



Congregational Church of Austin,
United Church of Christ
An Open and Affirming Congregation

An Open & Affirming Congregation in the United Church of Christ
Order of Worship for 4/7/2024
Second Sunday After Easter

** Please rise as you are able, in body or in spirit.*

Words for Centering

Rumi

Every object and being in the universe is a jar overflowing with wisdom and beauty, a drop of the Tigris that cannot be contained by any skin. Every jarful spills and makes the earth more shining, as though covered in satin...Make peace with the universe. Take joy in it. It will turn to gold. Resurrection will be now. Every moment, a new beauty.

Ringling of the Bells

Prelude

Improvisation on Morning is Broken

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel

If you are visiting for the first time, we are so glad you have joined us! Thank you for leading us in worship with your presence!

***Hymn of Celebration**

New Life

UCC Sing! Prayer and Praise #156

***Call to Worship**

Roberto Hernández

Rejoice, Congregational Church of Austin, the Easter season is upon when we celebrate Christ's transformative love!

Transformative love? Have you seen the news lately? It's filled with war, pettiness, and division. Show us examples of this transformative love!

You sound like Thomas in this morning's story from the gospel of John. He didn't believe that the vision of Jesus had come to his fellow disciples. He wanted proof.

And yet, the vision of Christ came to Thomas' skeptical spirit. Perhaps if we look around, we will see visions of Christ in our skeptical spirits as well.

That's right! So, bring your authentic questions and need for proof as the vision of Christ transforms us today.

Come, let us worship God!

Reading of the Hebrew Scriptures Psalm 133 Roberto Hernández

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! 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. It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life for evermore.

Reading of the Christian Scriptures John 20:19-31 Rev. Ginny

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.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Divine Parent has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 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.'

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.' 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.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' 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.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Child of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

This is the spirit of God's love. **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn of Reflection** We Live by Faith and Not by Sight *NCH256**

Prayers for God's Beloved Community Rev. Ginny

Special Music

Reflecting in Community Searching for Authentic Meaning Rev. Ginny

Silence

Invitation to Generosity and the Sacrament of Communion Rev. Ginny

You are invited to financially give so that we can continue to serve our neighbors in Austin and throughout the world. Your generosity can be with cash, a check, or scanning the QR code to give online (see the back of this bulletin). Thank you for your generosity.

Communion

An Invitation to Everyone

The Breaking of the Bread and Pouring of the Cup

A Prayer of Nourishing Love

Offertory Music Blackbird J Lennon & P. McCartney

***Doxology** Tune, All Creatures of Our God & King

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God, all creatures here below. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ, and Spirit One.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Amen.

***Prayer of Dedication**

***Sending Song** Come, Gather in This Special Place NCH335

***Benediction** Rev. Ginny

Postlude Hymn to Freedom O. Peterson

You are invited to be seated and listen to the postlude as our gift to you from the Divine.

After the postlude, we will have a time of joys and concerns and prayer. If you are visiting with us, you are invited to stay for as much or as little as you choose. We are grateful for your presence with us today!

Welcome to the Congregational Church of Austin, UCC!

If you are visiting for the first time, we are so glad you have joined us! We invite you to join us after worship for a time of fellowship so that we can learn more about you and share more about our church with you!
Thank you for leading us in worship with your presence!

Leading In Today's Service:

Rev. Dr. Ginny Brown Daniel, Interim Pastor and Teacher

Roberto Hernández, Usher and Deputy Deacon

John Goff, Sound and Worship Streaming

Roberto Hernández, Worship Leader

Jonathan Geer, Piano

Amy Harris, Violin

** *When we refer to the New Century Hymnal, we use the acronym, NCH.*

Invitation to Baptismal Bowl and Prayer Net During Offertory

You are invited to bring your offering forward and place in the offering plate. You are also invited to the table near the prayer net. Our baptismal bowl is there for you to dip your fingers in God's Living Water as a baptismal reminder that you are created in God's image and loved wholly just as you are! You are also invited to take a prayer ribbon (symbolizing the prayers you bring with you today) and tie it to the prayer net to remind us that God holds the collective prayers of creation together in God's love for all of creation.

If you would rather remain seated and participate, simply lift your hand and an usher will bring you an offering plate and prayer ribbon. Please participate as much or as little as you choose.