

Welcome to Seward United Methodist Church

May 1, 2022 - 10:30 a.m.



Making disciples who make a difference in Seward and beyond.

Welcome and Announcements

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.

Song of Praise

Your Love Awakens Me

Verse 1

There were walls between us

By the cross You came and broke them down

You broke them down

And there were chains around us

By Your grace we are no longer bound

No longer bound

Pre-Chorus

You called me out of the grave
You called me into the light
You called my name and then my heart came alive

Chorus

Your love is greater
Your love is stronger
Your love awakens awakens awakens me
(REPEAT)

Verse 2

Feel the darkness shaking
All the dead are coming back to life
I'm back to life
Hear the song awaken
All creation singing we're alive
'Cause You're alive

Bridge

And what a love we've found
Death can't hold us down
We shout it out
We're alive 'cause You're alive

Ending

Your love awakens me
Your love is greater
Your love is stronger
Your love awakens awakens awakens me

CCLI Song # 7054720

Chris Quilala | Phil Wickham

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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] 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^[b] 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

Sanctuary

TFWS 2164

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

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

Offertory

Megan Forbes

Doxology

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

UMH 94

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

Remembrance of You

¹ We remember the night you broke the bread, The mercy of the words you said,

And the life you would lose to make us new. We break this bread in remembrance of you.

² We remember the night you took the cup, The pouring out of deathless love,
In the sins you would bear, our hope renewed, We take this cup in remembrance of you.

R This is your body we've come to receive. This is the promise we've come to believe. We are one body
in spirit and truth.
We give our lives in remembrance of you.

³ We remember the night of agony
That led the King to Calvary.
Oh, the pain you endured, your love to prove. We take this gift in remembrance of you. (R)

⁴ We remember the day love moved the stone
To make the pow'r of heaven known
And to welcome us all to live in you.
We come to the feast in remembrance of you. (R)

Hymn **They'll Know We Are Christians By Our Love** **TFWS 2223**

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

Megan Forbes

The People of God Go Forth to Serve

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