

## Leading Causes of Life: Choose Life

August 30, 2020

Gathering Music

Susan Doherty

### ENTERING IN

Greeting

Rev. Gaye

Call to Worship

Revs Gaye & Glenn

God is Good!  
All the time!

*Welcome to the Church in Diaspora on this blessed Sunday,  
the 30th of the 8th month of the year of Coronavirus 2020!*

**But who's counting?**

Welcome if you're watching in hi-def, lo-fi or have to keep rebooting  
your screen (or your soul) because it's so worn out.

**When glitches and hiccups happen,  
remember God dwells in the interruptions, too.**

*Welcome to you if you are old or young, or a little bit of each;  
queer or straight, or a little bit of each;  
doubting or believing, saint or sinner, or a little bit of each.*

*Welcome to people of all colors, all genders,  
all body shapes and sizes, all physical, mental, and emotional  
abilities and moments.*

**Because we are here and there and everywhere,  
yet somehow still together as One today,  
this Body of Christ is whole and a little more perfect.**

Now remember, you *have* a whole body even though it sometimes seems—staring into screens—that you are nothing but eyes and brains.

***Welcome all of yourself to this moment, with a hand on your heart, and one on your belly, breathing more deeply, remembering that in many languages ‘breath’ and ‘spirit’ are the same word.***

Now reach out your blessing hands in every direction! Welcome the creatures you are sharing space with, then your neighbors, then strangers afar, to this moment of peace and worship.

***Send out peace with your body, and feel it echo back!***

**Peace be with you!**

**Opening Song**

**W&S 3152 v.1,2**

***Welcome***

## Prayer Time/Lord's Prayer

*Hurts & Hallelujahs*

**Rev. Gaye**

*Call to Prayer*

**Sherri & Greg**

*Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer*

**Rev. Glenn**

In these quieter times, God of peace,  
as in the busyness of our hectic days,  
you hear the true prayers of not just what we say,  
but also what we do and who we are.

Hear us as we join our hearts in unity to pray for your church.  
May we be united in your truth, committed in your love,  
and sanctified by your grace, that with one heart and one voice  
we might proclaim your gospel in word and deed,  
praising you for your abiding presence in our midst  
as a community of faith.

We pray for our fellow creatures,  
this world which you lovingly made,  
and the people of earth with all their diversity and commonality.

We lift to you those in our world who weep,  
and those who cause their weeping;  
those without food, clothing, shelter or a means of sustaining life  
with the dignity of one whom you have created.

We pray for those who distort the good news of the gospel,  
who make gods out of things,  
out of themselves,  
out of their systems, institutions or structures...  
and who find it all so hollow and empty.

We pray for those who live without meaning and hope,  
who live as objects of the whims of others,  
and those who live in broken families,

broken communities,  
and a broken world.

Lead your church, we pray, toward a new vision  
of our mission to them in Christ—the vision of shalom—  
both those who are afar off in other lands, but also here,  
where each of us may encounter them personally.

Tender and compassionate friend,  
give us the assurance that you are here among your people,  
and in the gifts of quiet and rest  
in this celebration of your word and table.

Enable us with your guidance to be your church  
and to do your will in our common life together.

Pour out your Spirit on those who are suffering,  
especially as we lift to you our own needs and the needs  
of those whose lives are closely linked with our own:  
and those we name in the silence of our hearts.

Bless us to follow in the paths of those saints  
who have gone before us in faith, whose steps were taken  
in the sure and certain comfort of your presence,  
that we may faithfully glorify you now,  
in your church and your world, forever.

For these prayers we offer in the name and spirit of Jesus, your  
Christ, our Lord, by praying together the prayer he taught us...

**LISTENING, LEARNING, LOVING**

## Sharing the Word(s)

### Luke 24:1-5

Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb, bringing the fragrant spices they had prepared.

<sup>2</sup> They found the stone rolled away from the tomb,  
<sup>3</sup> but when they went in, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. <sup>4</sup> They didn't know what to make of this.

Suddenly, two men were standing beside them in gleaming bright clothing. <sup>5</sup> The women were frightened and bowed their faces toward the ground, but the men said to them,

*“Why do you look for the living among the dead? :*

### Excerpts from “Leading Causes of Life”

“... It seems that every generation needs some help in remembering the point of it all: That life passes through us and beyond us.

(We're) especially indebted to Jonas Salk's radical curiosity about life, and his playful hope for an “epidemic of health.” Salk respected the swarming intelligence of viral epidemics that find ways to move around the planet adapting all the time to find the niches here and here amid the weakness of human society.

Opportunistic, unpredictable, persistent, and from time to time deadly to their human hosts, viruses would seem to have all the high cards. But humans actually carry on quite a respectable fight—not because we can be like viruses, but because we have another set of strategies.

For instance, while we don't reproduce very often, we do so in the context of complex bonds of nurture, dependency, and affection that persist “in sickness and in health.”

We humans don't swarm, but we do recognize patterns, analyze, reflect, remember, plan, and sometimes act rationally. We also act with passion and hope undergirded by our powerful ability to create symbols and ritual that hold us up and pull us forward. And, of course, we're really good with all sorts of tools. Over the last several hundred thousand years, the epidemic of human health has competed quite well with viral life. While we should give due respect to avian flu, AIDS, (Ebola, and now COVID-19), the human life strategy is worth understanding. In a time when fear seems to fill up our imagination leaving no room for anything else, it is important for those that love at all to think that life may pass through us, and beyond us. Maybe we can be part of a renewed "epidemic of health!"

### Deuteronomy 30:15-20

*These are the words of Moses...*

<sup>15</sup> Look at what I've done for you today: I've placed in front of you... Life and Good...Death and Evil.

<sup>16</sup> And I command you today: Love GOD, your God. Walk in God's ways. Keep God's commandments, regulations, and rules so that you will live, *really* live, **live exuberantly**, blessed by GOD, your God, in the land you are about to enter and possess.

<sup>17-18</sup> But I warn you: If you have a change of heart, refuse to listen obediently, and willfully go off to serve and worship other gods, you will most certainly die. You won't last long in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

<sup>19-20</sup> I call Heaven and Earth to witness (to) you today:  
I place before you Life and Death, Blessing and Curse.  
Choose life so that you and your children will live.

And love GOD, your God, listening obediently to God,  
firmly embracing God.

Oh yes, God is **LIFE** itself,  
a long *life* settled on the soil that GOD, your God,  
promised to give your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

**Message for Our Day**

**Rev Gaye**

## Our Tithes and Offerings

Rev. Glenn

When we could choose to be selfish,  
 may we share from our abundance;  
 when we could choose to be hoarders,  
 let us give away all we have;  
 when we could choose to be broken,  
 let us be reconciled with those around us.  
 Bless our lives, as well as these gifts, we pray. Amen.

*Offertory*

### *A Living Prayer*

Greg & Sherri Ramsay

## Sacrament of Holy Communion

Revs Gaye & Glenn

### Invitation to the Table

*Friends, God prepares a feast for you and for all people;  
 a feast of good things,*

a feast of peace.

*Come and taste.*

Eat and be filled.

*Drink deep and never thirst again.*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

Eternal One, who cares for each one of us  
 as if you had no one else to care for,  
*and who cares for all of us even as you care for each,*  
 we come here because you have invited us.

*We recognize at the deepest levels of our beings  
 that it is at this table that we are affirmed and made whole.*

Enable us to know now the presence of the Christ,  
*the one who calls us to be family,*  
 the one in whose presence no other can be called a stranger.

*Forgive us that we have been hard of heart,  
 that we have failed to acknowledge others as brothers and sisters.*

Enable us now to accept the fact that we are members of one another, that we are family with all of your creation, and that we are all loved by you.

*We pray these things in the name of the Christ who has called us to you. Through him, with him, and in him, in the power of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor be to you, O God, now and forever.*

In this Year of Coronavirus 2020, we must adapt like the viruses!

*So, we adapt our communion elements to be Bread and the FRUIT of the Vine!*

So please, as our servers come around, take ONE baggie of bread and grapes, for your family, you and your companion, or for yourself.

*Then share the bread and juice of the fruit of God's vine, remembering Jesus and his friends at a table, in the presence of God, finding every way possible to CHOOSE LIFE!!*

*Music during Communion*

***One Life***

**Greg & Sherri Ramsay**

## **SENDING FORTH**

**Announcements**

**Rev Gaye**

## Closing Song

### *Down By the Riverside*

## Benediction

Rev. Gaye

And now we take our leave.

Before we gather here again:  
may each of us bring happiness into another's life;  
may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;  
may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity.

And may we remain together in spirit  
until the hour we meet again.

And, May the God who dances in creation,  
who embraces us with human love,  
who shakes our lives like thunder,  
bless us and drive us out with power  
to fill the world with her justice.

**Amen! May it be so!**

## Music for Scattering

reprise closing song