

Mount Vernon United Methodist Church
MORNING WORSHIP

April 7, 2024

PRELUDE "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" (arr. Mark Hayes) *Juliet Cho*

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, walk in the light.

We walk together as children of light and love.

Come, gather in the love of God.

We gather together as children of light and love.

Come, live in the unity of God's Holy Spirit.

We live together as children of light and love.

*OPENING HYMN 318 "Christ Is Alive"

1. Christ is alive! Let Christians sing.
His cross stands empty to the sky.
Let streets and homes with praises ring.
His love in death shall never die.

2. Christ is alive! No longer bound
to distant years in Palestine,
he comes to claim the here and now
and dwell in every place and time.

3. Not throned afar, remotely high,
untouched, unmoved by human pains,

but daily, in the midst of life,
our Savior in the Godhead reigns.

4. In every insult, rift, and war,
where color, scorn, or wealth divide,
he suffers still, yet loves the more,
and lives, though ever crucified.

5. Christ is alive, and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and all creation ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

*MORNING PRAYER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Light of the world, shine upon us with your Holy Spirit.

**Gather in our midst, that we might know you are truly
here. Guide us in unity and love, that we might be a
blessing of unity and love for the world. Amen.**

SPECIAL MUSIC "Deep River" *John Wilt, Soloist*

SCRIPTURE READING Esther 4:1-17

When Mordecai learned all that had been done, Mordecai tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and ashes, and went through the city, wailing with a loud and bitter cry; he went up to the entrance of the king's gate, for no one might enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. In every province, wherever the king's command and his

decree came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting and weeping and lamenting, and most of them lay in sackcloth and ashes.

When Esther's maids and her eunuchs came and told her, the queen was deeply distressed; she sent garments to clothe Mordecai, so that he might take off his sackcloth; but he would not accept them. Then Esther called for Hathach, one of the king's eunuchs, who had been appointed to attend her, and ordered him to go to Mordecai to learn what was happening and why. Hathach went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate, and Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries for the destruction of the Jews. Mordecai also gave him a copy of the written decree issued in Susa for their destruction, that he might show it to Esther, explain it to her, and charge her to go to the king to make supplication to him and entreat him for her people.

Hathach went and told Esther what Mordecai had said. Then Esther spoke to Hathach and gave him a message for Mordecai, saying, 'All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—all alike are to be put to death. Only if the king holds out the golden sceptre to someone, may that person live. I myself have not been called to come in to the king for thirty days.' When they told Mordecai what Esther had said, Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, 'Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.' Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, 'Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.' Mordecai then went away and did everything as Esther had ordered him.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

"Courageous Choices"

Rev. Jennifer Coffey

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH 881

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;

the third day he rose from the dead;

he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

* GLORIA 70

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen. Amen.**

OFFERING OF TITHES AND GIFTS

OFFERTORY "Tambourin" (Jean-Pilippe Rameau)

Juliet Cho

*DOXOLOGY 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 uplifts!
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

*OFFERTORY PRAYER

*PREPARATORY HYMN 308

"Thine Be the Glory"

**1. Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.
Angels in bright raiment
rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave clothes
where thy body lay.**

Refrain:

**Thine be the glory,
risen, conquering Son;
endless is the victory
thou o'er death hast won.**

**2. Lo! Jesus meets thee,
risen from the tomb;**

**lovingly he greets thee,
scatters fear and gloom.
Let the church with gladness
hymns of triumph sing,
for our Lord now liveth;
death hath lost its sting. *(Refrain)***

**3. No more we doubt thee,
glorious Prince of life!
Life is naught without thee;
aid us in our strife.
Make us more than conquerors,
through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan
to thy home above. *(Refrain)***

HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation (red hymnal, page 7)

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

Confession and Pardon (p. 8)

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hear the good news: Christ died for us while we were yet sinners; that proves God's love toward us. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Glory to God. Amen.

Great Thanksgiving (p. 9)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through the prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit. On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

The Lord's Prayer

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Receiving the Holy Elements

Congregational Hymns:

616 "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast"

617 "I Come with Joy"

641 "Fill My Cup, Lord"

BREAKING THE BREAD

GIVING THE BREAD AND CUP

Prayer After Holy Communion:

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*CLOSING HYMN 555 "Forward Through the Ages"

**1. Forward through the ages,
in unbroken line,
move the faithful spirits
at the call divine;
gifts in differing measure,
hearts of one accord,
manifold the service,
one the sure reward.**

Refrain:

**Forward through the ages,
in unbroken line,
move the faithful spirits
at the call divine.**

**2. Wider grows the kingdom,
reign of love and light;**

**for it we must labor,
till our faith is sight.
Prophets have proclaimed it,
martyrs testified,
poets sung its glory,
heroes for it died. [Refrain]**

**3. Not alone we conquer,
not alone we fall;
in each loss or triumph
lose or triumph all.
Bound by God's far purpose
in one living whole,
move we on together
to the shining goal. [Refrain]**

*BENEDICTION

*POSTLUDE "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" (arr. Mark Hayes)

Juliet Cho