music

“Oh Love that Will Not Let Me Go”

*words by George Matteson (1842-1906), Scottish minister and hymn writer, blind from birth;
melody copyright 1997 by Chris Miner, an American who began writing hymns while in college
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Oh Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in Thee,
I give Thee back the love I owe, That in Thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be.

Oh Light that follow'st all my way, I yield my flick'ring torch to Thee,
My heart restores its borrowed ray, That in Thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be.

Oh Joy that sleekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to Thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

Oh God who liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust, life's glory dead, And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be.

Welcome, Introductions, and Announcements

Call to Worship

Rev. Nancy Mack

Liturgist: God speaks to the heart,

ALL: *Out loud, but muted*

Offering compassion and hope.

God enlivens the mind,

Inviting curiosity and wonder.

God awakens all spirits,

Fostering sacred connection.

God nurtures our strength,

Creating unimagined possibilities.

God calls the whole world, to selflessness

Inspiring extravagant love.

Invocation

Liturgist: Let us pray:

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Creating Spirit, we join with the chorus of all of creation to celebrate your wondrous deeds. Fill us with your joy and train our ears for harmony, so we may contribute to the world You are already creating. All this we pray in the name of Jesus, who revealed what is possible through love. Amen.

Prayer of Confession:

Liturgist: Unwavering God, we keep asking what is it that you most desire of us in hope that you might tell us something easier. Instead, You offer the same answer over and over: Love one another as I have loved you.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

We confess that our love for others is not always what we hope it will be.

We are quick to judge and slow to offer grace.

We are swift to anger and resistant to make amends.

We are prone to suspicion and resistant to build trust.

We hear the greatest commandment, and if we are honest, we are filled with hesitation because it means we must change. Unwavering

God, in these moments of stillness, hear our struggles with the love you call us to practice...

A Moment of Silent reflection on our views of love and the ways to share it.

Assurance of Grace

Liturgist: Friends, hear the good news. God's love is so extravagant and inclusive that it knows no bounds. It transcends borders and speaks a universal language. Abide in that love. Find joy in that love. Be renewed by that love. Replicate that love in the world.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Amen.

Collections Cart

Rev. Nancy Mack

This is the time the children usually collect donations of food for the food bank from the congregation. The Food Bank and other organizations still need your donations, perhaps even more now than previously. It may be easier right now to contribute financially to the [Blue Ridge Area Food Bank](#).

Time with Children

Villette Griffin

Contemporary Reading

Rev. Nancy Mack

Mahatma Gandhi - *"Joy lies in the fight, in the attempt, in the suffering involved, not in the victory itself."*

Khalil Gibran - *"There are those who give with joy, and that joy is their reward."*

Scripture Lesson: John 15:9–17 NRSV

Rev. Nancy Mack

9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

12 "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I

have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Liturgist: *This is the Word of God, for the People of God!*

All: *(out loud, but muted)*
Thanks be to God.

Special Music “**Allegretto**” from *Menuetto in F* by Joseph Haydn
flute solo by Cece Beresford Accompanied by Amanda Beresford.

The Sermon/Message **Pastor Marvin L. Morgan**

A Mother’s Day Prayer: Read by Cece Beresford

(This prayer is attributed to Angela Blundell, a native of New Zealand, hence the word “Mum” rather than “Mom”.)

A Mothers Day Prayer

We pray for at home Mums, at work Mums, trying-to-be-everything Mums. We pray for the hoping-to-be Mums, regretting-they-are Mums, wondering-if-they-made-the-right-choice Mums. We acknowledge the tired Mums, energised Mums, sad Mums, joyful Mums, grieving Mums, celebratory Mums, the hoping-that-it’ll-all-turn-out-okay Mums.

We pray for those who raised us, scolded us, encouraged us and nurtured us, for the people who speak truth into our lives, who fiercely protect us and deeply love us, whoever they are because biology doesn’t matter when it comes to love.

We pray for the people we have the privilege of loving and caring for, whether we gave birth to them, adopted them, are their godparents, foster parents, their aunt or uncle, cousins, best friends or simply welcomed them into our lives.

We pray for the hurt and wounded, the abused and scared. We pray for the broken, the frail and sick and those who were unable to mother the people who needed them.

We give thanks for every person who has mothered us and give thanks for the nurture and care we receive from all the people who love us. Be with those people today.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Invitation to the Offering

Pastor Morgan

It is one thing to memorize the words of Jesus. But it is another thing to let those words transform us and rearrange our priorities and our lives. In these moments of quiet and reflection, what is it that God is inviting you to rearrange about your priorities? What is it that you want to offer to the Church and to the world as a practice of God's love?

This is our opportunity to give, financially, to the family that nurtures us in new growth. *[We urge you to visit [our webpage](#) and click on the “Donate or Pledge Now” tab, to present your gifts.]*

Dedication Prayer

All: *(out loud, but muted)*

God, bless the gifts that are being given, as we worship, those that will be given, later in the day, and in the days to come. May our gifts be used and shared in ways that further your kin-dom on earth. Amen.

Joys and Concerns

Rev. Karen Mann

It is more important than ever to hold one another in prayer. If you are participating in this service at-home, we invite you to light a candle and remember your fellow Sojourners in prayer. If you are watching live from home, we invite you to leave a comment, on the “Chat” screen, with your joys or concerns, now. Please remember that this is a PUBLIC forum and can be seen by anyone.

Pastoral Prayer by Pastor Morgan

Closing Hymn

“Thuma Mina”

South African traditional song, collected and arranged by Anders Nyberg

Thuma mina. Thuma mina, thuma mina, thuma mina somandla.

Send me, Lord. Send me, Jesus; send me, Jesus; send me, Jesus; send me, Lord.

Lead me, Lord. Lead me, Jesus; lead me, Jesus; lead me, Jesus, lead me, Lord.

Fill me, Lord. Fill me, Jesus; fill me, Jesus; fill me, Jesus; fill me, Lord.

Closing Comments by Pastor Morgan

Benediction

Pastor Morgan

Friends, imagine what is possible. Imagine what our community would feel like if our own hearts embraced the unconditional love God has for us. Imagine what the nation would sound like if our words echoed the inclusive love God has for us. Imagine what the world would look like if our actions reflected the unwavering love God has for us. Go forth from your sheltering-in places, to transform possibility into reality and to join God in transforming the world through love.

All: *Out loud, but muted*

Amen.

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