

**Kirkwood UCC  
1603 Dougherty Ferry Road  
Kirkwood, MO 63122**

**April 28, 2024 9:30 a.m.  
Fifth Sunday of Easter  
“It’s Complicated; Maybe”**

**Rev. Dr. Carole Barner**



**Welcome**

Pastor Carole

**Holy Pause**

**Prelude**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Ken and Beth Heuermann

We belong to one another, to the cosmos, to the Spirit of the Living God. We are made from the same elements—carbon, hydrogen... hope and love. Bless our gathered gifts today, oh God. Keep us rooted in wonder and in ordinary acts of care. May we reflect the Light of Christ. Amen.

**Opening Chorus** “Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary”

## Opening Words

Kristin Spradley

All is not lost

### **It must not be**

There are children

### **There are wildflowers**

Love creeps into our lives like vines

### **rooting into our hearts the ways of liberation**

We are interconnected, branches of the same corner of the universe,

### **reaching for sunlight, yearning for transformation,**

tenderly caring for all that still longs to live.

Let us worship God—

### **Our Sunlight, Our Salvation,**

Our Ancient Ever New Hope.

## Opening Prayer

Karen Kaul

**As the sellers of propaganda invest in our separation and our resignation, Holy Spirit, we long to remain steadfast in our connection to one another. May compassion be the soil from which we grow, our care for each other as tender as seedlings. As the soul-lost treat life as expendable, cultivate in us the fruits of the spirit—grow us in love, joy, peace, and patience. Even as we grieve the destabilizing of the seasons, may we be as faithful in our solidarity—trees intertwining our roots underground. Amen.**

## Children's Time

Judy Kamper

**Scripture:** New Testament

### **Gospel, John 15:5**

<sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who live in me and I in them will bear abundant fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

### **1 John 4: 7-21**

<sup>7</sup>Beloved, let us love one another because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten of God and has knowledge of God. <sup>8</sup> Those who do not love have known nothing of God, for God is love. <sup>9</sup> God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: by sending the Only Begotten into the world, that we might have faith through the Anointed One. <sup>10</sup> Love, then, consists in this: not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us and has sent the Only Begotten to be an offering for our sins. <sup>11</sup> Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another. <sup>12</sup> No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another, God dwells in us, and God's love is brought to perfection in us. <sup>13</sup> The way we know that we remain in God and

God in us is that we have been given the Spirit. <sup>14</sup> We have seen for ourselves and can testify that God has sent the Only Begotten as Savior of the world. <sup>15</sup> When any acknowledge that Jesus is the Only Begotten, God dwells in them and they in God. <sup>16</sup> We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God in them. <sup>17</sup> Love will come to perfection in us when we can face the day of judgment without fear—because our relation to this world is just like Christ's. <sup>18</sup> There is no fear in love, for perfect love drives out fear. To fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love. <sup>19</sup> We love because God first loved us. <sup>20</sup> If you say you love God but hate your sister or brother, you are a liar. For you cannot love God, whom you have not seen, if you hate your neighbor, whom you have seen. <sup>21</sup> If we love God, we should love our sisters and brothers as well; we have this commandment from God.

**Message** "It's Complicated; Maybe"

**Forever is in our Hands**  
**Psalm 23 for Earth Day**

Pastor Carole

God makes us shepherds and gardeners,  
so none of God's relations –  
creatures, growing things, land, water,  
wind, sky – need be in want.

God gives us lying down places of green pasture,  
rainforest, delta, desert, high mountain, deep canyon,  
and paths by arroyo, deep river, waterfall, ocean shore,  
and these restore our souls.

Creator leads us to care, not from duty, but from love.  
Though we pass chemically poisoned fields,  
over-fished seas, the violence of fracking,  
mountaintop removal coal mining, the terrible tears  
of the valley of extinction, when we join the weeping,  
we no longer fear.

God sets up one global table – in spite of the turned-over-ones  
of corporate influence, money, political power.

God anoints us with community,  
teaches us overflowing wells.

Surely we follow with committed people people of goodness and mercy,  
from Chico Mendes to Greta Thunberg, and so many, so many more.

Where we dwell now is God's house.

Forever is in our hands.

**Music for Reflection**

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother,  
Holy and blessed is your true name.  
We pray for your reign of peace to come,  
We pray that your good will be done,**

Let heaven and earth become one.  
Give us this day the bread we need,  
Give it to those who have none.  
Let forgiveness flow like a river between us,  
From each one to each one.  
Lead us to holy innocence  
Beyond the evil of our days —  
Come swiftly Mother, Father, come.  
For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy:  
Forever your name is All in One

**Commission and Blessing**

Pastor Carole

Like the moon whispering to seeds to wake up from winter,  
may New Life vibrate new life within us.

As we work to heal the earth may we too be healed.

Go forth in the glow of the God of Reciprocity.

**Sending Forth Song** “Pass It On”

**With Special Thanks to:**

**Pastor Carole**

**Music - Merry Keller**

**Pianist - Ron Bryant**

**Lector - Kristin Spradley**

**Congregational Voice - Karen Kaul**

**Greeter - Rose Brockhouse**

**Lighting of the Christ Candle - Ken and Beth Heuermann**

**Children’s Time - Judy Kamper**

**Nursery Caregiver - Jennifer Johnson**

**Tech Booth - Amelia Lloyd**

**Slides - Newton Kasinge**

**Zoom Moderator - John Riggs**

Sources:

Cover Image: Rachel Asen

Pass It On  
Chalice Hymnal #477

Lighting of the Christ Candle  
enfleshed.com

Forever is in our Hands  
Psalm 23 for Earth Day  
Maren Tirabassi

Opening Words  
enfleshed.com

Lord’s Prayer  
Parker J. Palmer

Opening Prayer  
enfleshed.com

Commission and Blessing  
enfleshed.com

Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary  
Sing! Prayer and Praise Hymnal #187

RESPOND

# 187 Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary

$\text{♩} = 60$   
D/A Em/A D A

1. Lord pre - pare me to be a sanc - tu - ar - y, — pure and  
- pow'r me to be a wit - ness for you, — act - ing

G Em<sup>7</sup> D/A A A<sup>7</sup>

ho - ly, tried and true; — with thanks -  
bold - ly, in your name; — seek - ing

D A

-giv - ing, I'll be a liv - ing — sanc - tu -  
jus - tice, where there is hurt - ing — off - 'ring

G Em<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> D D/A Em/A D

- ar - y for — you. 2. God em -  
hope where there is — pain.

# Pass It On

477

1. It on - ly takes a spark to get a fire go - ing,  
 2. What a won - drous time is spring when all the trees are bud - ding,  
 3. I wish for you, my friend, this hap - pi - ness that I've found—

and soon all those a - round can warm up in its glow - ing;  
 the birds be - gin to sing, the flow - ers start their bloom - ing;  
 on God you can de - pend, it mat - ters not where you're bound;

that's how it is with God's love, once you've ex - per - i - enced it:  
 that's how it is with God's love, once you've ex - per - i - enced it:  
 I'll shout it from the moun - tain top, I want my world to know:

you spread God's love to ev - ery - one, you want to pass it on.  
 you want to sing it's fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.  
 the Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.