

## WE GATHER IN CELEBRATION

### Prelude

*Meditation on Wondrous Love*  
By David Lasky

### Opening Sentences

One: This is the day that our God has made!

Many: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

### Centering Words

### Centering Song

*Gathered Here*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first two phrases, and the second staff contains the next two phrases. The lyrics are: "Gath-ered here in the mys-tery of this hour, gath-ered here in one strong bod - y, gath-ered here in the strug-gle and the power, Spir - it draw near." The numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 are placed above the first four measures of the music, indicating a four-measure phrase structure.

### Call to Worship

One: Do you feel it? God's kingdom is beneath our feet.

Many: **We live in the new creation shaped by God  
out of our brokenness.**

One: Do you know it? God's reconciling love in Christ  
has shattered our ways of viewing people.

Many: **No longer do we label our sisters and brothers,  
we welcome them with open arms.**

One: Do you believe it? God has made everything, including us,  
new,

Many: **and commissions us to share this good news with  
everyone!**

### Opening Hymn

*There Is A Balm in Gilead (verses 1 & 3)*  
Words and music on page 7

# WE CELEBRATE THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

*We welcome Hailey Jane Kuchta and Akai Xavier Townes into the Christian family through the sacrament of Baptism.*

Invitation

Promises of the Family & Congregation

Act of Baptism

Prayer

Congregational Welcome

**ALL:** Hailey and Akai,  
we welcome you with joy into the common life  
of this church and the whole family of God.  
We promise you our friendship and prayers  
as we share the hopes and labors of the  
church of Jesus Christ.  
By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue  
to grow together in God's knowledge and love  
and be witnesses of our risen Savior. Amen.

Song of Welcome

*Child of God*  
by Mark Hayes

Passing of the Peace

Children's Moment

Rev. Karma Cloud

Lenten Creation Care Moment

Joanne Kornoelje

Creation Care Song

*Touch the Earth Lightly*



Touch the earth light-ly, use the earth gent-ly, nour-ish the life



of the world in our care: Gift of great won-der, ours to sur-



- ren-der, So that the chil-dren to-mor-row will share.

## Offering

Special Offering

One Great Hour of Sharing

Alex Schwarm

### WE OFFER OUR PRAYER

Sung Preparation to Prayer *I Want Jesus to Go with Me (vs. 1)*



I want Je-sus to go with me; I want Je-sus to go with  
me. All a-long my pil-grim jour-ney, Oh, I want Je-sus  
to go with me.

### Prayers of the People

Response: One: God, in your mercy,  
Many: hear our prayers.

### Responsive Lord's Prayer

One: Our Father, who art in heaven;

Many: our Parent who embraces us ALL as children,

One: hallowed be your name;

Many: may we never use your name to hate or exclude.

One: Your kin-dom come;

Many: not the kingdoms that divide themselves over borders,

One: your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Many: In all places, especially where violence and fear reign.

One: Give us this day our daily bread;

Many: so that we may share our bread with those who hunger;

One: and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who  
trespass against us;

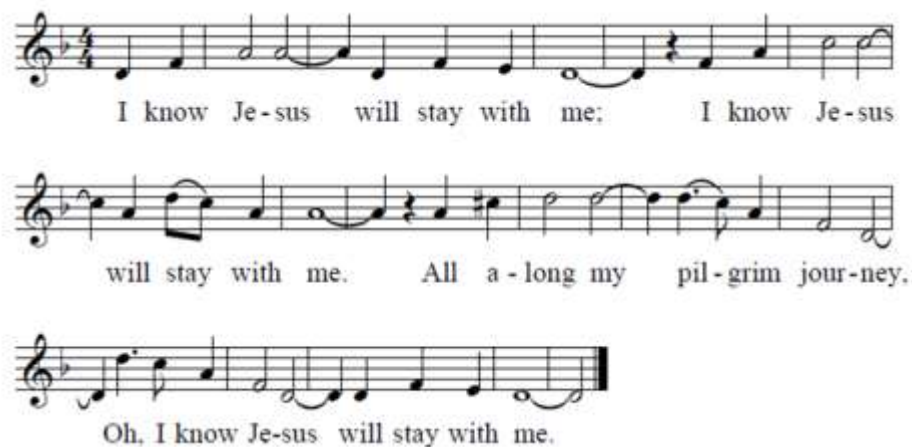
Many: helping us to move from self-interest to compassion.

One: And lead us not into temptation;  
Many: **especially the temptation to be indifferent to suffering or to confuse our priorities with your own;**

One: but deliver us from evil;  
Many: **and may we become a haven and advocate for those devastated by evil.**

One: For yours is the kin-dom and the power and the glory forever;  
Many: **in you, the world finds hope. AMEN!**

**Sung Response to Prayer**      *I Want Jesus to Go With Me (vs. 3)*



I know Je-sus will stay with me; I know Je-sus  
will stay with me. All a-long my pil-grim jour-ney.  
Oh, I know Je-sus will stay with me.

**WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WISDOM**

**Scripture Readings:                      Luke 15: 1-3, 11-32**

15Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.” 3So he told them this parable:  
“There was a man who had two sons. 12The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and

before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. <sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>“Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. <sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. <sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

One: May God’s wonder be revealed by the mystery of these words.

Many: **Thanks be to God!**

Sermon "Shutting the Door on Grace" Rev. Ann Ralosky

Anthem *Open Wide The Door of Mercy*  
Words and music by Daniel Greig, arr. Brad Nix

## **WE GO INTO THE WORLD**

### **Announcements**

Closing Hymn *There is a Balm in Gilead (verse 2)*

### **The Closing Commission**

One: The spirit of God is upon us.

All: **God has anointed us  
to bear good news to the afflicted,  
to bind up the broken hearted,  
to proclaim freedom to the captives,  
to open the prisons of those who are bound.  
Let us go forth in the name of Christ to bring**

peace into broken relationships, healing to  
alienated persons, action to protect our planet  
and justice into oppressive  
structures. AMEN.

## Benediction

## Postlude

*Metamorphosis Four (excerpt)*  
By Philip Glass

### SERVICE NOTES

*Thank you to our volunteer worship leaders this morning.*

**Worship Leaders:** Rev. Ann Ralosky

**Liturgist:** Phyllis Stone

**Reader:** Ceceila Alderman-Williams

**Ushers:** Rev. Heather Cherrey, Stella Wilkins and Terrence Williams

**Coffee Hour Host:** Phyllis Crichlow

**Coffee Hour Setup Team:** Steve Cutaia, Tim Duhamel, and Mike Harney

**Music Leaders:** Julie Morgan and David Salyers

**AV Techs:** Jason Jinson & Joe Mondo

*A gift to the food bank has been made by Luis and Nancy Pi-Sunyer in grateful appreciation for the meals, cards, prayers and love from our church family as we heal and grow stronger.*

*Gratitude to the Iona Community for use of some of our worship language.*



*Scan this QR Code  
with your camera or  
scanning app to  
quickly donate  
online!*

### You can make a donation or sustaining gift online at any time!

There are many ways to give to FCC each Sunday. You can easily set up your sustaining gift, your Sunday Offering, or a one-time contribution.

**ONLINE:** Scan this QR Code or go to [www.fccmontclair.org/giving](http://www.fccmontclair.org/giving).

**TEXT:** You can text a donation to 877-346-1045 followed by a space, and then the amount of your donation (follow the one time set up instructions.)

**CHECK:** If you give by check it must be made out to "First Congregational Church," (not "FCC") and can be put in the offertory basket, or mailed to 40 So. Fullerton Avenue, Montclair, NJ, 07042.

*Thank you.*

Jer. 8:18-22; 46:11; Acts 10:34-43

African-American spiritual; alt.

## Refrain

There is a balm in Gil-e-ad, to make the wound-ed whole,

## Last time, end

there is a balm in Gil-e-ad, to heal the sin-sick soul.

1 Some - times I feel dis - cour-aged, and think my work's in vain,  
 2 Don't ev - er feel dis - cour-aged, for Je - sus is your friend,  
 3 If you can - not preach like Pe - ter, if you can - not pray like Paul,

## to Refrain

But then the Ho-ly Spir-it re-vives my soul a-gain.  
 who, if you ask for knowl-edge, will nev-er fail to lend.  
 you can tell the love of Je-sus, who died to save us all.

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Enneagram Follow-up Workshop with Cullen McVoy, April 12, 1:00-2:30pm**

Come and share your thoughts about which Enneagram type you might be, and receive feedback from Cullen and the group. **If you weren't able to attend the first workshop**, and don't have any idea of your type, he will be giving a brief recap of the types. If you want to explore the types beforehand, feel free to contact him and he would be happy to bring you up to speed ([culizabet@msn.com](mailto:culizabet@msn.com)). You can also get concise summaries of the types at <https://www enneagraminstitute.com/>.

## **Ongoing Events**

### **Weekly Labyrinth Walks, Wednesdays 11am-1pm in the sanctuary.**

All are welcome!

### **Slow Motion Bible Study—Thursdays, 7pm on Zoom!**

FCC member, Rev. Victor Peterson, will lead an engaging exploration of our scriptures each Thursday evening on Zoom.

### **"Women Of A Certain Age" Gathering - Every First Friday 11am-1pm in the Library**

An informal gathering of women 65 and over who would like to develop friendships and share conversation. They will meet **every first Friday** in the FCC library. Bring a bag lunch if you like! Contact Rev. Heather Cherrey at [revcherrey@optonline.net](mailto:revcherrey@optonline.net) for more info.

### **Underground Church (monthly—usually Third Saturdays,) 10:30am in the Sanctuary—Next Date is April 19 in the Guild Room**

An intimate and interactive worship experience that hearkens back to the early church.

### **Full Spectrum Spirituality (FSS) - LGBTQ+ Gathering -Sundays Weekly During Coffee Hour in Room 5 (Parents Room)**

We will chat about life, spirituality, and whatever else comes up! Led by Lex Lourenco and Jasmin Urban. If you are interested in joining this group, please text Lex at 856-332-7448.

### **Green Team Ministry Meeting (2nd Sundays) 12-1pm in the FCC Library**

Learn about FCC's climate justice initiatives, be part of planning our events, and live your faith by taking action for the planet.

*For more details check the calendar on our "Upcoming Events" page:*  
<https://fccmontclair.org/upcoming-events-at-fcc/>