



IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

*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

1255 First Avenue Oakland, CA 94606

Beguiled By Beauty: Celebrating LGBTQ+ Siblings



THE SPARKLE CREED

by Rev. Rachel Small Stokes

I believe in the non-binary God whose pronouns are plural.

I believe in Jesus Christ, their child, who wore a fabulous tunic and had two dads, and who saw everyone as a sibling child of God.

I believe in the rainbow Spirit, who shatters our image of one white light and refracts it into a rainbow of gorgeous diversity.

I believe in the church of everyday saints, as numerous, creative, and resilient as patches on the AIDS quilt, whose feet are grounded in mud and whose eyes gaze at the stars in Wonder.

I believe in the calling to each of us, that love is love is love, so beloved, let us love.

I believe, glorious God. Help my unbelief.

Amen.

“We are Made for the Beloved”

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September 12, 2021
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Celebration of Divine Worship

WELCOME

Rev. Pamela Kurtz, *Pastor*

INTROIT

Singing for Our Lives
Jim Meredith, *piano*

Holly Near

OPENING PRAYER [*responsive*]

Christy Ranjith and Sherri Elinson

Divine Goodness, Holy One,
Pause us for this moment,
bear us up in this time,
hold us for eternity.

We open to your warming presence,
We remember we came from you,
We affirm all beings are your beloveds,
And all the people say, "Amen."

Worship Design Studio (WDS)

A SONG, SCRIPTURE AND A PRAYER

Opening Song *Impartial, Compassionate, God of All Lives*

from Songs for the Holy Other

W: Adrienne Stricker M: St. Denio (UMH 103)

1. *Impartial, compassionate God of all lives, in Christ you have shown us your love actualized. Incarnate and weak in the arms of the poor, destroying all systems that keep closed the door.*
2. *Unholy, unjustified fear we incite, when we shun our neighbors yet cling to our rights. Your children still wander the street left in pain; we pass laws against them to prove our disdain.*
3. *Creator of beauty, we stand not in pride, we do not assume you will stay on our side. For yours is the sacred, untarnished by sin, a refuge for outcasts that all may come in.*
4. *Our hope is your freedom for both great and small, to strive for perfection and know all means all. We challenge and question each law without grace, affirming the image of Christ on each face.*
5. *All honor we give you, O help us to see, your children are worthy to claim victory. And so let our actions flow out of our praise, to seek transformation, your Kingdom to raise.*

Scripture

Philippians 4:8-9 (MSG)

Sherri Elinson

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

Prayer for Reflection

Sherri Elinson

....deeds are done which appear so evil to us and people suffer such terrible evils that it does not seem as though any good will ever come of them; and we consider this, sorrowing and grieving over it so that we cannot find peace in the blessed contemplation of God as we should do; and this is why: our reasoning powers are so blind now, so humble and so simple, that we cannot know the high, marvelous wisdom, the might and the goodness of the Holy Trinity. And this is what he means where he says "You shall see for yourself that all manner of things shall be well", as if he said "Pay attention to this now, faithfully and confidently, and at the end of time you will truly see it in the fullness of joy."

Julianna of Norwich (1343-1416 est.)

Prayers of the People

Rev. Pamela Kurtz

The Lord's Prayer

Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

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 forever. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Prayer of Confession and Resolve *[unison]*

Christy Ranjith

Creating God - God of Mercy, we have acknowledged the diversity in this amazing world, created in atoms and molecules but with an underlying spirit of mystery, we confess that, at times, we have forgotten the wonders of that diversity.

We have longed for things to be familiar and as they have always been, and strike out at ways of being that differ from our own.

We know that the great religious traditions have caused harm in the past and continue to cause harm and pain to those who express their being in ways different than the majority.

We know, too that we individually, both intentionally and unintentionally, have rejected and shunned those who are not just like us.

For this we are truly sorry, and ask your patience as we learn and strive for ways to be more inclusive and celebrate all in this wondrous world. Amen.

Hope United Church

TIME OF SILENCE FOR PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND HOPE

Assurance of Grace

Here these words of assurance my dear siblings:

We are forgiven. Holy Wisdom, come. We long for your truth that sets the captives free. Bring us your Word that liberates. Quiet all that turns us against ourselves, one another, or any of your creatures and creations. Lead us in love that mends and restores. Amen.

Hope United Church

Passing the Peace

*As forgiven people Living with the indwelled Spirit,
let us share peace with our siblings in the world!*

SHARING IN COMMUNION OF THE BREAD AND CUP

MESSAGE

“Made for the Beloved”

Rev. Pamela L. Kurtz, *Pastor*

RESPONDING TO THE WORD

True Colors

Billy Steinberg & Tom Kelly

Soloist: Dan Strauss

LIVING AS THE CHURCH, GRATITUDES, OFFERINGS

Living as the Church

Gratitude Times

Offering Time

Offering Words

Thanksgiving Song

For Everyone Born

W: Shirley Erena Murray

M: Brian Mann

*For everyone born, a place at the table, to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship, for everyone born, the right to be free.
And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace;
yes, God will delight when we are creators of justice, justice, and joy.*

CLOSING SONG

What a Wonderful World

w & m: Bob Thiele (as "George Douglas") and George David Weiss

*I see trees of green, red roses too; I see them bloom for me and you,
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.*

*I see skies of blue and clouds of white; the bright blessed day, the dark sacred night,
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world.*

*The colors of the rainbow so pretty in the sky; are also on the faces of people going by.
I see friends shaking hands, saying, "How do you do?"
They're really saying, "I love you."*

*I hear babies cry; I watch them grow. They'll learn much more than I'll never know.
And I think to myself, what a wonderful world;
Yes, I think to myself, what a wonderful world.
Oh yeah*

BENEDICTION [unison]

Sherri Elinson

*The world is so varied and beautiful
Seek wisdom wherever it is to be found.-+
And may the goodness of the Creator,
the companionship of the Christ,
and the insight of the Spirit,
infuse your life now and always. Amen*

WDS

POSTLUDE

Shubert

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