

**First Parish Church, Congregational  
United Church of Christ  
Worship Celebration  
Fourth Sunday of Easter  
Sunday, April 25, 2021  
10:00 am**

**Prelude**

*"Passacaglia"*

Raison

**Welcome**

**Hymn**

*"Listen to Your Savior Call"*

Listen to your Savior call, "Do you love me most of all?"

Jesus speaks, and speaks to you, "Love me as I first loved you"

"I delivered you when bound, and when bleeding, healed your wound"

"Sought you wandering, set you right, for your pathway gave you light"

"Mine is an unchanging love, higher than the lights above"

"Deeper than the depths beneath, free and faithful, strong as death"

O my Savior, hear my need: though my love is faint indeed

Still I love you and adore; oh, for grace to love you more

**Opening Prayer**

Holy One, we come together today as a community of Your people near and far. We come from many different places and backgrounds, and with many different gifts, talents and capabilities, but You call us to be one in You.

As Your people, O God, we are different in ways, but the same in the ways that matter most. The same in that You love us all equally. The same in that You value us all equally. The same in that You ask us all equally to use our gifts, talents and capabilities for the sake of lifting others up through compassion, forgiveness, justice and mercy.

As Jesus did. As Jesus calls us to.

May we do all this in His Risen Name, and with the words he gave us on our lips, hearts, minds and spirits...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

**Piano Solo**     *"I Sing the Mighty Power of God"*     Ellacombe, arr. Robbins  
Dr. Herman Weiss, piano

## **Prayer Intentions**

### **Time of Silent and Spoken Prayer**

**Music Meditation**                     *"3 Part Invention in G Minor"*                     Bach  
Dr. Herman Weiss, piano

## **The Gospels**

### **Matthew 5:38-48 (New Living Translation)**

<sup>38</sup> "You have heard the law that says the punishment must match the injury: 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' <sup>39</sup> But I say, do not resist an evil person! If someone slaps you on the right cheek, offer the other cheek also. <sup>40</sup> If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too. <sup>41</sup> If a soldier demands that you carry his gear for a mile, carry it two miles. <sup>42</sup> Give to those who ask, and don't turn away from those who want to borrow.

<sup>43</sup> "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. <sup>44</sup> But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

<sup>45</sup> In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike.



- We encourage all members and friends of First Parish to remain with us immediately after the conclusion of our Worship this morning for our Virtual Friendship Time on Zoom. You can join the meeting by computer, tablet, iPad, or smart phone by clicking this link <https://zoom.us/j/720983063> Password- 244108
- Dial in with your phone and join using just audio at this number 1-301-715-8592 (Meeting ID- 720 983 063, Password- 244108). We welcome you for this time of additional community connection.
- **Sunday Morning Regathering, on Sunday, May 2:** First Parish will regather in person for Sunday Morning Worship celebrations starting on May 2. An introduction and specifics on protocols are below. This will also be emailed to the entire congregation on Monday, as well as available on our website and in the May Church Bell to be delivered this week:

As was announced a few weeks ago, The Church Council set **next Sunday, May 2**, as the date for our regathering in person for our Sunday Morning Worship celebrations.

It was felt that, in light of the increasing number of First Parish members and friends who are now vaccinated or will be soon, we could safely and responsibly regather to some extent without sacrificing the live music and other aspects which have made our Virtual Worship so effective and attractive to not just our spiritual community locally, but so many beyond this area who have been participating faithfully.

At the same time, as has been expressed to us by some of you, we fully understand you may not feel comfortable with participating in person yet. That, of course, is a matter for all to decide for themselves. For those who may not be ready, please know that **Virtual Worship is here to stay**. And not just Worship. We will go forward as a "hybrid" church, making as much of what we do as possible accessible to as many as possible in person and virtually into the future.

More information about regathering in a "hybrid" manner for things like committee meetings and classes will come later...

As for Sunday Worship, the Deacons are hard at work making sure everything is in place for Sunday mornings, including developing a set of protocols which Church Council has approved. Without going into all the minutiae, please note the following procedures for those attending in person starting May 2:

- Church doors will open at **9:40 a.m.** for attendees
- Deacons and Volunteers will be there to greet you outside as well as seat you inside
- Contact info for attendees will be taken in the event contact tracing becomes necessary
- Hand sanitizer will be available in the narthex should you wish to use it
- **Masks are required** for all but the Worship team
- Seating will be socially distanced, with household units being able to sit together or as near to each other as possible depending on available pews
- The front pews will not be available in order to keep appropriate distance from the Worship leaders up front and in the Chancel
- For now, the format for Worship will remain as it has been since last March.
- All those in attendance will have the opportunity to both sing the Opening Hymn and say the Opening Prayer
- Paper Bulletins will be available for you either on your seat or on a table for you to take as you enter the Sanctuary
- There will be no formal Offering, but attendees are invited to place any offering they wish as they leave Worship in a plate which will be placed at the back of the Sanctuary
- For May 2, as well as all Communion Sundays for now, the Deacons have obtained individual Communion packets which will be available as you enter the Sanctuary
- At the conclusion of Worship, Mark will invite attendees to leave, beginning with those in the back of the Sanctuary and working toward those in the front

