

Macon United Methodist Church
190 W Bell Street, Macon, IL 62544; (217) 764-5133
Pastor Terry McDorman; 630-390-0414; accesstogodshouse@gmail.com
April 28, 2024 **Fifth Sunday of Easter**

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

“As the gardener, by severe pruning, forces the sap of the tree into one or two vigorous limbs, so should you stop off your miscellaneous activity and concentrate your force on one or a few points.” R. W. Emerson



RINGING OF THE CHURCH BELL inviting the community to join in worship

PRELUDE

GATHERING

Words of welcome and announcements

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

***CALL TO WORSHIP (responsive)**

Easter people, we have been saved by the Risen Christ, the life-giving Vine.

We abide in Love, the life-giving Vine.

We are branches of the Vine—sustained, nurtured, and pruned by Love.

We have no life apart from Love, the life-giving Vine.

When we make our home in the Vine, and the Vine makes a home in us, we bear the fruit of Love.

We produce the fruit of Love, the life-giving Vine.

Easter people, how shall we bear the fruit of Love, the life-giving Vine?

We will love and learn to love as we rest, play, work, and build community with God and one another. Amen.

***OPENING HYMN**

“Gather Us In”

(FWS #2236)

1. Here in this place new light is streaming, now is the darkness vanished away,
see in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day.

Gather us in, the lost and forsaken, gather us in, the blind and the lame;
call to us now, and we shall awaken, we shall arise at the sound of our name

2. We are the young--our lives are a myst'ry, we are the old--who yearn for your face,
we have been sung throughout all of hist'ry, called to be light to the whole human race.
Gather us in--the rich and the haughty, gather us in--the proud and the strong;

give us a heart so meek and so lowly, give us the courage to enter the song.
3. Here we will take the wine and the water, here we will take the bread of new birth, here you shall call your sons and your daughters, call us anew to be salt for the earth. Give us to drink the wine of compassion, give us to eat the bread that is you; nourish us well, and teach us to fashion lives that are holy and hearts that are true.

4. Not in the dark of buildings confining, not in some heaven, light years away, but here in this place the new light is shining, now is the Kingdom, now is the day. Gather us in and hold us forever, gather us in and make us your own; gather us in, all peoples together, fire of love in our flesh and our bones.

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

Halleluia! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed! May this declaration resound not only in these walls but touch the lives of all we meet and forever be the truth of which we speak. Your love, once sown within a garden, tended for your own people, neglected and rejected, now spreads its sweet perfume in this place and wherever it is shown. Halleluia! Jesus is risen! He is risen indeed!

COMMUNITY PRAYERS

Let us lift our prayers in thoughts of praise.

SILENT PRAYER

Let us share our doubts with God.

THE LORD'S PRAYER (all)

FIRST SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 8:26-40 (CEB)

An angel from the Lord spoke to Philip, "At noon, take the road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a desert road.) So he did. Meanwhile, an Ethiopian man was on his way home from Jerusalem, where he had come to worship. He was a eunuch and an official responsible for the entire treasury of Candace. (Candace is the title given to the Ethiopian queen.) He was reading the prophet Isaiah while sitting in his carriage. The Spirit told Philip, "Approach this carriage and stay with it."

Running up to the carriage, Philip heard the man reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you really understand what you are reading?"

The man replied, "Without someone to guide me, how could I?" Then he invited Philip to climb up and sit with him. This was the passage of scripture he was reading: *Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent so he didn't open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was taken away from him. Who can tell the story of his descendants because his life was taken from the earth?*

The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, about whom does the prophet say this? Is he talking about himself or someone else?" Starting with that passage, Philip proclaimed the good news about Jesus to him. As they went down the road, they came to some water.

The eunuch said, “Look! Water! What would keep me from being baptized?” He ordered that the carriage halt. Both Philip and the eunuch went down to the water, where Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Lord’s Spirit suddenly took Philip away. The eunuch never saw him again but went on his way rejoicing. Philip found himself in Azotus. He traveled through that area, preaching the good news in all the cities until he reached Caesarea.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God, we are so worried about future generations. We want them to remain so that they can learn your ways. We worry that we won’t be here to tell them about you. We are worried they won’t know about your love. Remove this bad fruit from us, O God. Trim away this branch. Remove that twig. Burn it in the fire. Remain with us so that we might show your glory as we seek to grow again. Feed us with your words so that we might find the new life we need. Amen.

SECOND SCRIPTURE READING

John 15:1-8 (CEB)

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vineyard keeper. He removes any of my branches that don’t produce fruit, and he trims any branch that produces fruit so that it will produce even more fruit. You are already trimmed because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. A branch can’t produce fruit by itself, but must remain in the vine. Likewise, you can’t produce fruit unless you remain in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can’t do anything. If you don’t remain in me, you will be like a branch that is thrown out and dries up. Those branches are gathered up, thrown into a fire, and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified when you produce much fruit and in this way prove that you are my disciples.

MESSAGE

“Blooming in Spring”

Pastor Terry

HYMN

“For the Beauty of the Earth”

(UMH # 92)

1. For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
for the love which from our birth over and around us lies;
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.
2. For the beauty of each hour of the day and of the night,
hill and vale, and tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light;
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

3. For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's delight,
for the mystic harmony, linking sense to sound and sight;
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.
4. For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
friends on earth and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild;
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.
5. For thy church, that evermore lifteth holy hands above,
offering up on every shore her pure sacrifice of love;
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.
6. For thyself, best Gift Divine, to the world so freely given,
for that great, great love of thine, peace on earth, and joy in heaven:
Lord of all, to thee we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

INVITATION TO SHARE

It's hard to know if we are growing, but no one has seen God either. We see God in the love we share. We grow with God in the mercy we give. Let us give our gifts of love and mercy.

PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS

***DOXOLOGY**

(UMH # 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!

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION (unison)**

Gracious God, as we offer our gifts today, we reflect on the wisdom in the words from John's gospel. In this imagery, we recognize our role as branches, connected to you, the source of our strength and vitality. Help us stay rooted in your love, producing fruit that brings glory to your name. May these gifts signify our commitment to abide in your teachings and work joyfully in response to your love. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

MUSICAL REFLECTION

CLOSING PRAYER (unison)

When everything was dark and it seemed that the sun would never shine again, your love broke through. Your love was too strong, too wide, too deep for death

to hold. The sparks cast by your love dance and spread and burst forth with resurrection light. Gracious God, we praise you for the light of new life made possible through Jesus. We praise you for the light of new life that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection. We praise you for the light of new life that continues to shine in our hearts today. We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy, will live in us each day; and that we will be bearers of that light into the lives of others. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN “How Can I Keep From Singing?” (FWS #2212)**

1. My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far-off hymn that hails a new creation.
Refrain: No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?
2. Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul. How can I keep from singing?
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?
3. What though my joys and comforts die? I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round? Songs in the night he giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?
4. The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from singing?
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heaven and earth, how can I keep from singing?

***BENEDICTION**

POSTLUDE

Special thankyou's to all those that assisted with worship today.

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK: 41

ATTENDANCE GOAL: 70

Be certain to check the church website, <https://maconilumc.net/> for updated information about the church, events and news. Please use webmaster.maconumc@gmail.com to submit updates or additions to the church website.

DR. DALE SPIRES' MEMORIAL SERVICE
Saturday, May 11, 2024, 10:00AM at Macon UMC.

RICE MEALS

Macon UMC would like to host another rice-meal packing event this summer. The congregation has already contributed \$1040 toward the required \$1,350 needed for the project. Donations are requested to cover the remainder.

PASTORAL CARE

Did you know that the church has a ministry of pastoral care to serve those that reside in retirement and/or multi-level care facilities? If you or someone you know might benefit from a visit or phone call, please let the church office know so that contact can be made.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESENCE AND SERVICE

Sun May 5 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. May 5 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun. May 5 11:00 am Outreach Committee Meeting; Pastor's office
Sat May 11 10:00 am Dr. Dale Spires' Memorial Service, Macon UMC
Sun May 12 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. May 12 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service
Sun May 19 7:00 am UMM Breakfast, Fellowship Hall
Sun May 19 9:00 am Sunday School
Sun. May 19 10:00 am Worship and Zoom Service

BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

Apr 29 Devin Forden and Vic Serbe May 02 Charles Kilzer
May 04 Rev. Terry McDorman

MISSIONS



Items requested by the food pantry are: Any kind of cereal and/or oatmeal, canned fruit and vegetables, canned soup, pasta sauce, and shampoo. Cash donations are always welcome.