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What Is Our Easter Story?

Sunday, May 16th, 2021 || 7th Sunday of Easter || Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

REMINDER: We are not meeting in person this week!

We invite you to light a candle at 9:30 AM and join us in prayer online or over the phone for a pre-recorded service.

Audio worship, including the prelude and postlude, prayers, and the sermon is available at

<https://georgewhitefieldumc.weebly.com/worship-services> or over the phone at (978) 990-5000, access code 719365#.

Just dial in, enter the access code on your keypad, and you will hear the service begin with music.

Worship for the Season of Easter

New England Conference of The United Methodist Church

Prelude

Pianist: Linda Sturgis || Soloist: Elise K. Ruona, age 16 || Buxton UMC, Maine || Lyrics: George Matheson || Lyrics and Music: David Moffitt/Sue C. Smith || Arrangement: Travis Cottrell

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

Lyrics: George Matheson || Lyrics and

Fanfare on a Mighty Fortress

Bryan Hilliard, Trumpet || Kevin Tracy, Trumpet || Ami Fields, French Horn || Russell Bogartz, Trombone || Michael Stephan, Tuba || Crawford Memorial UMC, Winchester MA || Original lyrics and tune by Martin Luther || Arranged by Tim Jameson

Welcome

Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson, Director of Connectional Ministries

Hymn

Mosaic Chapel, Roslindale MA

Because He Lives

Gospel

Stephanie Cyr, Gales Ferry UMC, CT

Mark 16:1-8

Children's Message

Rev. Tracy Reeves, Old Town ME

Anthem

Union Gospel Ensemble and Friends || Pastor Jermaine Tilloch (lead vocalist) || Norris Welch, Crystal Collier, Robert Kelsey, Tonia Barlow, Bill Ellis, Chantal Charles, Eddie Mallory, Khandice Kenebrew, Herb Jones, Angela Nelson, Will Pruitt (vocalists) || Plamen Karadonev (pianist) || Fabio Pirozzolo (percussionist) || Dimitar Bonev (bass) || Union UMC Boston MA

My Testimony

Sermon

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar

What is our Easter Story?

Testimony

Various members of NEAC: Pastor Kerry Cameron, Burlington VT || Pastor Joseph Wilson, Lowell MA || Rev. Daniel Randall and children, Palestine || Hannah Cote, Wanakee: Meredith NH || Rev. SeungRi Victor Han & children, Houlton ME

What if a Miracle Happened?

Hymn

Aldersgate UMC Chelmsford MA: Cheryl Cruickshank, Holly and Peter Fipphen (Vocalists) || Pianist: Maylis de la Fe || Words: William James || Music: Henry T Smart

Easter People, Raise Your Voices

Benediction

Pastor Gayle Holden, Richmond ME

Postlude

Haven UMC, E. Providence RI || Organ: Beverly Rathbun || Violin: 1 Juhee Lee || Violin 2: Christine Song || Composer: Robert W. Thygerson || Tune by Frederick M. Lehman

The Love of God

Thine Be the Glory

Worldwide UMC Discipleship Ministries 2021

Special Thanks to all the participating churches and ministries!

Buxton UMC, Maine || Crawford Memorial UMC, Winchester Massachusetts || Mosaic Chapel Roslindale, Massachusetts || Gales Ferry UMC, Connecticut || Old Town UMC, Stillwater Federated, Mattawamkeag UMC, Maine || Union UMC, Boston, Massachusetts || Camp Wanakee Meredith, New Hampshire || Houlton UMC, Maine || First UMC Burlington, Vermont || Centralville UMC Lowell, Massachusetts || General Board of Global Ministries missionaries || Aldersgate UMC Chelmsford, Massachusetts || Richmond UMC, Maine || Haven UMC East Providence, Rhode Island || Members of the Worldwide UMC Choir

Community Announcements

- **Pastor Christy Vacation.** Pastor Christy is away from May 10th to May 17th, and will be unable to respond to phone calls or emails. Pastoral Coverage is being provided by Rev. Amie McCarthy of the Spencer UCC, who can be reached at (508) 272-6437. There will be no in-person worship service on Sunday, May 16th; a special at-home worship service will be mailed out that week, and the audio service will be available on our website at georgewhitefieldumc.weebly.com/worship-services or over the phone at (978) 990-5000, access code 719365#. Regular outdoor in-person worship services will resume on Sunday, May 23rd.
- **NO IN-PERSON SERVICE ON MAY 16TH.** Because Pastor Christy will be on vacation that week, we will not be holding in-person worship. Worship services have been mailed out and the audio worship service is available on our phone line and website.
- **Ad Council Meeting (and others who wish to join).** Ad Council will be meeting on Sunday, May 23rd after church in the fellowship hall. All are welcome as we make important decisions.
- **Transition.** By now, you will have heard the news that Pastor Christy is being appointed to First United Methodist Church in Stoughton, MA, and we will be receiving Certified Lay Minister Sandy Dam and Coordinating Pastor John Lucy on July 1st, 2021! We are very excited to meet Minister Sandy and Pastor John, and we look forward to their ministry! In the meantime, please continue to be in prayer during this transition as we work out details and prepare for their arrival.
- **IN-PERSON OUTDOOR WORSHIP RESUMES! Update from the Reopening Advisory Board.** We are meeting **weekly** at 9:30 AM **in front of the church**, weather permitting. Regardless of vaccination status, **masks and social distancing are required** in order to limit our risk factors. Remember to bring your lawn chair, wear your mask, and be sure to set yourself up at least six feet from folks who are not part of your household. Should weather become a concern, Pastor Christy will begin a phone chain by Saturday at 4 PM prior to the service. Indoor worship possibilities are still being explored. As always, if you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns about in-person worship, feel free to reach out to anyone on the Reopening Advisory Board: Jane Dolan, Tom McKeon, Diane Mundell, Melissa Quilitzsch, or Pastor Christy.
- **UPDATE ON MAILINGS.** In order to save on postage, mailings will now be available on Sunday mornings for pickup at our outdoor services. Mailings will no longer automatically be sent out; if you are unable to join us in person, mailings will be dropped in the mail on Monday mornings so all folks can continue to be part of our connection.
- **Pastor Christy's Office Hours: MAY.** Pastor Christy's office hours have shifted to **Mondays** and **Tuesdays** from 8 AM to 4 PM and **Fridays** from 8 AM to 12 noon. If you have an emergency outside of office hours, please call her cell phone, leave a message, and she will get back to you as soon as possible.
- **Prayer Chain.** As a church, we are a wonderful community of prayer. When a need arises, we send it through the prayer chain so we can all meditate together. If you would like to be a part of this prayer chain, reach out to Jane Dolan, who will put you on the list.
- **THANK YOU for your continued generous donations to the work of the church!** We are so grateful for your gifts, for they make an impact near and far. As a reminder, you can mail your offerings to PO Box 576, West Brookfield, MA 01585. Thank you!

Sonshine Phone Calls and Cards List

If you know of anyone who could be added to our Sonshine list, let Pastor Christy know.

Betty Hubbard
47 E Main St.
West Brookfield, MA 01585

Kelly Rice
98 Lake Shore Drive
West Brookfield, MA 01585

Claire Wirf
(508) 791-8131 (mornings)
838 Mill Street
Worcester, MA 01602

Richie Buzzell
16 Ragged Hill Rd.
W Brookfield, MA 1585

Daily Devotionals:
A Community Of Prayer from Around the Connection
The Upper Room Daily Devotionals official magazines are still being distributed.

If you would like a copy, please let Pastor Christy know.

Monday, May 17th through Saturday, May 22nd || Written by Various Authors in the Conference
We invite you to light a candle at 9:30 AM daily, meditate on our given scripture, and join us in prayer

Monday, May 17th, 2021

Caroline Bass, candidate for ordination/membership as a full deacon
Read Psalm 98

Disclose your justice, O God, and give us something to sing about. We are ready to roar and shout and shake, because we are desperate for equity, fairness, justice, and the marvelous victory that will give all the earth such joy. While we wait, we remember your steadfast love and faithfulness, from the house of Israel to all the ends of the earth. Disclose your justice, O God, and give us something to sing about. Amen.

Tuesday, May 18th, 2021

Rich Hughen, Interim Conference Lay Leader
Read Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

An Embodiment Prayer

(Place your hands on the top of your head) God, be in my mind so my thoughts reflect a better understanding of your ways. (Place your hands over your eyes) God, be in my eyes to see the ways I have fallen short and to see the ways that I might be a better instrument of your grace and peace. (Place your hands over your mouth) God, be in my mouth so the words that I speak may be words of justice and hope that the world needs. Help me to know when to be silent and when to shout. (Place your hands over your ears) God, be in my ears and in my hearing that I might hear the cries of the world that I may respond with justice and grace. (Place your hands open on your lap) God, help me to be open to answer your call. Open and ready to serve as a child of yours should live and serve. (Place your hands on the top of your legs) God, be in my legs that I might walk in your way and in my feet that I may be grounded in you. (Place your hands over your heart) God, be in my heart and in my loving so that all that I do shall embrace your world and my neighbors around it. (Place your hands high open palms raised to the heavens) God, be in my whole being that all that I do may glorify you! Amen.

Wednesday, May 19th, 2021

Rev. Rick McKinley, Director of Congregational Development
Read Ephesians 2:1-10

Dear God, Can I speak to you so directly? I hope so. I'm taking my lead from your guy, Paul. He seems to go right at it – and right at you. Of course his stuff can be tough to swallow sometimes. Anyway, I'm getting off track. Back to Paul. This letter he writes to your church in Ephesus. Powerful stuff God. This is what I'm hearing. That somehow, in the middle of the mess, the mess that we are. The messes that we make, you wipe the slate clean. Instead of being done with us, you kept coming to us. Sorry – I promised I'd be direct. You keep coming to us. And Paul says the proof is Jesus. That somehow, wiping the slate means that we get to stand, sit, walk, run, skip, cry, jump, fall, shout – all of it – with Jesus. That is ... just ... amazing. Hearing this, I feel ... just ... amazing. I feel ready – ready to sit, walk, cry, run, skip – all of it. As bruised as I feel some mornings, I know you've done the harder work to make it possible for us to do the good work. The good work you started. The good work Jesus continues. The good work waiting for all of us. So here I am, God, at least for today, ready to work. Ready to tackle my lists with you in mind. With Jesus in mind. Today I'll learn to work the way Jesus would work, if Jesus were me. Good work. Amen.

Thursday, May 20th, 2021

Rev. Erica Robinson-Johnson, Director of Connectional Ministries/Assistant to the Bishop
Read Numbers 24:4-9

Oh God, we are so impatient! It has been more than a year stuck inside, behind masks, at a distance from one another ... and we thought this would only last a few weeks! It has been a year since we learned that we have to wash our hands as long as it takes to pray the prayer Jesus' taught us ... we thought that was a long time to lather! It has been months since we learned a miracle was happening and effective vaccines would be available this year when they typically take many years ... and we couldn't wait! And we still can't get them fast enough! We are impatient for a cure, impatient for a time of

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safety, impatient for a return to what we are missing. Remind us to trust in you. Remind us to be grateful for the miracles that happen each day. Remind us to follow your faithful ones who point us toward your love and everlasting life. Amen.

Friday, May 21st, 2021

Rev. Ted Crass, President, The United Methodist Foundation of New England

Read John 3.14-21

Gracious and loving God, for you so loved the world, that you gave your love in the character, passion, and compassion of Jesus ... a perfect love — even of that which is unknown. A love that casts out fear. Sometimes it is hard to comprehend that you love each of us in this way, too: all of your love within our hearts. As we travel in the wilderness of our season, we don't leave behind our thoughts ... our unique voices ... our "selves" ... our judgements ... our contradictions. These insist on coming along. Our prayer this season is that your Holy Spirit accompany us — and push us as needed, wider still ... into the wilderness of our unawareness. There, we can examine the reality of our thoughts and judgements. We can discover the unknown "selves" within our hearts. This discovery will require self-compassion ... for each of us. Many things we find difficult or hard to accept are there. Be with us to reconcile these for our wholeness and to love more deeply the mystery and the unknown in others. For you so loved the world, that you gave your love in the character and compassion of Jesus. Holy One, today in our journey, help us to imitate this love. Lead us to experience your reconciling love at home within our hearts so that we can be unique expressions of your love in the world for others. In the name of Jesus the Christ, Amen.

Saturday, May 22nd, 2021

Debbie Gagnon, HR & Benefits Manager

Read Psalm 19:12

Dear God, errors are made as I try to do my best work for you. Each day starts with the prayer that I might be productive and able to serve you well. And when that happens, it is a good day. And when it does not, I seek your comfort and guidance. No matter what, each night ends with a prayer of thanks for that day. I know you are the reason I am here, and I have no errors in your eyes. You alone can clear me from my hidden faults. Amen.