



"A Community Of Many Faithing Communities Where All Belong!"

Living Waters Contemplative Life Center | Divine Intervention Ministry to the Homeless  
Tippecanoe just.good.food Garden | Food Justice Site PCUSA  
Arts and Science Literacy Camps for Children

# Welcome To Worship

August 6, 2023

9:30 a.m.



*~Broken Vessel by Dan Christopher*

*Welcome to this time of being with God and each other.*

*"Showing Great Love" Rev. Trish Eckert*

## ✧Prelude: Zo Trembley

## ✧Welcome and community news

- **Forward Scholars Tutoring Information Session** Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> 1:30-2:45 pm. PLEASE RSVP: <https://forms.gle/37pKk4GoDH8cXUGn8>  
Contact Dr. Carrie Streiff-Stuessy, Executive Director, with questions at [carriess@forwardscholars.org](mailto:carriess@forwardscholars.org)
- **Tippe Night Out** Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup> 6:30 pm Humboldt Park – 3000 S Howell
- **Worship at Plymouth UCC** Sunday, August 20<sup>th</sup> 9:30 am – 2717 E Hampshire
- **Cohosting Interfaiths Dinner at Grace** Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> 6-8:30 pm 2931 S Kinnickinnic
- **Larry Hartmann's memorial service** Saturday, September 16<sup>th</sup> noon

## ✧Readying Ourselves for Worship

*Surely God is in this place, Holy Ground!  
Surely God is in this place,  
Holy Ground!*

## ✧A Blessing as we Center Ourselves in this Moment

*Blessing for the Anointing ~ Jan L. Richardson*

Some with ointment.  
Some with tears.  
Me, today,  
with words  
gathered and treasured  
carried and poured out  
for you  
wherever you are.

May you welcome this  
as what it is:  
a needful extravagance  
an offering both lavish  
and crucial  
that has let go

of everything  
to lay itself at your feet  
and tell you

I see you  
I bless you

And you,  
where can you go  
that you do not need  
this anointing,  
this blessing that drenches  
the one who gives,  
the one who receives?





~ Anointing the Feet of Jesus, Ann Lukesh

## ✧ **Becoming Present to God and Each Other - Our Check-in**

### ~ **The Joy of Passing the Peace** ~

One: May the peace that surpasses all understanding be with you

All: **And also with you**

One: Thanks be to God

## ✧ **Time for Young Hearts** “I love you, God!”

### ✧ **Gathering as God’s People: *Women in the Bible***

While exploring the theme of “women in the Bible” so far this summer, we’ve reflected on three different stories from the Old Testament. We began with the story of Hagar in the Book of Genesis, observing her example of being fully awake to God’s presence. Next, we focused on the powerful narratives of women throughout the Book of Exodus who made it possible for Moses to fulfill his call, and finally we turned our attention to the deep love and connection between Ruth and Naomi, giving us a chance to consider how we might show up in others’ lives and what we most need in our relationships.

Last week we turned to the New Testament, and the story of Mary and Martha – recognizing the gifts of ministry that both women illustrated for us; revealing how each of us is called to take action as well as make time for contemplation. This week it feels fitting to reflect on one of the many “unnamed women” in the Bible, and a story that shows up differently in each of the four Gospels is the woman who anoints Jesus – we’ll concentrate on Luke’s version this morning.

We are invited to enter the story of a courageous and vulnerable woman capable of expressing deep and abiding love, regardless of how she is judged by others. May we open ourselves to the truths that we most need in our own lives as we contemplate this story together.

### ✧ **Gathering Hymn 201 *A Prophet Woman Broke a Jar***

#### ✧ **Opening Ourselves to God's Grace**

ONE: God invites us to extend our circle of love beyond all human boundaries.

Let us open our hearts to embrace all people of every color and every culture; and animals, and the earth, and the galaxies of the universe.

Welcome to our circle of love!

Let us pray:

**ALL: We give thanks that we are all part of the family circle of God, forgiving one another, loving one another because God has first loved us, that God's Spirit has banished distinctions between Jew and Greek, between slave and free, between female and male, between those who are in power and those who are powerless. We give thanks that we are one in the love of the One who loves in us, forever and ever. Amen.**

#### ✧ **Sharing our Innermost Lives with God**

ONE: Gracious God,

our transgressions are too heavy to carry,

too real to hide,

and too deep to undo.

Forgive what our lips tremble to name,

what our hearts can no longer bear,

and what has become for us

a consuming fire of judgment.

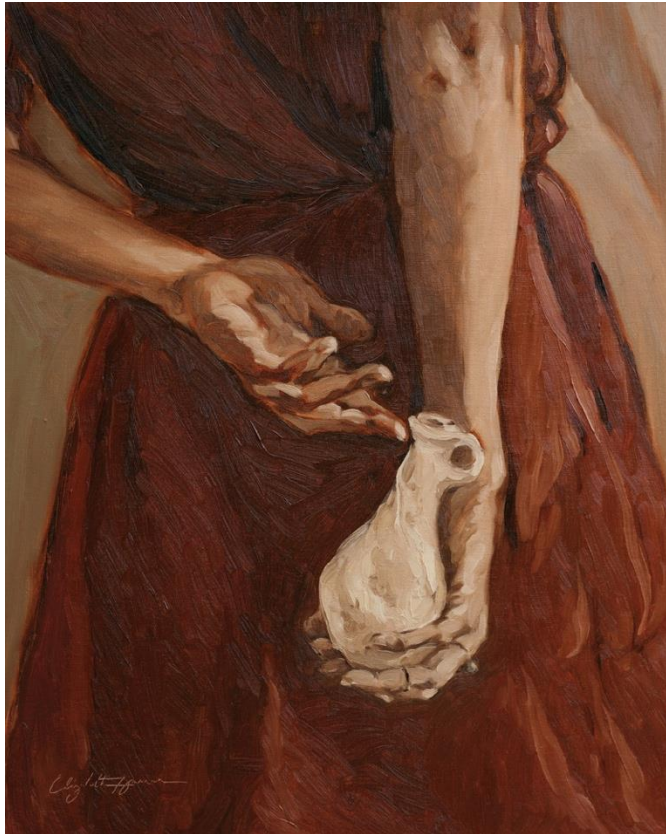
**ALL: Set us free from a past that we cannot change;  
open to us a future in which we can be changed;  
and grant us grace  
to grow more and more in your likeness and image;  
through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.**

#### ✧ **Special Music**

*from "Jesu, Joy of [Our] Desiring," by J. S. Bach*

#### ✧ **Prayer of Intention**

Holy Spirit, may we hear your precious Word for us today. May we grow in wisdom, strength, and love as we open our ears, our minds, and our hearts to the transformative message you have in store for each of us. Amen.



~ *Woman with the Alabaster Jar* by Elizabeth Bowman

### ✧ **Bible Wisdom Teaching Luke 7: 36-50**

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. 37 And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. 38 She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner.' 40 Jesus spoke up and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' 'Teacher,' he replied, 'speak.' 41 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?' 43 Simon answered, 'I suppose the one for whom he cancelled the greater debt.' And Jesus said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' 44 Then turning towards the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' 48 Then he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' 49 But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' 50 And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

One: May we hear anew the origin stories of our faith and draw from the roots of our tradition.

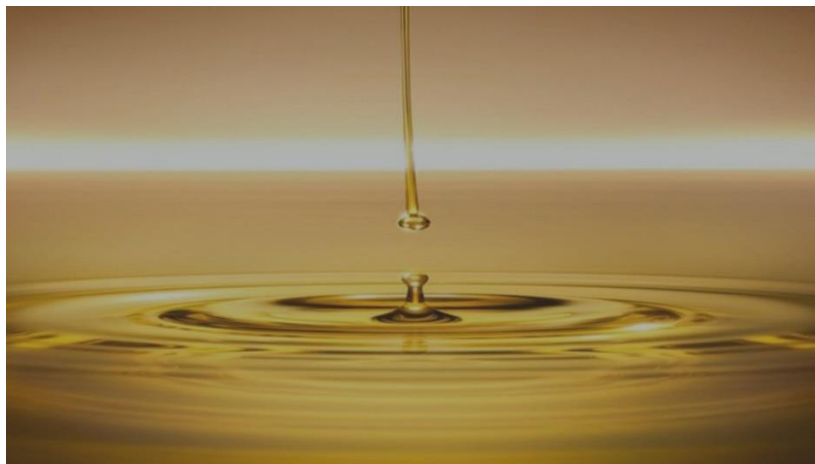
All: **Thanks be to our God.**

✧ **Message** “Showing Great Love” Rev. Trish Eckert



✧ **Reflection Questions**

- In the midst of suffering, do I seek points of encounter with God?
- During times of despair do I stay present to the feeling of emptiness and wait for God to fill it with new life?
- Do I understand my spiritual longings as a gift and a nudge from God, and do I act on them?
- What trials in my current life might be able to be turned around by seeing them as challenges to love?



✧ **Short period of silent reflection**



## ✧Sharing Our Wisdom

### ✧Hymn 692 *Spirit, Open My Heart*

### ✧Community Prayers & the Pastoral Prayer



### ✧Words of Invitation and the Breaking of the Bread Communion of the People

#### Welcome

In Luke, the woman who crashed the Pharisee's dinner party was a sinner and thought to have brought shame upon the host.

The woman, a sinner, wasn't invited. She was only tolerated, or rather ignored, unacknowledged by the host or the guests. Jesus was the one who brings attention to her – and for positive reasons. Once again, it was a sinner who proclaimed God's righteousness by her actions and the pious one who rejected God's purposes through his.

The meal described in Luke 7 is a public affair – just as the Lord's Supper is a communal sacrament. At times, we want to protect this Table – desiring to keep it pure for Jesus' sake. But when we do so, we do not follow Jesus' example.

Jesus, friend of sinners, cared not about the worldly value of those with whom he dined with. Rather, he chose love and then opened the Table to all. Let us offer our thanksgiving to the God who invites us to the Table.

## Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

Creator God, we give you thanks for the world that you breathed into being and that you named good. Created in the image of you, your peoples are wonderfully diverse. We are at once as different as the hummingbird from the shark, the giraffe from the lizard, yet we all share the breath of life that you breathed into us.

Jesus who loves us so profoundly, through your life, death, and resurrection you made it possible for us to be at Table with you. In the same way, you have taught us how to be at Table with one another. You never turned down an invitation to eat based on the guest list. You reached out to feed those who were excluded. For this our hearts are full of thanks. May we come knowing your grace. May we be kept from hindering those you have welcomed. Let us always remember that it is your body and blood that make this Table holy and accessible to all.

Spirit of Truth, you move throughout the world binding together what we tear apart. It is only in the power of your Spirit that we are able to claim oneness with you and with each other. Spirit, give us a holy nudge when we crowd others away from the Table. Close our mouths when we give voice to words that shame.

With thanksgiving, Holy Spirit, we ask for your presence at the Table today. With the peace of Christ and with the joy set before us, we join our voices in prayer to you, saying:

### ✧**The Lord's Prayer**

**ALL: Eternal Spirit, life-giver, pain-bearer, love-maker  
Source of all that is and that shall be,  
Father and Mother of us all,**

**Loving God in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe.  
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world.  
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings.  
Your kin-dom of peace and freedom sustain our hope  
and come on earth.**

**With the bread that we need for today, feed us.  
For the hurts that we inflict on one another, forgive us.  
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.  
From trials too great to endure, spare us.  
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love  
now and forever. Amen.**



## Words of Invitation and the Breaking of the Bread

As we prepare ourselves to come to this Table, a Table that has been prepared for all who desire to be fed, we remember Jesus' words to Simon, which are also his words to us: *"Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."* – Luke 7:47

Whether we have been forgiven much or little, whether we have shown great or little love, whether we have confidence that our sins have been forgiven or doubt how this could be possible, you are invited to come. There are no invitations to be sent out. There are no credentials to be shown. There is no requirement to prove your worth. The meal has been prepared and all are invited to come and take your place at the Table.

### Prayer after Communion

Holy and Inclusive God, we give you thanks for inviting us to your Table. May the love and grace you lavish so freely upon us, overflow as love and grace to others. Amen.



✧ **Benediction**

May God bless us,  
embrace us,  
and send us forth  
renewed,  
refreshed,  
revitalized.

May we live each day  
in the name of Love, a  
nd include all  
in our circle of love,  
and treat all  
with a spirit of love,  
through the Spirit  
who is Love. Amen.

*Now that the worship has ended, may the service truly begin.*

✧ **Our Response:**

***Holy One, now we your servants go in peace. Your Word lives on in us.***

✧ **Postlude Zo Trembley**