

Worship Leader Guide

DATE: Sunday, May 18, 2025, 5th Sunday of Easter

SERIES:

Preacher: Pastor Amy

Liturgist: Stacy C

Accompanist: Leigh Ann C

Greeters/Ushers:

Media Technicians: Tammy M

Nursery Attendant: Shirley C

[9:55 AM]

PRELUDE "Light of the World" by Franklin Ritter

[10:00 AM]

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME & WORDS OF GRACE

Amy: The Lord be with you!

I am pastor Amy, and I use she/her pronouns, and I am glad that you are starting this Sunday morning here at Grace UMC. It is a joy to welcome you today whether you are here in our sanctuary today or joining us on livestream. We know we have a wonderful, diverse group of folks that come to worship with us online.

Friends, no matter where you come from today, or where you go at the close of this service, no matter what you believe or doubt, no matter what you feel or don't feel today, no matter your immigration status, no matter whom you love, you're welcome to come just as you are to be met by our God who knows you by name and who loves you and who wants to have an ever closer relationship with you. You are welcome here.

Let's pray: God of Becoming, sometimes we wonder how to praise you in a world that seems so fragile. Wars, climate catastrophes, and unjust laws can topple lives in an instant. Bodies made for connection, play, and rest are riddled with anxiety about how to survive systems of oppression. And yet, we long to celebrate what brings us joy and we long to worship what is good. In the paradox of life, guide us with your Radical Love. Amen.

Liturgist: Please stand as you are able and comfortable and join me in the call to worship.

*CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Today we gather to worship with the Spirit!

As we celebrate Their Expansive Love,

Many: They celebrate the ways we are learning compassion.

One: As we express gratitude for Their Faithfulness,

Many: They honor the ways we show up in life's struggles.

One: As we come to Them with more questions than answers,

Many: They live with us in the unknown.

One; Alleluia, Divinity is with us and within us!

Many: Let us worship God.

Liturgist: Let's lift our voices together in our opening hymn from the red hymnal page 384 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

***OPENING HYMN:** UMH 384 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of Heav'n to Earth come down,

Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown;
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
Into ev'ry troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit,
Let us find thy promised rest;
Take away our love of sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith as its beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Come, Almighty to deliver;
Let us all thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy host above,
Pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory
Till in Heav'n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise!

SCRIPTURE READING Revelation 21:1-6

Liturgist: Today's first lesson comes from the book of Revelation.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared. And the sea was also gone. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

³ I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people! God will live with them, and they will be God's people. Yahweh will be with them. ⁴ And will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever."

⁵ And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!" And then it was told to me, "Write this down, for what I tell you is trustworthy and true." ⁶ And God also said, "It is finished! I am the Alpha and the Omega—the Beginning and the End. To all who are thirsty I will give freely from the springs of the water of life.

One: This is the Word of God for the people of God.

Many: Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S MOMENT

ANTHEM "10,000 Reasons" arr. by Mason Brown - UMC Choir, Leigh Ann, Minister of Music

JOY & CONCERNS

Amy: As we make our way back to our seats, we will move into a time of prayer. Are there joys and concerns that you would like to lift, so that we can be in prayer and praise with each other today and in this coming week?

PRAYER HYMN TFWS #2226 Bind Us Together

Refrain:

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.

Bind us together, Lord, bind us together, Lord,
bind us together in love.

There is only one God, there is only one King;
There is only one body, that is why we sing. [Refrain]

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Amy:

LORD'S PRAYER

OFFERING OUR GIFTS AND OURSELVES

Poet, Adam Zagajewski, writes that we "must praise the mutilated world." Let us bring our offerings to God and each other as an act of praise in this mutilated world. For, even amidst systems of destruction, we are invited to attend to Life.

***DOXOLOGY** UMH #95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Holy Mystery, we desire to be a people who experience praise and grief as two sides of the coin of Love. Thank you for our teacher, Jesus, who lived deeply in this reality. Thank you for the prophet, Mary Magdalene, who tells us of death and life intertwined. Bless our offerings, that they may support what needs to be grieved and what needs to be grown. Amen.

TRUSTEES UPDATE

SECOND LESSON Acts 11:1-18

Amy: Today's second lesson comes to us from the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Soon the news reached the apostles and other believers in Judea that the Gentiles had received the word of God. ² But when Peter arrived back in Jerusalem, the Jewish believers criticized him. ³ "You entered the home of Gentiles and even ate with them!" they said. ⁴ Then Peter told them exactly what had happened. ⁵ "I was in the town of Joppa," he said, "and while I was praying, I went into a trance and saw a vision. Something like a large sheet was let down by its four corners from the sky. And it came right down to me. ⁶ When I looked inside the sheet, I saw all sorts of tame and wild animals, reptiles, and birds. ⁷ And I heard a voice say, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat them.'

⁸ “‘No, Lord,’ I replied. ‘I have never eaten anything that our Jewish laws have declared impure or unclean.’

⁹ “But the voice from heaven spoke again: ‘Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.’ ¹⁰ This happened three times before the sheet and all it contained was pulled back up to heaven.

¹¹ “Just then three men who had been sent from Caesarea arrived at the house where we were staying. ¹² The Holy Spirit told me to go with them and not to worry that they were Gentiles. These six brothers here accompanied me, and we soon entered the home of the man who had sent for us. ¹³ He told us how an angel had appeared to him in his home and had told him, ‘Send messengers to Joppa, and summon a man named Simon Peter. ¹⁴ He will tell you how you and everyone in your household can be saved!’

¹⁵ “As I began to speak,” Peter continued, “the Holy Spirit fell on them, just as he fell on us at the beginning. ¹⁶ Then I thought of the Lord’s words when he said, ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ ¹⁷ And since God gave these Gentiles the same gift he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to stand in God’s way?”

¹⁸ When the others heard this, they stopped objecting and began praising God. They said, “We can see that God has also given the Gentiles the privilege of repenting of their sins and receiving eternal life.”

One: This is the word of God for the people of God.

Many: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE “Transformation”

***CLOSING HYMN** UMH #408 The Gift of Love

Though I may speak with bravest fire,
And have the gift to all inspire,
And have not love, my words are vain,
As sounding brass, and hopeless gain.

Though I may give all I possess,
And striving so my love profess,
But not be given by love within,
The profit soon turns strangely thin.

Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
Our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
By this we worship and are freed.

***CHARGE AND BLESSING**

Go forth with this assurance, beloveds:
In your grief, God is with you and God is within you.
In your joy, God is with you and God is within you.
Let us go forth, for both mourning and celebration
are the work of the people of God.
Go in peace. Amen.

POSTLUDE “Postlude in D” by Francois Couperin Leigh Ann Corcoran, Minister of Music