

# Order of Worship for at Home Use

## April 11, 2021

Welcome to worship with Grace@Home!

We pray that you are healthy and well as you worship this week.

If you wish to worship via the video, click this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bjtSBSiaaJ8>

As we gather online it is important to remember that we are not alone. We gather with our brothers and sisters in this church and in Christ's church wherever God has placed us. We are, after all, the body of Christ and the family of God. As His people we gather for worship and we are reminded of the promise that Christ will be with us, even to the very end of the age. We are also reminded that as God's children we are a great community and even when distanced we remain God's children in communion with God and one another.

Today as we gather, I encourage you to create a comfortable space for worship where you are reminded of God's presence in your life and that He is with you in this moment. Surround yourself with the symbols of Grace. Find a place that is peaceful so that you might hear the still quiet voice of God when it speaks to you. Maybe light a candle as a reminder of God's light in the world and in your life, have your Bible with you as it is God's revelation to us in this moment.

Pastor Jim

## We Gather as God's Family to Worship

Introit "O Love that Wilt not Let Me Go"

Dr. David Dorway & Dr. Jerry Reeves

Welcome

Pastor Dana Pope

Welcome to worship this week as we continue to celebrate the Resurrection of our LORD, Jesus. We are so glad that you have decided to worship with us online. We gather from north, south, east and west; from all walks of life; we are at home, in the sanctuary, and even out and about as we worship. We are blessed to be able to come to our Holy God, united with believers from every time and place, and worship Him. In the weeks ahead you will see that our online service will be sent out later. We are slowly working towards live-streaming, but in the process we will be recording our live service and sending that out later in the day on Sunday. We hope you are blessed by the increased sense of community as we continue to worship together. Come, for we are called into the throne room of God... Let us gather in the name of our Risen LORD, Jesus the Christ.

Call to Worship

Pastor Dana Pope

One: In Christ, life has been revealed

**All: We worship God, Who is light, and has no darkness at all**

One: We declare what we have heard, and seen; all that we know

**All: God is good and gracious and full of mercy**

One: We gather to worship God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

**All: We turn our hearts to God. Let us worship God!**

Hymn "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing" vs 1 & 3

Dr. Lisa Elliott

Sharing the Peace of Christ

\*\*not in video\*\*

*The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you...*

*and also with you.*

*In this time of social distancing it is important for us to remember that in Christ we are connected to all who believe in Jesus in every time and place. As the world continues to be isolated, and many are feeling anxious, as Christians we share the peace of Christ as a way to offer hope and the joy of Christ. Again today we use the familiar words, "The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you... and also with you."*

*Now, or after your time of worship, reach out via text, email, phone or video call, to someone outside of your home extending the invitation to enter into the peace of Christ with our faith community.*

*Praise God, that His peace is with us, always!*

Holy God, as we continue to seek You in these days of Easter. We pray that we will see clearly the new life that springs forth from Your hand. We know that You created all that there is, brought life and light out of darkness...in the beginning. But, now, even as spring brings new life, our eyes are dim, and grow weary, and our faith wanes, so that we do not see the glory of what You are creating anew in us and in the world right now. Wake us up, O God, help us see. Help us take notice and rejoice in Your continuing work in all of creation. The new life that is springing forth.

As we pray today, with intention, we turn back to You - away from all darkness - and ask that You would help us. We need Your hand of guidance, that we might come out of our sin and darkness into Your forgiveness and light. Help us to rely on You for new life, another opportunity, increased faith. Show us evidence of growth and new life, Your glory and power.

We humbly ask that You would forgive us for our failures to notice Your work; forgive us for our reluctance to allow Your will to be fulfilled in us; and forgive us for the times we hesitate or refuse to participate in the work You are doing in the world. Forgive us for the times we go our own way, the times we seek to make things happen in our time, and for the times that our vision is so very narrow. Holy One, forgive us. Open our eyes and soften our hearts. Help us to look up and look to You. Help us rely on You - trust You - and You alone...

Once again, today we pray for Your provision - for us, our families and friends, our world. We ask for healing and wholeness - so many are dealing with illnesses and disease; we pray for protection and provision - for those struggling to make ends meet, for all who serve us, and for the many whose lives are in danger today; and we ask for discernment and wisdom - as we navigate this life. As a people we struggle with so many things, yet we turn again to You and put our faith and trust in You...in Your nail scarred hands we know peace, we know we are blessed and loved beyond measure. For this we are ever grateful.

We thank You Holy One, for hearing our prayers. We pray in the name of Jesus, Who taught us to pray, saying: Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

### **We Listen to God's Word**

Children's Message

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Today each family is encouraged to find an old map and open it for the children's message. Take a few moments to pick a destination and trace the route you would need to take to get to your chosen destination. Discuss with your children what happens if you turn off your route. Will you end up in a different location if you turn off the route? Will you change what you see and your experience along the way if you make a different choice? To follow a map it takes a little faith. You must have faith that the map is accurate, telling you the truth. And you must have a little faith that your understanding of the map is correct so that your decisions will lead you where you want to go.

Today in worship we are looking at the first chapter of First John. In this letter John tells us what we should believe if we want to be God's people who know God and help God bring goodness and truth to the world. Like the map, we must faithfully follow God knowing that His way is the way we want to go.

Special Music

"Grace"

C. Hamlin  
Chancel Choir

Reading of the Word

1 John 1:1-2:2

Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

Message

"Telling the Truth"

In the church year, we are in the season of Eastertide. That means, after Easter, and well, this is the first Sunday after Easter. This season lasts until Pentecost, which is the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit of God to the New Testament church. This year Pentecost falls on May 23rd. Between now and Pentecost we will be looking at John's first letter to the first Christians and his message about Jesus Christ after the resurrection.

First John has an amazing message that could not be more appropriate for today. However, to understand John's word you have to look closely at the time in which John was writing. John, the disciple of Jesus, wrote this letter sometime around AD 85. That is 50 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus. This makes John the youngest of the disciples and probably the last living apostle of Jesus. He had started churches and been part of the evangelism of Asia, or Turkey. He had seen and heard of his fellow disciples all die for their faith. John had seen the birth of the church at the first Pentecost, and he had experienced the persecution of the followers of Jesus that had sent Christians fleeing to all parts of the Roman world. John had also experienced the challenges of heresy that came to threaten the infant church. This letter was a letter to address conflict in the church as to what Christians believe and how we as followers of Christ are to behave. In Asia, there were many religions, Gnosticism. Greek mysticism, polytheism of Rome and the Ancients Greeks are just a few theologies that threatened early Christianity. There were many religions in the region that influenced thought and beliefs, but none of them were Christian. A particular threat that John was addressing was that of Gnosticism. This idea taught that ideas were the highest form of good in the created order. The quest of the faithful Gnostic was to have the right ideas. This idea was given a resurgence with Rene Descartes of the Enlightenment who said, "I think, therefore I am." This idea born from Plato's theory of forms, turned into a religion by the Gnostics is simply wrong. Ideas don't make things real; creation makes things real. Descartes existed because he was created by God, born of his parents, whether they believed or thought it to be so or not.

For the Gnostics, Jesus was just an idea, not real. You see if He were real, He could not have been entirely good. So, for the Gnostics Jesus was just an idea. He was a good idea. What he taught was good, but that was it, and now He is gone, so we move on to newer ideas always looking for the better or best idea.

Now, John had helped to evangelize the Greek world and now was the old, retired, exiled leader of the Christian faith, he wanted to make sure Christians understood the faith they professed as they were threatened by a new idea that claimed that Jesus was never human and that he only existed in thought or in spirit form. This is what the Gnostics taught.

Gnosticism was the first real theological challenge to Christianity, outside opposition from the Jews who felt the Christian faith was just an offshoot of Judaism, and John addressed it in his first letter. In the face of heresy, John wanted his people to know Jesus, so he wrote these words in I John 1:1-2:1

<sup>1</sup>That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup>The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup>We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup>We write this to make our joy complete.

<sup>5</sup>This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup>If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. <sup>7</sup>But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

<sup>8</sup>If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. <sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. <sup>10</sup>If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

<sup>1</sup>My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. <sup>2</sup>He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

In this amazing text, John the last disciple of Christ, gives his testimony. He calls it like he sees it. He tells the truth to those who would distort it. He says this is what we believe, and this is how we should live. He says, “What I am going to tell you is the truth, I know it is the truth because I have seen it, I have touched it, I have lived it. It is real and it is the truth. Whether you believe it or not, God came to this world as Jesus Christ and because He came, we can know God our creator. God became flesh so that you might be able to have a relationship with Him. You may think flesh is bad, but let me tell you, it is not. God became flesh in order that He might remove the sin, the brokenness and the darkness that infects all of creation. You may think that Jesus was just an illusion or a spiritual image of what is real, but I tell you God is real and He came to us Jesus Christ. If we believe this, we live. If we recognize that, our hope is in God we live. This is the message of Easter. However, if we think that we are sinless, we are fools. You Gnostics have it wrong. God is real He is not a distant spirit form. God is real, He is the light, and He is here, really. And, because He is real, we can have our lives really changed.” That, my friends, is the gospel.

I love this letter because it tells it like it is. John is not afraid of the truth. John knows that the truth is the truth whether we believe it or not. I used to think that we have to be passive and friendly about our faith. If we offend people, they won't hear the gospel and the message will be lost on them. However, I have learned that failing to tell someone the truth does them no favors. Simply avoiding the harsh reality of the truth allows people to live a lie. And lies hurt more than the truth.

Followers of Jesus should never shy away from the truth. Truth is good. It brings light to the darkness. Failing to tell the truth does no favors. When I am wrong, correct me. When culture is wrong stand up. People are better when we reform our ways. When I am right, or culture is right, honor that. But never, never, agree with evil, it only makes you part of the problem.

This is not a political thing. People on both sides of the aisle are often wrong, and sometimes right. When they are wrong call it out. That is what reforms the community. Injustice because of race is wrong and it should stop. Blaming one race for all the problems of a culture is wrong, and it should stop.

A failure to call out what is wrong just leads to bigger problems. I know our culture is struggling with how to identify gender. I don't have a position on how adults should handle gender dysphoria. It is not something I have to deal with in my life, so I am not an expert. But not speaking out on behalf of children is wrong. There are states today that are considering laws and courts in our legal system that are hearing arguments that have the force of law that will allow children as young as 5 years old decide their gender. The argument that children the age of 5 should be allowed to make life altering irreversible decisions for themselves free to adult guidance is crazy. It is not how God made us. Children are to be cared for and guided by morally sound adults. We call those people parents. If I let my children decide their identity when they were 5 my daughter would have chosen to be a kitten named Raye! She also would have drowned in the pool because she believed she could well before she learned. Instead, Kathy and I loved her and told her she was created to be our special child of God! Now as an adult she has grown and matured and is capable of making life changing decisions.

Today our society, our country is divided by race issues and injustice. There are people who want us to believe that diversity is about highlighting differences and history should be viewed only through the eyes of oppression. As a result, there are certain groups of people who can be identified by the color of their skin who are privileged oppressors and there are those who deserve compassion, because they belong to a racial group that has a history of victimization.

Well, that is one world view that is tearing us apart and using race to do it. It has become political and frankly it is wrong. (I believe) You see, the Bible teaches us that everyone was created in the image of God. Race and history are not part of God's blessing or history's curse. Everyone is created in the image of God. Because we are God's children, we bear His image and so do others. Every human being should be treated with the dignity and respect due a child of God.

Because we are all image bearer's injustice should always be opposed. No person deserves to be treated unjustly, no one! It is particularly heinous when injustice is perpetuated on the basis of race. Skin color, where you were born, economic condition, the language you speak make no difference in the Kingdom of God. As Christians this is our worldview, and we should stand for it whether or not others agree.

Today, it seems, the world doesn't want to hear the truth. It seems the world wants to make up its own truth and then play God. It is as if the world wants to walk in the darkness because it doesn't want to hear that it is wrong. The idea that sin is in our lives is offensive because it says that we are not perfect. In our culture, the only hope we have for salvation is through ourselves.

I think it is time we tell the truth. We cannot save ourselves; we need God. Maybe we need to follow John's example and preach the truth, as we know it, as God has revealed it. I think the world needs to hear the truth that God loves them in spite of their sin and that there is no need to walk in darkness. The truth shall set us free; all we need do is listen to it and allow ourselves to walk in the light. After all, "if we say we have no sin the truth is not in us and we deceive ourselves". Isn't it time for a little truth?

## **We Respond to the Voice of God**

Presentation Tithes & Offerings

Pastor Dana Pope

As we continue to worship, we respond to God's love for us, and the needs of the world, by blessing God's kingdom with our time, talents, energy and resources. Today as an act of offering, take this time to turn your heart to God and reflect on how you might be light and life to our hurting world. Ask God for wisdom and inspiration as we navigate this time of heartbreak, separation, grief, injustice and violence. Today and this week turn to God and let us dedicate ourselves to lean into Christ's peace and offer that to our world. Let us return God's tithes and our offerings to the church via mail or online giving, using text to give or the following link:

<https://onrealm.org/gracepclv/-/give/now>

Offertory

"A Shield About Me"

D. Thomas/W. Charles  
Kathy Koch & Savannah Scarlett

Offertory Prayer

Pastor Dana Pope

As we give these, tithes and offerings, O God, we pray that You would bless them and multiply them. As we turn our hearts to You we ask that Your hand would guide us and that we might be given opportunities in the days ahead to offer more of ourselves. Our lives, our words of encouragement and hope, our time and talents. We pray that You might use us to serve Your people and Your kingdom. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.



## We Go with God to Love and Serve

Closing Hymn      “Lead Me to the Cross”      B. Fraser  
Praise Team

Benediction      Pastor Jim Houston-Hencken

“May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face;  
The rains fall soft upon your fields.  
May you grow to see your children’s children,  
and until we meet again.  
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.”

Postlude      “Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah”  
Dr. David Dorway, organist

**As you continue to worship this week, please keep the following people in prayer, and reach out to one another in word or deed.**

### In Need of Prayer

Dolores Harris (Merrill Gardens )

Judy Aitken, Becky Aldridge, Fred & Mickie Bratschie, Bernard Buswell,  
Bill Carlston, Leslie Cary, Bob & Joan Clark, Carol Daniel, Ann Donithan,  
Rosamaria Duenas, Pennie & Wayne Everhart, Joice Franklin, Mary Gafford,  
Charlene Harper, Pam Kodey, Christian and Lara Kolberg, Dorell Koon, Richard Lyle,  
Carole McKinnis, Sherrie Miles, Don Moore, Maggie O’Donnell, Alice Oiler,  
Dodi Palmer, Mary Phillips, Aminta & Jorge Santanilla, Bruce Simon,  
Marty & Barbara Swartout, Mike Walsh, and Dick Wohletz

### In Memoriam:

Jack Crockett 3/18/2020  
Randy Innis 3/18/2020  
Clark Trapp 3/18/2020  
Ruthy Stull 3/19/2020  
Ted Phillips 4/1/2020  
Violet Cross 4/4/2020  
Bill Franklin 5/4/2020  
Greg Holt 5/7/2020  
Carol Mohr 5/25/2020

Priscilla Taylor 7/4/2020  
Louis Romero 8/8/2020  
Bettye Hodgkins 8/11/2020  
Gary Oiler 8/23/2020  
Donna Gibson 9/14/2020  
Audrey Mitchell 12/1/2020  
Alice Black 12/23/2020  
Phyllis McGuire 12/29/2020  
Carol Moore 12/30/2020  
Andrew Davis 1/1/2021  
Kay Stinson 1/3/2021  
Robert "Bob" Lockhart 1/16/2021  
Laverne Willman 1/11/2021  
Jennifer Moore 2/12/2021  
Joe Fontana 2/22/2021  
Greta Hougnon 3/17/2021