

The Presque Isle Congregational Church
United Church of Christ
April 23, 2023

Prelude

Barbara Merryman

Gathering Music

You Are Welcome Here

Words of Welcome

Melissa Vance

Introit

O Christ, Lamb of God

Call to Worship

Coming from places that have seen better days,

God bids us to celebrate this day, a day full of new possibilities.

Coming with our breath taken away by grief,

The Holy Spirit breathes new life within us, renewing our connection with God and with one another.

Coming to worship seeking a hope that will endure,

Christ unbinds the fetters that hold us in death, speaking in word and sacrament, and building community for holy service.

Opening Prayer (unison)

God of life, present and promised, you are the One to whom we call: for you are the One who hears, and you are the One who acts, bringing us new life with your grace and love and power. Lead us in our time of worship, that we may be prepared to follow your lead in places where life is at risk—places where hope seems far away, places where dreams die during sleep. When we leave these walls, help us live the teachings we proclaim within this place of worship, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Opening Hymn

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

Prayer of Confession: (unison)

Forgive us, O God, when we see the world through rose-colored glasses rather than as it really is, much less the way you seek it to be. Forgive us, Holy One, when we forsake lively and risky faith calling us to be agents of change in our world for the bland conviction that all will be well. Renew us with your grace and ground us with your Spirit, that we might be empowered to live, in word and deed, as testimonies to the power of your love over the grave. In Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The God we serve is the God of life, the God of hope, the God of new beginnings. This we trust, and by this we live. Thanks be to God!

Two-Minute Message

The Death of Lazarus

11 1-2 A man by the name of Lazarus was sick in the village of Bethany. He had two sisters, Mary and Martha. This was the same Mary who later poured perfume on the Lord's head and wiped his feet with her hair. **3** The sisters sent a message to the Lord and told him that his good friend Lazarus was sick.

4 When Jesus heard this, he said, "His sickness won't end in death. It will bring glory to God and his Son."

5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and brother. **6** But he stayed where he was for two more days. **7** Then he said to his disciples, "Now we will go back to Judea."

8 "Teacher," they said, "the people there want to stone you to death! Why do you want to go back?"

9 Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours in each day? If you walk during the day, you will have light from the sun, and you won't stumble. **10** But if you walk during the night, you will stumble, because you don't have any light." **11** Then he told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, and I am going there to wake him up."

12 They replied, "Lord, if he is asleep, he will get better." **13** Jesus really meant that Lazarus was dead, but they thought he was talking only about sleep.

14 Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead! **15** I am glad I wasn't there, because now you will have a chance to put your faith in me. Let's go to him."

16 Thomas, whose nickname was "Twin," said to the other disciples, "Come on. Let's go, so we can die with him."

Jesus Brings Lazarus to Life

17 When Jesus got to Bethany, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. **18** Bethany was less than three kilometers from Jerusalem, **19** and many people had come from the city to comfort Martha and Mary because their brother had died.

20 When Martha heard that Jesus had arrived, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. **21** Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. **22** Yet even now I know that God will do anything you ask."

23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will live again!"

24 Martha answered, "I know he will be raised to life on the last day,[a] when all the dead are raised."

25 Jesus then said, "I am the one who raises the dead to life! Everyone who has faith in me will live, even if they die. **26** And everyone who lives because of faith in me will never really die. Do you believe this?"

27 "Yes, Lord!" she replied. "I believe you are the Christ, the Son of God. You are the one we hoped would come into the world."

28 After Martha said this, she went and privately said to her sister Mary, "The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you." **29** As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went out to Jesus. **30** He was still outside the village where Martha had gone to meet him. **31** Many people had come to comfort Mary, and when they saw her quickly leave the house, they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry. So they followed her.

Scripture Reading (Continued)

28 After Martha said this, she went and privately said to her sister Mary, “The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you.” **29** As soon as Mary heard this, she got up and went out to Jesus. **30** He was still outside the village where Martha had gone to meet him. **31** Many people had come to comfort Mary, and when they saw her quickly leave the house, they thought she was going out to the tomb to cry. So they followed her.

32 Mary went to where Jesus was. Then as soon as she saw him, she knelt at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

33 When Jesus saw that Mary and the people with her were crying, he was terribly upset **34** and asked, “Where have you put his body?”

They replied, “Lord, come and you will see.”

35 Jesus started crying, **36** and the people said, “See how much he loved Lazarus.”

37 Some of them said, “He gives sight to the blind. Why couldn’t he have kept Lazarus from dying?”

38 Jesus was still terribly upset. So he went to the tomb, which was a cave with a stone rolled against the entrance. **39** Then he told the people to roll the stone away. But Martha said, “Lord, you know that Lazarus has been dead four days, and there will be a bad smell.”

40 Jesus replied, “Didn’t I tell you that if you had faith, you would see the glory of God?”

41 After the stone had been rolled aside, Jesus looked up toward heaven and prayed, “Father, I thank you for answering my prayer. **42** I know that you always answer my prayers. But I said this, so the people here would believe you sent me.”

43 When Jesus had finished praying, he shouted, “Lazarus, come out!” **44** The man who had been dead came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of burial cloth, and a cloth covered his face.

Jesus then told the people, “Untie him and let him go.”

45 Many of the people who had come to visit Mary saw the things Jesus did, and they put their faith in him.

Choral Anthem

Breath of God

PIUCC Choir

Proclamation

Daniel Jackson

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

Our **Creator***, 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 sins as we forgive those who sin 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

**Please use whatever name is most familiar/comfortable when you pray to God.*

Closing Hymn

We Are Marching

Community News and Announcements

Departing Hymn

God Be With You

Musical Citations

Gathering Music

You Are Welcome Here

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Introit

O Christ, Lamb of God

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Opening Hymn

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

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Choral Anthem

Breath of God

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Closing Hymn

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos' (We Are Marching in the Light of God)

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Departing Song

God Be With You

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