

# **“Different Pictures”**

*Fourth Sunday in Lent*

## **GATHER**

*People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town. As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence, for peace, for help.*

### **Praise Music**

#### **Welcome and Announcements**

Question to Ponder:

What does it mean to be interdependent with the environment?

### **Prelude**

#### **Threshold**

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

## **APPROACH**

*People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer—opening our hearts with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.*

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

#### **Opening Prayer of Confession**

Let us pray:

God of All Possibilities,  
Made in your image, you have tasked us as co-creators of a better world. You bestowed imagination and the ability to learn and progress.

But we are tired. Our energy wanes and enthusiasm wanes.  
The call for ideas, solutions, work-arounds and adaptations has been non-stop for us all—whether we are needing to find ways to keep children engaged and well, or figuring out how to maintain a passion for our work in the midst of trying times, or needing desperately to undo systems of oppression too long affecting our lives and the lives of our neighbors.  
Not only our livelihoods, but our liveliness is at stake.  
Too often we want to give up, declare it all too hard and simply isolate, waiting out the time for better days.  
It all feels overwhelming and so we look away, sometimes even from the need in our own community.

Help us, Healer. Show us our energy reserves.  
Forgive our cynicism. Move us to move  
one step at a time toward greater care for one another.  
In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

### *Silence*

### **Assurance**

I invite you to imagine a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. It may help to keep your eyes closed. This warm orb of light is deep within you, a flame always there and ready when you need it. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to ignite and spark inspiration. It floods your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. This light from you offers a beacon for those around you, whose own light reflects and multiplies your own. There is now exponentially more radiance.

Know this: We are gifted with agency to affect healing in the world. No. Matter. What.  
We are not alone and we can join with others to magnify hope.  
Christ will answer when we call, when we reach out for what we know can help.  
For you, for me, for all. Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...  
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

### **Peace**

I invite you to imagine the warmth that surrounds you extending to those who may be next to you in close proximity. Imagine it extending beyond your walls to  
the neighborhood...  
the wider community...  
the church...  
and seeing it spread like the rising sun, let it expand to all the world.  
Let this be our peace. **Amen.**

If you have not already, I invite you to open your eyes.

The peace of Christ is with you.

**And also with you.**

**Opening Hymn:** *“O Love that Will Not Let Me Go” UMH 480*

O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;  
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;  
My heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine’s blaze its day may brighter, fairer be,

O Joy that sleekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;  
I trace the rainbow thru the rain, and feel the promise is not vain, that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;  
I lay in dust life’s glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red life that shall endless be.

**BELIEVE**

*People were fortified by Jesus’ words and deeds that revealed care for all—especially those marginalized. We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.*

**Time for Children**

**A Contemporary Word**

The path of awakening is not about becoming who you are.

Rather it is about unbecoming who you are not.”

— **Albert Schweitzer**

**Special Music**

**An Ancient Word**

*Matthew 9: 18-26*

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well.” Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader’s house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, “Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

## Sermon

### ASK

*People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we come before the Holy One, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.*

### Song of Preparation: Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Lord, listen to your children praying, Lord, send your Spirit in this place; Lord,  
listen to your children praying, Send us love, send us pow'r,  
send us grace.

Repeat

### Prayers of the People

We pray this day for...

### KNOW

*The parting words Jesus' gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness.*

### Lord's Prayer

### Ritual Action for the Week

### RESPOND

*Scriptural accounts of healing often end with responses from the "crowd" of witnesses. How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as the Body of Christ?*

## **Closing Song** *“Be Thou My Vision” UMH 451*

Be thou my vision O Lord of my heart; naught be all else to me, save that thou art.  
Thou my best though, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

Be though my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
Thou and thou only, first in my heart, great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.

Great God of heaven, m victory won, may I reach heaven’s joys, O bright heaven’s Sun!  
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

## **Commission**

### **Blessing**

Now go with confidence  
that we will awaken, we will seek out and reach for  
the healing solutions that our neighbors, our communities, our world needs,  
recovering our depth of love for all  
and our joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:  
“You are not dead, you are sleeping.”

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver  
salve to your soul  
and a spring in your step.

**Amen.**

## **Postlude**