

LISBON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
April 18, 2021 Third Sunday of the Easter Season  
“At Home Worship”

**Call to Worship:**

*Come, now is the time to worship.*

**Now is the time to spring forth in faith.**

*Come, give thanks to our God.*

**We sing of God’s praise and glory.**

*Come, seek the Lord, our God.*

**We rejoice in God’s continual presence.**

*Come, now is the time to worship and celebrate our God.*

**Opening Prayer** Steadfast God of faith and grace, we come into your presence with rejoicing this day. Carry us out of our challenges into the glorious message of your saving love and constant presence. We hear your message of peace for our lives so walk with us, we pray, O God, as we renew our faith and journey forth as disciples of the Risen Christ. Amen.

**Scripture Reading** “*Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.*” Read Acts 3.12-19

**Prayer of Confession** Spirit of forgiveness and grace, you know when we have failed to hear your Word and live your love. Forgive us, we pray. Open our ears to hear and our hearts to love. Guide us into unity and selflessness, that our church might be a true body of Christ, that we might be faithful disciples of your Son. In trust and gratitude, we pray. Amen.

**Time of Silent Confession** *Offer the confessions of your heart to God in these quiet moments.*

**Words of Assurance** The joy of God is our strength and our salvation. Christ came to proclaim release from captivity, even

captivity from sin. In Christ, we are forgiven and made new. Rejoice and give thanks in the name of the One who is our Risen Savior. Thanks be to God!

**Scripture Reading** “*Beloved, we are God’s children now...*”  
Read I John 3.1-7

**Remembering our Joys and Concerns in Prayer** *Please spend a few moments remembering those who are on our prayer list and the joys and concerns you bring to God today.*

**An Easter Season Prayer** God of renewal, you are the Author of life. You are the One who came to meet us in flesh and bone. You are the One who walked among us, proclaiming love, mercy, and repentance. You are the One who died, and rose, and lived again, that we might truly believe and truly live. Empower us to be your witnesses, we pray, and help us accept your unconditional love, that we might share your love with others. In the name of the One who taught us to pray..... **The Lord’s Prayer**

**Scripture Reading** “*...that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations...*” Read Luke 24.36-48

**Meditation** According to a commentary I read while preparing these words of meditation, anthropologists have discovered a primitive tribe in the South American jungles for whom the most important role within the tribe is the “keeper of the flame.” Because fire is so precious and takes such an effort to recreate, one member is entrusted with keeping the flame alive. With the existence of many gadgets for fire starting, such a role isn’t necessary in our society but it was vital to this tribe, and most likely, many others. No doubt the person fulfilling this role was greatly honored among the people.

Within the vast “tribe” of followers of Christ, there is one essential role as well; however, unlike the keeper of the flame,

this role doesn't apply to one person at a time but to ALL of us, all at once, all the time. That is the role of "witness." Jesus stressed how important this role would be for those who are his followers in every day and age.

Our reading in Luke's gospel tells us that the Risen Christ once again joined his disciples and offered them a blessing of peace. After their bewilderment in being greeted by the one whom they had seen crucified and buried abated and after Jesus had something to eat (there's his human nature shining through!), he turns to his friends and reminds them of his teachings. Then, as the gospel says, "*he opened their minds to understand the scriptures.*" How I would have loved to have been present for that experience! Imagine being taught by God's only Son, the One who had just died and rose again! They must have been in awe – until, that is, Jesus reminded them of their calling, that "*...repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*" Then, as if to really stress the point, Jesus said, "*You are witnesses of these things.*"

Like the keeper of the flame, there can be no more central task of those who follow Jesus than to witness to his eternal presence. Indeed, the very word *witness* reminds us of everything we are supposed to be and do. It's up to us, in our words and in our actions, to share what Jesus means for us that others may begin to believe and join us as God's Kingdom people. We are, for all intents and purposes, the head, heart, and hands of Jesus for our time. As we work to help our community turn together from all of the ways that lead to death, that is to a less than full life that Christ wants for us, we witness to turning together to follow the ways that lead to new life – our life in Christ.

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us that we are "the light of the world." As we witness to our love for Christ and his love for us, we share the light for all to see!

**Words of Benediction** Go as witnesses to the Risen Lord for Christ has fed us and made us whole. Go as witnesses to the Risen Lord for Christ has brought us joy. Go as witnesses to the Risen Lord for we go to share the Good News of our Savior.



Lisbon United Methodist Church  
welcomes, nurtures, and serves  
all people  
with the love of Christ.