

**Pandora/Gilboa UMCs**  
**Second Sunday of Easter**  
**April 21, 2024 @ 9:30/ 10:45**

**WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE & LIGHTING OF CANDLES**

**PRELUDE**

**\*CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: The God of all shepherds has called us here.

**P: We come today, celebrating God's love for us.**

L: The Good Shepherd has given his life for us.

**P: We come today ready to celebrate and to praise God.**

**\*OPENING PRAYER (UMH 456)**

**Thank you, loving God, for bringing us to this time of worship. Refresh us and heal us. Remind us of the many ways in which you have blessed our lives with your abundant love and presence. Guide our hearts and our spirits that we may hear your words and our souls may be stirred into active service to your people. In the name of the Good Shepherd, who leads us to life. Amen.**

**\*OPENING HYMN (UMH 368) "My Hope Is Built" (verses 1 and 2)**

**BISHOP PALMER SECOND CHANCE VIDEO**

**\*HEALING COMMUNITIES RESPONSIVE READING**

L. O God, creator of heaven and earth, you are our redeemer, our strength and our hope.

**P: I was sick and you visited me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see me. Thank you for your healing power.**

L: God, you are greater than the marginalization thrust on us by organized forces and institutionalized agencies. You are omnipotent and able to do anything but fail.

**P: I was sick and you visited me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see me. Thank you for your deliverance power.**

L: God, we cry out to you today and stand in the gap for those who have been disenfranchised and victimized at the hands of others. We trust you to bring about a change in all of our lives.

**P: I was sick and you visited me with help and ministering care, I was in prison**

**and you came to see me. Thank you for your restorative power.**

L: We ask for healing for those who have lost loved ones at the hands of others; healing for those who are behind jail and prison bars; and healing for those in the communities that will struggle to embrace them upon their return.

**P: I was sick and you visited me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see me. Thank you for your reconciling power.**

L: Almighty God, help us to love, forgive, reach out, and open doors to all whom you send our way -as well as to those who have yet to realize that they need our help. Lead us and guide us each and every day.

**P: I was sick and you visited me with help and ministering care, I was in prison and you came to see me. Thank you for your transformative power.**

**All: Help us God to forgive the blood that has stained many hands, the bruises that have hurt many bodies, and the ruins that have come to many families. In the midst of all that has plagued our communities and challenged our families and faith, it is our heart's desire to be healed. As we desire to be healed, we want the scales of justice to balance while the grace of God prevails. We want love to be released and healing to come to our communities. We are now moving towards a healing community, with and through your grace. Amen.**

**SPECIAL MUSIC Jeff Kuhlman "Amazing Grace My Chains Are Gone"**

## **JOYS & CONCERNS**

**PRAYER: For Courage to Do Justice**

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others; open my ears that I may hear their cries; open my heart so that they need not be without succor; let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong, nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich. Show me where love and hope and faith are needed, and use me to bring them to those places. And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee. Amen.

## **PASTORAL PRAYER**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS, Special Offering for All In Community Ministry (or local church's justice-involved ministry)**

**\*Offertory**

**\*Doxology**

**\*Dedication of Tithes, Offerings and Gifts**

**\*UMH 367 "He Touched Me"**

**SCRIPTURE READING: Matthew 25:34-36**

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Enter, you who are blessed by my Father! Take what’s coming to you in this kingdom. It’s been ready for you since the world’s foundation.

And here’s why:

I was hungry and you fed me,  
I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,  
I was homeless and you gave me a room,  
I was shivering and you gave me clothes,  
I was sick and you stopped to visit,  
I was in prison and you came to me.

The Word of God for the people of God

**Thanks be to God!**

**SERMON: So My Debts are Paid...or Are They? Speakers: Justice-involved members/neighbors**

**SERMON TEXT SUGGESTION:**

**You may want to add Luke 18:9-14 into your sermon... The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector**

<sup>9</sup>To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

<sup>13</sup>“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

<sup>14</sup>“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

**DYING MOMENTS/PRACTICING FORGIVENESS:** (this is only printed on the leader's paper)

We all are imperfect. We all wish we could take back words that we have said in anger, or times when we were so focused on ourselves that our words or actions brought sadness or grief to someone else. We all fall short, in living lives that are far from the life of the One that we say that we follow, the One whose name we bare...Jesus the Christ.

Some have been convicted of a wrong-doing, and have been a part of our judicial system's "corrections" where often they have endured more demeaning, hurtful, often dehumanizing assaults that are greater than the wrong that they had committed. Some of us have committed wrongs of judging others, before and after a person has been involved with the judicial system...sometimes our judgement has come to others who have never been formally charged, but we feel that they have sinned, and so we treat them and speak to them as though they are less than, unworthy. Sometimes our judgments, our sins are a lashing out towards another, to help us feel justified, "better than" someone else. God, you tell us to "judge not, lest we be judged." (Matt 7:1-2) Help us hear your words.

Some of us have buried sins that we have lived with most of our lives, deep within our hearts. We don't speak of them, we don't deal with them. Sometimes we just feel dirty, even when we have asked God to forgive us...we don't believe that Jesus' sacrifice, God's grace is sufficient for our sin to be washed away, for us to become as clean as snow. And not believing in God's power and grace, we commit another sin, a sin of disbelief, a sin of limiting God and God's power.

Whatever your sin or sins are, you are now invited to write your sin on the paper that you either picked up as you entered the sanctuary or pick one up as you enter the chancel area. When you are up front, follow the example of the Pastor and those who have led worship today, and pray for forgiveness, and then burn the paper, symbolizing the death of the sin, to you, as it disappears into ashes. If you would like to receive an anointing of oil following the death of your sin, you may receive the anointing and then return to your seat.

**\*UMH 383 "This is a Day of New Beginnings" (verses 1-4)**

**\*ENDING SONG OPTIONS:**

**\*UMH 347 "SPIRIT SONG" (P)**

**"Family of God"**

**\*POSTLUDE**

Source: Pastor Ruth Carter-Crist and Kathy Kaufman, Gilboa United Methodist Church