Westminster Presbyterian Church

MAY 2, 2021
FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

Welcome and Announcements — **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Gathering Words — **Candy and Ferenc Relle**

Provocative and surprising is the God of resurrection!
How wonderful are the strange ways of God.

Making holy our sorrow…
God births life from death.

Disavowing power that threatens and destroys,
God is a force of justice, transformative and restoring.

The peculiar practices of God unsettle and confuse.
Whatever shape love will take, it is welcome in this place.

Opening Prayer

Creative One,
come and open our hearts, our minds, and our shared sense of possibility.
Help us to perceive the multitude of opportunities to live out your desires for us.

Called to be one body,
we fragment ourselves into a million selfish pieces.
Your children of love,
we insist on the right to despise our sisters and brothers.
Though your perfect Love was broken for us,
we are afraid to give of ourselves to the world.

Forgive us, Mother of Compassion.
Abide in us.
Fill us with passion for discerning your will.
May we live it out as community daily
with courage and unrelenting love.
Amen.

Opening Hymn No. 401 — Here in This Place — GATHER US IN

Prayer of Illumination — **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Scripture Reading — Acts 8:26-40

[26]Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) [27]So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. They had come to

Jerusalem to worship [28]and were returning home; seated in their chariot, they were reading the prophet Isaiah. [29]Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." [30]So Philip ran up to it and heard them reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" [31]They replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And they invited Philip to get in and sit beside them. [32]Now the passage of the scripture that they were reading was this:

"Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.
[33]In his humiliation justice was denied him.
Who can describe his generation?
For his life is taken away from the earth."

[34]The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" [35]Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to them the good news about Jesus. [36]As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized? [38]The eunuch commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized them. [39]When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on their way rejoicing. [40]But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

Sermon **Spirit-filled Lives** **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Hymn No. 529 Draw Us in the Spirit's Tether UNION SEMINARY

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

Holy Mystery,
"Get up," you cried to your Word and Spirit,
"and go down the wilderness road to chaos."
And so they went,
calling forth rich life out of nothingness,
crafting us in your creative image.
You showed all your wonders to us, with delight in your heart,
but we chose death and sin to be our guides in this life.

Though we loved you last, you loved us first,
sending your prophets to declare all you had done,
and when we remained far from you,
you sent Jesus to us,
to bear your fruit of life and hope for all your children.

Jesus, your language of love enfleshed,
wove us into one through your Breath of Life,
breaking down walls of division, hostility, and injustice,
giving us eyes to see and hearts to embrace
new patterns of family and society,
willingness to travel into the unknown,
allowing your mystery of new heaven and new earth to be revealed in each step.

Pour out your Spirit into us now and abide in us at this table!
Pour out your transforming presence
on the gifts of this body
and the gifts of this bread and fruit of the vine.
May they be for us your life and love,
uniting us as one body—Christ's body—
for the sake of loving the world until your work is complete.

We pray in the name of the One who is to come, Jesus the Christ, who taught us to pray together:

O Breathing Life, your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.
Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' faults.
Help us not forget our Source,
Yet free us from not being in the Present.
From you arises every Vision, Power and Song from gathering to gathering.
Amen—
May our future actions grow from here!

Closing Hymn No. 285 Like the Murmur of the Dove's Song BRIDEGROOM

Benediction **Rev. Dr. Enikő Ferenczy**

*Note: The Gathering Words and Opening Prayer were adapted from *Enfleshed: Liturgy that Matters* and Thom Shuman.
The Lord's Prayer is a retranslation from the Aramaic by Mark Berry from the *Emerging Church Movement*.