

*First Presbyterian Church of Monroe*  
*Fourth Sunday of Easter*  
*April 25, 2021*



“The proclamation of Easter Day is that all is well. In the end, his will not ours, is done. Love is the victor. Death is not the end. The end is life. His life and [all life] through him, in him. Existence has greater depths of beauty, mystery and benediction than the wildest visionary has ever dared to dream. Christ our Lord has risen.”

Frederick Beuchner, *“The Magnificent Defeat”*

Prelude

**Threshold Moment**

Easter is the unstoppable, unpredictable expression of God's love for humankind! The call of Jesus is to live fully in the power of that love – alive in each of us. We learn about that divine love as it is embodied in the person and ministry of Jesus, the one who is compared to a good shepherd. As we look to him to learn how to love, may our hearts praise the One who raised Jesus and raises us to abundant life and love!

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,  
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.  
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,  
Dare to dance again!**

If we are to dance with abandon, we learn and follow – then we can begin to lead. We can learn the steps to the dance of love through the lead of Jesus and those who have gone before us. May we dare to dance even as we continue to learn the way of love.

**Dare to dance with dreamers, sing their song,  
Dare to dance their stories, sing out strong.  
Dare to dance with freedom your whole life long,  
Dare to dance again!**

This is the call!

Face this new day, even when you aren't sure.

**We lift up our heads to meet the day.**

Get ready for life, for life is all around.

**We fortify our hearts with compassion and action.**

If rain still lingers, open the umbrellas of hope and set out anyway.

**For we are called to dance again!**

Prayer

Ann Lux, Liturgist

Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation –

We know your voice, the sounds of your steps.

Your love gathers us, urges us, encourages us.

Come and dance with us, engage with us, as we seek you –

so that we can be risen with Christ and in Christ.

Be with us now, we pray in the name of the Risen Christ. Amen.

**Opening Song of Praise**  
“Let All Creation Dance”

**Call to Confession**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Again and again, we lose our way.  
We long to follow you,  
yet we are distracted by other paths and chart our own way.  
We navigate by false stars and visions.  
Forgive us when we are lured by lights in the distance,  
instead of remaining steadfast and steered by your Light.  
Remind us that your way is The Way.  
We forget we are claimed by you, loved by you,  
and created to move to your holy rhythm.  
Forgive our forgetfulness.  
Forgive our short-term memory.  
Remind us again and again  
to dance in your love and to the beat of your heart.  
Place your wounded hands upon our hearts.  
Turn us again toward you.  
Lord of Life. Lord of Light. Lord of Resurrection. Amen.

**Declaration of Forgiveness**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Passing of the Peace**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

The peace of the Risen Christ be with you.

**And also, with you.**

You are invited to turn to wave to each other as a sign of graceful greetings this day.

**A Story for All Ages**  
*(Time with Children)*

**The Story**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

“We offer thanks  
**we offer thanks**  
for dreamers true  
**for dreamers true**  
for all they are  
**for all they are**  
and all they do.  
**and all they do.**”

Let us become  
**let us become**  
dreamers too  
**dreamers too**  
and bring new life  
**and bring new life**  
to me and you!  
**to me and you!**  
Amen!  
**Amen!**

### Reading of the Word

**First Reading: Psalm 23** *(NRSV)*  
**Second Reading: I John 3:16-24** *(NRSV)*

Ann Lux, Liturgist  
Ann Lux, Liturgist

### **Sounds of Resurrection**

“Shepherd Me, O God”

**Gospel Reading: John 10:11-18**  
**Sermon**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler  
Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Prayers of the People**  
**The Lord’s Prayer**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart,  
teach me to move in the power of your Spirit,  
teach me to [move] in the light of your presence,  
teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.**

### **Offering Our Resources and Our Energy**

Ann Lux, Liturgist

How do we know the rhythm and dance of our lives is faithful? Drummer of the Grateful Dead, Mickey Hart wrote “To fall in love is to fall in rhythm.” When we love Jesus, we fall in rhythm to the beat of Jesus’s heart. We become ever attentive to all of creation—like Christ, our good Shepherd. In the face of societal rules and attitudes that strive to foster competition and “everyone for themselves,” our hope is that others will know us by our love. Let us “fall in rhythm” with our planet and our neighbors in order to foster unity and build up the whole. Our energy to the work of justice and love and our trust in God who holds our lives may be shown through our offering today. Let us bring our offering to God.

**Teach me to pray in the power of Easter,  
following Christ in a life resurrected,  
teach me to act with compassion and justice,  
teach me to dance with the beat of your heart.**

**Song for Stepping Out into the World**  
“They Will Know We Are Christians by Our Love”

**Charge**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Benediction**

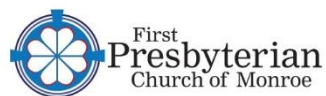
Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Our Loving God,  
Risen Christ,  
and Dancing, Swirling Spirit  
will fill you with all you need.  
May your life bring the beat of the Spirit  
to all needing the rhythm of God’s love.  
The rhythm of Again and Again.  
Go forth and dare to dance!  
Be God’s love letter to the world! Alleluia! Amen.

**Postlude**

**FPC Monroe Worship Team**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler, Pastor  
Rob Edwards, Minister of Music  
Ann Lux, Liturgist  
Isaac Fankhauser, Sound Team  
Josh McMann, Sound Team  
Randy Stiffler, Sound Team



108 Washington Street  
Monroe, Michigan 48161  
734-242-1545

Prayer of Confession adapted from “A Prayer for When We’ve Lost Our Way,” by Enumo Okoro. A Rhythm of Prayer. Edited by Sarah Bessey. Convergent. New York. 2020. p. 118-119.

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