

CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
30 N. CLINTON ST.
IOWA CITY, IA 52245
319-337-4301

WORSHIP FOR MAY 24, 2020
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER
ASCENSION SUNDAY

“The novel coronavirus has the potential for mitigation, treatment, and ultimately prevention. But a decline in hope and purpose is a crisis of civilization requiring reflection and generous care for the good of the whole society and its place in the world. We have been given the grounds and opportunity to do some very basic thinking.

“Without an acknowledgment of the grief brought into the whole world by the coronavirus, which is very much the effect of sorrows that plagued the world before this crisis came down on us, it might seem like blindness or denial to say that the hiatus prompted by the crisis may offer us an opportunity for a great emancipation, one that would do the whole world good.”

Marilynne Robinson

PRELUDE Prelude in G Major, Op. 48, No. 2 - Josef Renner

EASTER GREETING AND WELCOME

Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus says: Blessed are those who mourn,

for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,

for theirs is the realm of heaven.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,

for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,

for they will receive mercy.

HYMN “We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness”

We yearn, O Christ, for wholeness and for your healing touch;

too long have we felt helpless; our burdens seemed too much.

Forgetting all pretenses we make our pleadings heard,

in hope and expectation await your gracious word.

We long to have companions who travel by our side,

strong friends to call and answer with whom we are allied;

as we lift up each other when struggles lay us low,

community will flourish; our faith and caring grow.

**We need your living presence, O Christ of Galilee,
a presence that revives us and sets our spirits free.
No longer are we fearful, your love pervades each place.
Empower us with courage to claim your healing grace.**

OPENING PRAYER

We come to the time when we must look outward again whether we can bear it or not, O God. When we were wrapped in our own distress we dulled our eyes so we would not feel our tears and this is how we made it through. We felt you near and we were comforted.

Now we begin to look around and see beyond ourselves. We have fears for what will happen next and we know the tears will come. We will see the signs of the lost, the damaged, and the absent. We will search for answers and we will need your strength to comfort and your wisdom to repair. Even when we feel you far away, you will come to us across the reaches of the wreckage of the world and find us still. Keep your world in your regard. Remember each one of us in it and cherish us still. Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE LESSON II Corinthians 1:4-5

PSALM 71:1-3, 19-23

In you, O Lord, I take refuge;
never let me be put to shame.

**In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me;
incline your ear to me and save me.**

Be to me a rock of refuge,
a strong fortress, to save me,
for you are my rock and refuge.

**You who have done great things,
O God, who is like you?**

You who have made me see many troubles and calamities
will revive me again;
from the depths of the earth
you will bring me up again.

**You will increase my honor,
and comfort me again.**

I will also praise you with the harp
for your faithfulness, O God.

I will sing praises to you with the lyre,
O Holy One of Israel.

**My lips will shout for joy
when I sing praises to you;
my soul also, which you have rescued.**

SCRIPTURE LESSON Acts 1:1-11

SERMON "Absence"

TIME FOR GRATITUDE

DUET "All Creatures of Our God and King"

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

HYMN "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

**Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**When my way grows drear, precious Lord linger near
When my light is almost gone
Hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

**Precious Lord, take my hand
Lead me on, let me stand
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn
Through the storm, through the night
Lead me on to the light
Take my hand precious Lord, lead me home**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE Postlude in F Major, Op. 28, No. 7 - Christian Cappelen

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Minister:	The Rev. Bill Lovin
Director of Children's Programs:	The Rev. Ann Molsberry
Organist:	Bill Crouch
Choir Director/Soloist:	Kristin Ramseyer

WE WANT TO SEE YOU! We would like to have members and friends be a part of the greeting time during our online worship. Please send us a brief—10-30 second—video of you or your family waving, saying “Hi,” singing, or whatever you would like. Or send a photo. We’ll start including a few of these in the worship service each week as a way to strengthen our connections with each other. Send your greeting videos to https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1UcrZ4ya9xFir39cG_1x-SCO6dVPBbV0B?usp=sharing

BE A PART OF OUR PENTECOST CELEBRATION! Wear red to worship next Sunday, of course. And send Bill video or a photo or an email with your thoughts/expressions completing the sentence, “The church is....” Send your responses to uccicrev@uccic.org by this coming Thursday, May 28.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Congregational UCC will serve at the Free Lunch Program (FLP) on Monday, July 29 (our usual date on the fifth Monday of the month). If you would like to help, please contact Vicki Thomae at vickithomae@gmail.com or call the church office at 337-4301. Vicki is looking for folks to donate prepared food but will only ask 3-4 people to assist her that day. FLP is serving all meals take out style through the side door in the kitchen. Guests are not allowed in the building. They are strictly limiting the number of volunteers to adhere to social distancing guidelines. They have gloves available as always, but no other PPE. If you would like to wear a mask or other protective “gear,” you will have to bring your own.

Stay in Place, Stay Alive, ORGANIZE: A Call for Moral Non-Cooperation.

The Mass Poor People’s Assembly & Moral March on Washington is going digital! On **June 20th**, the Poor People’s Campaign will hold the largest digital and social media gathering of poor and low-wealth people, moral and religious leaders, advocates, and people of conscience in this nation’s history. A global pandemic is exposing even more the already existing crisis of systemic racism, poverty, ecological devastation, the war economy and militarism, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. [RSVP for June 20th here.](#)

