



**“Different Pictures”**

*Fourth Sunday in Lent*

*March 14, 2021*

**GATHER**

*People gather around Jesus as his reputation becomes known from town to town. As we gather virtually or physically, we too are yearning for presence, for peace, for help.*

**Prelude**

**Welcome and Announcements**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Threshold**

We continue our Lenten “season of recovery” as we focus on health as essential to our spiritual lives.

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

Prolonged times of difficulty can impede creativity. The picture of our lives is dulled and hope for a brighter future can fade. That's where a touch of inspiration is important. Inspiration awakens us from our sleep, as we hear in today's Gospel reading. We also awaken to our agency to seek out the Divine Healer, reaching out to touch the power we know can restore our intellect and imagination. Through Divine restoration we emerge ready to re-engage with the world--- seeking and seeing solutions, creating new or different pictures of life. Our broken fragments are transformed by God, the Holy Mosaic Artist, into something beautiful.

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
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## **APPROACH**

*People opened their lives to Jesus. We are drawn to the Healer—opening our hearts with honesty about our lives and finding assurance that offers peace.*

### **Opening Prayer of Confession**

Charlotte Frary, Liturgist

Let us acknowledge our need to restore, repair, renew our Holy Vessels so that we might be able to create and imagine new possibilities, new solutions.

Let us pray:

God of All Possibilities,  
Made in your image, you have tasked us as co-creators of a better world. You bestowed imagination and the ability to learn and progress.  
But we are tired. Our energy wanes and enthusiasm wanes.  
The call for ideas, solutions, work-arounds and adaptations has been non-stop for us all—whether we are needing to find ways to keep children engaged and well, or figuring out how to maintain a passion for our work in the midst of trying times,  
or needing desperately to undo systems of oppression too long affecting  
our lives and the lives of our neighbors.  
Not only our livelihoods, but our liveliness is at stake.  
sometimes even from the need in our own community.

Too often we want to give up, declare “life is too hard” and turtle inside ourselves. We isolate,  
biding time for better days.  
It feels overwhelming and we look away,  
even from the needs in our own community.

Help us, Healer.  
Show us our energy reserves.  
Forgive our cynicism.  
Move us to move  
one step at a time toward greater care for one another.

In this silence, we sense and acknowledge our yearning for wholeness.

*Silence*

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

**Assurance**

I invite you to imagine a warmth begin to arise within the core of your body. This warm orb of light is deep within you, a flame always there and ready when you need it. This warm glow begins to emerge from the recesses of your inner being to ignite and spark inspiration. It floods your whole body until your skin is glowing with it, radiating outward. This light from you offers a beacon for those around you, whose own light reflects and multiplies your own. There is now exponentially more radiance.

Know this: We are gifted with agency to affect healing in the world.

No. Matter. What.  
We are not alone and we can join with others to magnify hope.  
Christ answers when we call, when we cry out for help.

Take a deep breath in to let this truth fill you...  
and breathe out with the relief of assurance.

## Peace

I invite you to imagine the warmth that surrounds you extending to those who may be next to you in close proximity. Imagine it extending beyond your walls to  
the neighborhood...  
the wider community...  
the church...  
and seeing it spread like the rising sun, let it expand to all the world.  
Let this be our peace. **Amen.**

The peace of Christ is with you.  
**And also, with you.**

## Opening Hymn

*“O Love that Will Not Let Me Go”*

## BELIEVE

*People were fortified by Jesus’ words and deeds that revealed care for all—especially those marginalized. We strengthen our belief in the possibility for renewed health and vigor for all.*

## Time for Children

*Mark Burrows*

## A Contemporary Word

Curiosity is the first step down the path of awakening.”  
— **Anonymous**

“The path of awakening is not about becoming who you are.  
Rather it is about unbecoming who you are not.”  
— **Albert Schweitzer**

## Musical Proclamation

*“I Dream of a World (Church)”*  
*Mark A. Miller, Composer*

**An Ancient Word**  
*Matthew 9: 18-26*

While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. And the report of this spread throughout that district.

**Sermon**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**ASK**

*People who were healed by Jesus were not afraid to ask. And so we come before the Holy One, making our petitions and desires known, trusting the work of the Spirit.*

**Song of Preparation**

*"Make Us Holy, Make Us Whole"*

**In your love, make us whole.  
May we rest in your compassion.  
Calm the lost, weary soul  
in the warmth of your love.  
May your peace fill our hearts.  
May we know the love of Jesus.  
By your grace, you console.  
Make us holy, make us whole.**

## **Prayers of the People**

*Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler*

Healer of our every ill,  
especially our malady of exhausted spirits,  
we come before you to make our petitions known.  
Hear our cries for healing of body, mind, and spirit.  
We know that you are already at work among us,  
showing us the way to recovery.

You remind us that we do not have to shoulder everything alone.  
Divine spirit, you alone, are our true north. Like a compass provides direction through uncharted territory, Divine guide, you accompany us in our wilderness---offering direction, inspiration and healing.

We pray for all who feel cut off from opportunity and possibility.  
Whose spirits are dampened and damaged by those who fail to see value in their contributions,  
and who limit or deny fullness of expression.

We give thanks for communities, churches, non-profits, and businesses  
that support the flourishing of all voices, especially voices that have been silenced.

We give thanks for courageous innovators who use their resources and creativity to generate  
good in the world and who value generosity over profit.  
We ask for courage and encouragement to re-evaluate  
how we as a church can be more generous and creative.

We pray this day for...

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**In your love, make us whole.  
May we rest in your compassion.  
Calm the lost, weary soul  
in the warmth of your love.  
May your peace fill our hearts.  
May we know the love of Jesus.  
By your grace, you console.  
Make us holy, make us whole.**

## **KNOW**

*The parting words Jesus' gave to those he healed were often as much balm as the healing act itself. We hear words of encouragement from the One who makes beauty from brokenness.*

### **Ritual Action for the Week**

Charlotte Frary, Liturgist

Hear these words of Jesus "the girl is not dead, but sleeping." Today we have reflected on our need to be rejuvenated in spirit, to awaken anew our creativity and curiosity. Intellectual healing is spiritual healing. Jesus, who awakens the young girl in today's gospel, can surely awaken we, who are "sleep walking" through life.

Jesus, the healer of our every ill, is ready to transform the broken places of our lives into a beautiful mosaic of living art for the world.

By the power of God's forgiveness and transforming love, we are capable of reworking and remaking, the pictures of our "lives". Would you take your bowl of broken pieces of rocks or beach glass and arrange them in a design that sparks a sense of delight within?

Then leave your design in a place readily seen.

Let this design call you to pray this week for more curiosity and creativity.

## **RESPOND**

*Scriptural accounts of healing often end with responses from the "crowd" of witnesses. How will we proceed into the brokenness of this world and respond as the Body of Christ?*

### **Closing Song**

*"Be Thou My Vision"*

## **Charge**

*Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler*

Each week we look at the reaction of the crowd in the healing story. This week there is an interesting reaction at Jesus' notion that the girl was not dead. They laughed. Full-blown funeral rites had begun, flutes and all. And yet Jesus said, this is not the end of the story.

The idea that we could come back to life better than before, that we could find some way to bring life back to what feels dead, may seem preposterous to some. Even laughable.

Yet, like Jesus, we need not be deterred.

We can forge ahead, enter the "house" of sorrow and dare to proclaim that life can still exist.

In our communal discerning as to how our church community could become a "health hub" through our ministry and mission, may we release our collective imaginations and be open to innovation. Where and with whom can our church partner to passionately work for change? How may we rework...remake the picture of our church for such a time as this? Is there a new or renewed commitment or contribution we can make at First Presbyterian Church of Monroe to our larger community's effort for recovery during this pandemic?

## **Blessing**

*Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler*

Now go with confidence  
that the One Who Is Living Water  
is at work  
cleansing, renewing, and clarifying your life,  
recovering your depth of love for all  
and your joy of living in this world.

May the words of Jesus ring in your ears:  
"Do you believe it is possible?"

And may the Spirit hover, move, and deliver  
healing balm...a salve to your soul  
and a spring in your step.

As you leave this space,  
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.  
May your arms hold those in need.  
May your feet walk toward justice.  
May your heart trust its worth.  
May your soul dance in God's grace—  
And may this be your holy rhythm—  
The rhythm of Again and again and again,  
Until God's promised day.

In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself.  
You are God's treasure... a broken vessel... a holy vessel.  
So, go with courage, go with heart, go in peace. **Amen.**

## **Threshold into the World**

**Vessels, holy and whole  
Broken, needing the One  
Open, body and soul  
Healer, come.**

## **Postlude**

"Different Pictures", Holy Vessels: A Lenten Journey of Recovery" Series. [www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels](http://www.worshipdesignstudio.com/vessels).  
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## **SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Chancel Flowers**

This morning the chancel flowers have been given by Judy (Benriter) Statti of Lakewood, California, in memory of Bill and Eunice Benriter's Wedding Anniversary on March 18.

### **YouTube Livestreaming**

To connect to our Livestream service this Sunday click on the following link:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCySAQgUa6Sm9BHLvjO8bpMQ/live>

**FPC Monroe Worship Team**

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Rob Edwards, Interim Director of Music Ministries  
Charlotte Frary, Liturgist  
Isaac Fankhauser, Sound Team  
Josh McMann, Sound Team  
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