

Welcome to Seward United Methodist Church

May 1, 2022 - 8:00 a.m.



Making disciples who make a difference in Seward and beyond.

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude

Pam McConnell

Passing the Peace

Call to Worship (Discipleship Ministries)

L: Welcome family! Welcome relations! Welcome all!

P: The house of the Creator is our gathering place today.

The feast has been prepared for us all.

L: Welcome to the table that binds us all together!

P: God, who walked with our ancestors, who walks among us now,
and who will walk with our children's children for generations to come,

L: we give you thanks for your presence.

P: In the air that we breathe, in the sound of rustling leaves and in the waving grass.

L: we give you thanks for your presence.

P: In the sound of children's laughter, and in the songs of our elders,

All: we give you thanks for your presence.

[Refrain:]

Jesu, Jesu,
fill us with your love, show us how to serve
the neighbors we have from you.

1 Kneels at the feet of his friends,
silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them.
(Refrain)

2 Neighbors are rich and poor,
neighbors are black and white,
neighbors are near and far away.
(Refrain)

3 These are the ones we should serve,
these are the ones we should love;
all these are neighbors to us and you.
(Refrain)

4 Loving puts us on our knees,
serving as though we are slaves,
this is the way we should live with you.
(Refrain)

5 Kneel at the feet of our friends
silently washing their feet,
this is the way we should live with you.
(Refrain)

Opening Prayer (Discipleship Ministries)

All of God's People: We send to you, Creator God, our dreams, visions, and prayers. For our mission, let your Spirit move us to honor and respect one another – from the least to the greatest. May we treat everyone we encounter with dignity and love. May we affirm the image of the Creator within each one of us. May we help restore the image of the Creator on earth. May our words, thoughts, and actions nourish and sustain your creation. For the Church, may she lead and dance with honor. Let all who follow her steps and rhythm know and feel righteousness and strength. May her regalia exemplify purity and perfection. For the world, may the nations of the earth gather to listen to the heartbeat of God. May they sit in silence as the Great Peacemaker teaches and shows them how to walk upright. May the war clubs and instruments of destruction be transformed into life-giving means of grace. For the hearts of the people, created with your sacred fire burning within us, we confess that we struggle to live out of our great potential. When we do harm to your Creation, your creatures and fellow human beings, forgive us. When we fail to do all the good we can, in all the places we can, forgive us. When we turn away from your love and grace, forgive us. Let us hear, now, the good news of Jesus Christ, You are forgiven. I am forgiven. We are forgiven.

Children's Time

**Pastor JoEllen Axthelm &
Camp Fontanelle Leaders**

Scriptures

Psalter, Psalm 30 pg. 762-763 UMH

Response

For the night weeping may tarry;
With the morning light come joy.

R

¹I will extol, you O Lord, for you have lifted me up,
and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

² **O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you healed me.**

³ O Lord, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
restored me to life from among those gone down to the pit. R

⁴ Sing praises to the Lord, O his faithful ones,
and give thanks to his holy name.

⁵ **Surely the Lord's anger is but for a moment;
the Lord's favor is for a lifetime.**

Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.

⁶ **As for me, I said in my prosperity,
"I shall never be moved."**

⁷ By your favor, O Lord,
you had established me as a strong mountain;
**You hid your face,
I was dismayed. R**

⁸ To you, O Lord, I cried,
and to the Lord I made supplication:

⁹ **"What profit is there in my death,
if I go down to the pit?**

Will the dust praise you?
Will it tell of your faithfulness?

¹⁰ **Heart O Lord, and be gracious to me!
O Lord, be my helper!"**

¹¹ You have turned my mourning into dancing;
you have loosed my sackcloth
and girded me with gladness,

¹² that my soul may praise you and not be silent.

O Lord, my God, I will give thanks to you forever. R

Acts 9:1-20. (NRSV, The Conversion of Saul)

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of God, 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, God?" 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 traveling 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. God said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, God." God 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, "God, 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 God 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, 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.

Saul Preaches in Damascus

For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.”

Hymn

Lord of the Dance

UMH 261

1 I danced in the morning when the world was begun,
and I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun,
and I came down from heaven and I danced on the earth.
At Bethlehem I had my birth.

[Refrain:]

Dance, then, wherever you may be;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.
And I'll lead you all wherever you may be,
and I'll lead you all in the dance, said he.

2 I danced for the scribe and the Pharisee,
but they would not dance and they would not follow me;
I danced for the fishermen, for James and John;
they came to me and the dance went on. (Refrain)

3 I danced on the sabbath when I cured the lame,
the holy people said it was a shame;
they whipped and they stripped and they hung me high;
and they left me there on a cross to die. (Refrain)

4 I danced on a Friday and the sky turned black;
it's hard to dance with the devil on your back;
they buried my body and they thought I'd gone,
but I am the dance and I still go on. (Refrain)

5 They cut me down and I leapt up high,
I am the life that'll never, never die;
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. (Refrain)

Sermon

Called to Re-member

Pastor JoEllen Axthelm

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (ACTS 9, PSALM 30), (*Sandra Miller, Ministry Matters*)

L: God of Forgiveness,
hear now the confession of our sins.

**P: Our greed and our lust for power
create enemies where we should find friends.**

L: We fail to offer comfort and aid
to those who are afraid and beat down
by the burdens of life.

**P: We are as blind and willful as Saul
to the pain and the destruction
of our wrongdoings
and our well-meaning crusades.**

L: Forgive us, merciful One.
Give us sight to see with your eyes,
that we may bring hope and peace to our world.

All: Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE (ACTS 9, PSALM 30)

L: God's anger lasts but a moment,
but God's favor lasts a lifetime.
God forgives our shortcomings
and sends deliverance through Jesus Christ,
just as God forgave Saul
and used him to spread the gospel.

All: Thanks be to God!

The Prayers of the People

Please share your joys or concerns at the microphone or in the comments on Facebook or by texting us at 402-810-8900.

Prayer Hymn

Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus

UMH 462, v. 1 & 3

1 'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus,
and to take him at his word;
just to rest upon his promise,
and to know, "Thus saith the Lord." [Refrain]

Refrain:

Jesus, Jesus, how I trust him!
How I've proved him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!
O for grace to trust him more!

3 Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
just from sin and self to cease;
just from Jesus simply taking
life and rest, and joy and peace. [Refrain]

Sharing of Joys & Concerns
Pastoral Prayer
The Lord's Prayer

Offertory

Pam McConnell

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 up lifts!
 Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!
 Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer of Dedication

Redeeming God, we live in a world that is far too ready to say that you can't be found, ready to choose punishment over mercy, judgment over compassion. Our world is too eager to put energy into exclusion rather than working to be inclusive of all your children. We confess to you that, like Saul, we have been blind, even in our sightedness, to what you are doing in the world. We need our eyes to be truly opened, God, to who you really are. Let our blindness fall away and let us see the good that we can do—through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and our witness—to help usher in your kingdom here and now. May the gifts we give this morning be just the beginning of our availability to be your tools for bringing about the world you desire. We pray it in the name of the risen Christ. Amen. [*Acts 9:1-6, (7-20)*]

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Celebrant Pastors: JoEllen Axthelm and Jen Davidson

For Holy Communion, if at home, you may use whatever simple elements you have at hand — bread, crackers, pita, juice, water, wine. If you are at in person worship please follow the instructions given by the Pastor.

Prayers of the Great Thanksgiving (spoken responsively)

Our God is with you,

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts,

We lift them up to our God.

Let us give our thanks to God.

**It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
 always and everywhere to give our thanks to God.**

Heaven and earth sprang from your wisdom, O God, and you made us for your company.

**We turned away, and our love failed,
 but you remained steadfast.**

You gave us room when we were in distress.

And so with all your people here, and all the company of heaven, we join in an unending hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy, God of power and might,
 Hosanna in the highest!**

Everything that springs from your wisdom is blessed!

Hosanna in the Highest!

You lived among us as our teacher, held us, called us friends.

**You died and live again
 to show us death is not the end.**

You took bread.
We remember.

You broke it.
We remember,

You shared it.
We ate. We remember.

You took the cup.
We remember.

You said "Drink".
We remember.

You shared it.
We drank. We remember.

And so today, we feast again; our bread and wine are you.
You live among us still, whenever we remember you.

We offer ourselves now —
In praise and thanksgiving.

We offer ourselves now —
Holy and living.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith.
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Come Holy Spirit, on us gathered here.
Be among us as we share these gifts of bread and wine.

May they become for us the bread of life and the cup of grace
that we may become Christ's love in the world.

God-incarnate, God-Spirit, and God-Source of All Beginnings,
All glory and honor are yours, now and forever. AMEN!

SHARING OF THE BREAD AND CUP

Communion Hymn

Let Us Break Bread Together

UMH 618, v. 1, 2, 3

1 Let us break bread together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us break bread together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

2 Let us drink wine together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us drink wine together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

3 Let us praise God together on our knees, (on our knees)
let us praise God together on our knees. (on our knees)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me. (on me)

1. We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity may one day be restored

Refrain

And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yes they'll know we are Christians by our love

2. We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand,
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land: [Refrain]

3. We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard human dignity and save human pride: [Refrain]

4. All praise to the Father, from whom all things come,
and all praise to Christ Jesus, God's only Son,
and all praise to the Spirit, who makes us one: [Refrain]

Benediction**Pastor JoEllen Axthelm****Postlude****Pam McConnell*****The People of God Go Forth to Serve***

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