



# The United Church of Bethel

An Open, Affirming Congregation of the UCC/UUA

April 11<sup>th</sup>, Second Sunday in Easter, 2021

Tom Harty – Pastor

Becky Kondi- Keyboard & Vocals, Larry Nobile – Guitar & Vocals,

Seth Stoddard Technical Director

♠= Please Stand If you Are Able

All Prayers and Service Music are Found in the Folders in the Music Racks

## Centering & Prelude

## Welcome & Announcements

## Introit

## Greeting and Responsive Call to Worship

L The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

P **And also with you.**

L 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 him thanks and praise**

At the beginning of the day, at the beginning of the week, the faithful yet fearful people gathered together. It was then that the Spirit of God came among them and whispered:  
**Peace be with you.**

Their hearts skipped a beat as they double checked that the lock on the front door was still latched. So the Presence of God spoke a little louder:  
**Peace be with you.**

They looked around at each other, puzzled, amazed, befuddled, and bewildered. Some smiled. Some doubted. Some wondered if it were just too magical sounding or too good to be true. So the Christ showed them that his own scars were not the end of the story and that is when the words of God began to feel joyous:  
**Peace be with you.**

From that day on, the people of God repeated the words to one another when they gathered. From one generation to the next, they exchanged the words as a greeting to one another to remember that Holy interruption to fear:  
**Peace be with you!**

## .Invocation and Lord's Prayer

♠ Hymn NCH 237 I come to the Garden Alone

## Prayer of Confession

Holy One, our confession won't be news to you, but maybe if we allow it to be spoken aloud, You can help us find a way forward.

**Holy One, we have doubts. We're not talking about doubts like Thomas—his were perfectly reasonable—after all we too long to see You, touch You, and truly know You**

Our doubts feel different. We doubt that the peace you offer is really possible because our own minds are a mess of thoughts.

**We doubt that new life is possible because the wounds we bear are still overwhelming.**

We doubt that You really intended to call us when You called the disciples to be of service in creating a new way of being in the world

**We hear the age-old stories, but we are filled with doubts about ourselves, and if we are honest, doubts about your Holy possibilities. Holy One, in these moments of stillness, hear our doubts and settle our hearts, souls, and minds.**

### **Words of Assurance**

You are God's beloveds because of who you are, and who you are is a people called and gifted to be a presence of peace and love in this world. Your shortcomings are forgiven. Grace abounds. God calls to you. Peace be with you.

### **Passing of the Peace**

**First Reading: Acts 4: 32-35**

**Psalms 133 A Song of Ascents**

*refrain: How Pleasant to Live in Unity*

✦ **Gloria Patri**

**Epistle: 1 John 1:1-2:2**

**Choral Anthem**

✦ **Gospel John 20:19-31**

✦ **Hymn NCH 254 These Things did Thomas Count**

**Sermon**

**Joys and Concerns**

**Pastoral Prayer**

*Choral Response: Hear Our Prayer O Lord.*

**Offering**

✦ **Doxology & Prayer of Dedication**

✦ **Hymn NCH 249 Peace I Leave with You My Friends**

✦ **Choral Benediction**

**Postlude**

(Please remain seated for a period of quiet meditation and appreciation for the music our worship team provides.)

*Whoever you are, Wherever you are on life's journey, You are welcome here.*

*Our Faith is 2000 Years Old; Our Thinking is Not.*

**First Reading**  
**Acts 4:32–35**

32 Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. 33 With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. 34 There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. 35 They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

**PSALM**  
**Psalm 133**

A Song of Ascents.

**How pleasant to live in unity**

- 1 How very good and pleasant it is  
when kindred live together in unity!
- 2 It is like the precious oil on the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
on the beard of Aaron,  
running down over the collar of his robes.
- 3 It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion.  
For there the LORD ordained his blessing,  
life forevermore.

**How pleasant to live in unity**

## Epistle Reading

### 1 John 1:1–2:2

1 We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us— 3 we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; 7 but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

## Gospel Reading

### John 20:19–31

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.”

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” 27 Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” 28 Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” 29 Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name

