

# 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.*

(510) 465-4793      [www.lakemerrittumc.org](http://www.lakemerrittumc.org)

1255 First Avenue      Oakland, CA 94606

**LIVESTREAM WORSHIP SERVICE**



## Gifts of the Dark Wood

*Lenten Season Series*

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*  
Joan Miller, *Music Director*  
Neil Wade, *Office Administrator*

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March 28, 2021  
*Sixth Sunday of Lent*  
*Palm–Passion Sunday*

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WELCOME

INTROIT

This Path

Chuck Bell & Marcia McFee

Judi and Wayne Fabrizio

*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"*

MOMENT OF SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

OPENING SONG

Hosanna! Hosanna! TFWS 2109

1. Jesus rode into Jerusalem.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

All the people sang their praise to him.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Came to town upon a donkey's back;

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Seemed so lowly but he's Lord in fact.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

*Hosanna! Hear the people say, Hosanna! Save us today.  
Hosanna! It's a faithful song. Hosanna! Sing it all night long.*

2. Everybody brought their hopes and dreams.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Life just isn't always what it seems.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

Need somebody who can help us be

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

liberated from captivity.

*Hosanna! Hosanna!*

*Hosanna! Hear the people say, Hosanna! Save us today.  
Hosanna! It's a faithful song. Hosanna! Sing it all night long.  
Hosanna! Hear the people say, Hosanna! Save us today.  
Hosanna! It's a faithful song. Hosanna! Sing it all night long.*

## OPENING PRAYER *[unison]*

**Journeying Jesus, enter our lives  
and open us to the gifts residing deep within the Holy Darkness of our lives.  
Help us to be with and for each other  
as the crowds that day offered their presence for you.  
In your many names, we pray. Amen.**

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## SONG, SCRIPTURE, and READING

**"Just A Closer Walk with Thee"**

LMUMC Chimes

*Just a closer walk with thee,  
grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
daily walking close to thee:  
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

Neil Wade, *Soloist*

### **Luke 19: 29-42a, NRSV**

Kathleen Bell, *Reader*

When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying,

"Blessed is the king  
who comes in the name of the Lord!  
Peace in heaven,  
and glory in the highest heaven!"

Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!"

1. I am weak but thou art strong;  
Jesus keep me from all wrong;  
I'll be satisfied as long  
as I walk, let me walk close to thee  
*Just a closer walk with thee,  
grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
daily walking close to thee:  
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

2. Through this world of toil and snares,  
if I falter, Lord, who cares?  
Who with me my burden shares?  
None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee.  
*Just a closer walk with thee,  
grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
daily walking close to thee:  
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

“The world is so empty if one thinks only of mountains, rivers & cities;  
but to know someone who thinks and feels with us, and who, though distant,  
is close to us in spirit, this makes the earth for us an inhabited garden.”

—Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (147)

*Just a closer walk with thee,  
grant it, Jesus, is my plea,  
daily walking close to thee:  
let it be, dear Lord, let it be.*

## GRATITUDES & PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

When Pastor says “Lord,”

**People Respond: Hear our Prayers**

The Lord’s Prayer - Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

\*We invite you to use any other name to refer to the Divine with which you are comfortable ~ God, Father, Mother, Creator, etc.

**Our \*Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

## OFFERING OUR GIFTS TO GOD

Offering Words

*Oh God, You are my God  
And I will ever praise You  
Oh God, You are my God  
And, I will ever praise You*

*I will seek You in the morning  
And I will learn to  
Walk in Your ways  
And step by step You'll lead me  
And I will follow You all of my days*

## SCRIPTURE READING

**Luke 23:26-27**

As they led Jesus away, they grabbed Simon, a man from Cyrene, who was coming in from the countryside. They put the cross on his back and made him carry it behind Jesus. A huge crowd of people followed Jesus, including women, who were mourning and wailing for him.

## SERMON

**"The Gift of Misfits"**

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

## SPECIAL MUSIC

Lean On Me

Soloist: Stanley Huston

## HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer of Confession and Resolve (*Responsive*):

For hesitating to join the parade of life with our whole selves,  
**Forgive and restore us, O God.**

For letting fear keep us from walking alongside our neighbors,  
**Forgive and restore us, O God.**

For shying away from struggle even when we know what is right,  
**Forgive and restore us, O God.**

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS AND HOPE

## Assurance of Grace

Hear these words of assurance:

God continues to invite us to this parade... it is never too late.

God asks us to be companions—and we can... it is never too late.

God is with you, forgiving and restoring you to wholeheartedness.

**Thanks be to God! Amen!**

## Passing the Peace

As forgiven people living in the midst of the work of Jesus, let us share peace with our siblings in the world.

*(We go to our windows and doors and share with the world: **the peace of Christ be with you!**)*

## SHARING THE HOLY COMMUNION OF THE BREAD AND CUP

### CLOSING SONG

#### You Are There

Text: Julie Howard  
1993 the Order of St. Benedict, Inc.

*In the quiet curve of evening, in the sinking of the days,  
in the silky void of darkness, you are there.*

*In the lapses of my breathing, in the space between my ways,  
in the crater carved by sadness, you are there.*

*You are there, you are there, you are there.*

*In the rests between the phrases, in the cracks between the stars,  
in the gaps between the meaning, you are there.*

*In the melting down of endings, in the cooling of the sun,  
in the solicit of the winter, you are there.*

*You are there, you are there, you are there.*

*In the mystery of the hungers, in the silence of my rooms,  
in the cloud of my unknowing, you are there.*

*In the empty cave of grieving, in the desert of my dreams,  
in the tunnel of my sorrow, you are there.*

*You are there, you are there, you are there.*

### 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."*