

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church



An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland

Sustaining a vibrant and growing congregation through Christian spiritual transformation, making our work and the church relevant and visible.

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LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICE



“Gifts of the Dark Wood”

Lenten Season Series

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Ash Wednesday

WELCOME

INTROIT

This Path

Chuck Bell & Marcia McFee

Judi and Wayne Fabrizio

There's a path... though it winds its way through darkness

We would choose... to avoid it if we could

We awake... to an unexpected calling

God says, "come... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"

Moment of Spiritual Reflection

*There's a path (echo: **there's a path**) ... though it winds its way through darkness*

*We would choose (**we would choose**) ... to avoid it if we could*

*We awake (**we awake**) ... to an unexpected calling*

*God says, "come (**God says, "come**) ... there are gifts in the Dark Wood"*

OPENING PRAYER

God, Creator

Jesus, Teacher

Spirit, Guide

Open us to the possibility that
even-or especially-in the midst of difficulty, loss and uncertainty
we can find greater depth, deeper connection, and clearer vision.

Calm our fears

open our eyes

guide our feet.

Amen.

A STORY AND SONG

Matthew 14:22-33 (*The Message*)

As soon as the meal was finished, [Jesus] insisted
that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side
while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed,
he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray.
He stayed there alone, late into the night.

Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind
came up against them and they were battered by the waves.
At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them
walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits.

“A ghost!” they said, crying out in terror.

But Jesus was quick to comfort them. “Courage, it’s me. Don’t be afraid.”

Peter, suddenly bold, said,

“Master, if it’s really you, call me to come to you on the water.”

He said, “Come ahead.”

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus.

But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink.

He cried, “Master, save me!”

“When the Waves are Crashing”

W&S 3144

1. *When the waves are crashing
and my faith is drowning,
though I may forget you
Hold me, Lord.*

2. *When dark clouds have gathered
and my love is battered,
though I may desert you
Hold me, lord.*

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus.

But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, “Master, save me!”

Jesus didn’t hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand.

Then he said, “Faint-heart, what got into you?”

The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down.

The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing,

worshiped Jesus, saying, “This is it! You are God’s Son for sure!”

1. *When the waves are crashing
and my faith is drowning,
though I may forget you
Hold me, Lord.*

MESSAGE, MUSIC, AND REFLECTION

“Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

UMH 474

1. *Precious Lord, take my hand.
Lead me on; let me stand.*

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.

Through the storm, through the night,

Lead me on to the light.

Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

2. *When my way grows drear,
Precious Lord, linger near.
When my life is almost gone,
hear my cry, hear my call
Hold my hand lest I fall.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.*

3. *When the darkness appears
and the night draws near
and the day is past and gone,
at the river I stand;
guide my feet, hold my hand.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.*

IMPOSITION OF ASHES AND MUSIC

"Dust and Ashes" W&S 3098

1. Dust and ashes touch our face,
mark our failure and our falling.
Holy Spirit, come,
walk with us tomorrow,
take us as disciples,
washed and wakened by your calling.
*Take us by the hand and lead us,
lead us through the desert sands,
bring us living water,
Holy Spirit, come.*

2. Dust and ashes soil our hands --
greed of market, pride of nation.
Holy Spirit, come,
walk with us tomorrow
as we pray and struggle
through the meshes of oppression.
*Take us by the hand and lead us,
lead us through the desert sands,
bring us living water,
Holy Spirit, come.*

3. Dust and ashes choke our tongue
in the wasteland of depression.

Holy Spirit, come,
walk with us tomorrow,
through all the gloom and grieving
to the paths of resurrection.
*Take us by the hand and lead us,
lead us through the desert sands,
bring us living water,
Holy Spirit, come.*

BENEDICTION *(responsive)*

You have a place in this world; a place where everything comes together in your body and you disappear into a seamless whole. Move with and through those shortcomings that afflict you, and inhabit this world with your fullest self.

May the Spirit of the Living God,
Made known to us most fully within life's Dark Wood:

Go before you to show you the way;

Go above you to watch over you;

Go behind you to push you into places you may not necessarily go yourself;

Go beneath you to uphold and uplift you;

Go beside you to be your strong and constant companion;

And dwell within you to remind you that you are surely not alone,

And that you are loved – loved beyond your wildest imagination.

And may the fire of God's blessing burn brightly upon you, and within you,

Now and always.

Amen.

POSTLUDE

There's a Path

*There's a path (**there's a path**) ... and it leads us out together*

*To the wood (**to the wood**) ... where the darkness hovers still*

*We are sent (**we are sent**) ... and the Spirit goes before us*

*God says, "go (**God says, go**) ... be my presence in the world."*