

Lake Merritt United Methodist Church

An Inclusive Christian Community of Oakland



LAKE PARK

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

IN JOINT FELLOWSHIP

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

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THE DIFFICULT WORDS OF
JESUS



The Difficult Words of Jesus
Outer Darkness

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February 5, 2023
Fifth Sunday After Epiphany
CELEBRATION OF DIVINE WORSHIP

WELCOME

Rev. Sunae Cho, *Pastor*

INTROIT

MY LORD, WHAT A MORNIN'

Spiritual
Calvin Taylor

OPENING PRAYER (*RESPONSIVE*)

Fran Cooper

Leader: The time for harvest is close at hand.

What have you done with the gifts God has given you?

People: We have brought our gifts to the house of the Lord.

Leader: Praise God for the gifts and for opportunities for service
that they represent.

People: We praise God for all the ways in which our lives have been blessed.

Leader: Generous God, accept our gifts and our lives this day.

People: Loving God, accept our praise and gratitude. Amen.

Nancy C. Townley

OPENING SONG

(Please stand if able)

Open My Eyes, That I May See UMH 454

1. Open my eyes, that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

2. Open my ears, that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wavenotes fall on my ear,
everything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3. Open my mouth, and let me bear
gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 25:14-30 (MSG)

Fran Cooper

"It's also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left. Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master's investment. The second did the same. But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master's money.

"After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on, be my partner.'

"The servant with the two thousand showed how he also had doubled his master's investment. His master commended him: 'Good work! You did your job well. From now on, be my partner.'

"The servant given one thousand said, 'Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent.'

"The master was furious. 'That's a terrible way to live! It's criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest.

"Take the thousand and give it to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this "play-it-safe" who won't go out on a limb. Throw him out into utter darkness.'

SERMON

The Difficult Words of Jesus
"Outer Darkness"

Rev. Sunae Cho, Pastor

HOLY COMMUNION

Rev. Sunae Cho, Pastor

A CELEBRATION OF WORD AND TABLE

INVITATION

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
Who earnestly repent of their sin
And seek to live in peace with one another.
Therefore, let us confess our sin before God and one another.

CONFESSION & PARDON (*UNISON*)

ALL: Merciful God,
We confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
We have broken your law,
We have rebelled against your love,
We have not loved our neighbors,
And we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

SILENCE IS KEPT FOR PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & HOPE

Pastor: Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while you were yet sinners;
That proves God's love toward us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.
All: Glory to God. Amen.

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

Let us offer one another signs of peace and love.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Almighty God, creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image
and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed,
your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity,
made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through the prophet.
And so,
with your people on earth
and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(Please sing along, TFWS 2257-b)

**ALL: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Blest is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Pastor: Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant
by water and the Spirit.
When the Lord Jesus ascended,
he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to the disciples, and said:
“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
In remembrance of me.”

And so,
In remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
We offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
As a holy and living sacrifice,
In union with Christ’s offering for us,
As we proclaim the mystery of faith.

(Please sing along, TFWS 2257-c)

ALL: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

Pastor: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.
By your Spirit make us one with Christ
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.
Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,
now and forever.

(Please sing along, TFWS 2257-c)

ALL: Amen, Amen, Amen.

SHARING IN THE BREAD AND CUP

PRAYERS & GRATITUDES

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Ecumenical Version (UMH 894)

*Please feel free to use the name of your choice for God that speaks to your soul.

*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.*

LIVING AS THE CHURCH

OFFERING & THANKSGIVING SONG

I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me TFWS 2153

I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna live so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna work so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna work so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna give so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

I'm gonna give so God can use me
Anywhere, Lord, anytime.

CLOSING SONG

(Please stand if able)

Bring Forth the Kingdom TFWS 2190

1. You are salt for the earth, O people,
Salt for the city of God!

Share the flavor of life, O people:
Life in the kingdom of God!

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy,
bring forth the Kingdom of peace.

Bring forth the Kingdom of justice,
bring forth the Kingdom of God!

2. You are a light on the hill, O people,
Light for the city of God!

Shine so holy and bright, O people:
Shine for the kingdom of God!

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy,
bring forth the Kingdom of peace.

Bring forth the Kingdom of justice,
bring forth the Kingdom of God!

3. You are a seed of the word, O people,
Bring forth the kingdom of God!
Seeds of mercy and seeds of justice,
grow in the kingdom of God!

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy,
bring forth the Kingdom of peace.
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice,
bring forth the Kingdom of God!

4. We are a blest and a pilgrim people,
Bound for the kingdom of God!
Love our journey and love our homeland:
Love is the Kingdom of God!

Bring forth the Kingdom of mercy,
bring forth the Kingdom of peace.
Bring forth the Kingdom of justice,
bring forth the Kingdom of God!

CLOSING PRAYER (*UNISON*)

Fran Cooper

All: To trade, you let go.
To invest, you surrender.
God give me courage to let go
of myself,
my great investment
in the world you desire,
my self-spending
without which there is no return.
Today I give myself to the world,
banking on your grace,
not kept in fear,
not buried in inadequacy,
but spent with confidence,
and patient with the wait,
for the return
that is not mine but yours:
the world, blessed,
and myself, with interest.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes

POSTLUDE

Festival Chorus (*ORGAN*)

Van Denman Thompson