

## Worship Service - *“Do Over”*

Easter 3, Year C, 1st May, 2022

Acts 9:1-6 NIV / John 21:1-19 NIV

**Prelude (Video)**     [\*Duo, 2nd movement\*](#), WA Mozart, Bryan Young, bassoon;  
Annie Center, viola

**Opening Music**     [\*Brother\*](#)     performed by: Needtobreathe - feat. Gavin DeGraw, written by Bear and Bo Rinehart, 2013 NeedToBreathe Music (Admin. by Downtown Music Publishing, LLC)KMR Music Royalties II SCSp (Admin. by Kobalt Music Publishing America, Inc.), CCLI song number 7029230, used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246, uploaded to YouTube by Herbie Follin

## Welcome Guests / Announcements

**Pass the Peace/Video Interlude**     [\*I Will Change Your Name\*](#)

written by D.J. Butler, played by Annie Center, CCLI Song 145139, 1987 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing (Admin. by Integrity Music), used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 202161246

**Opening Hymn**     [\*Lord of the Dance\*](#)     written by Sydney Carter, tune was adapted from the Shaker melody "Simple Gifts", attributed to Elder Joseph Brackett, performed by Barley Bree and posted To YouTube by Chet Valley Churches, CCLI song number 75829, used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

## Call to Worship [responsive]

One: There's a *whisper* inside of us:

**All: Most of the time we can ignore it if we so choose, and often we neglect it;**

One: But its insistent, compelling voice reminds us that our lives are not without meaning, that we have a contribution to make, that we are called. This called-ness can be hard for us, Jesus,

**All: We are all too aware of our denials of you, of all the ways we've failed to live up to our promise; We're not sure that there aren't others who are more than we are: more faithful, more responsible, more organized, more committed, more able.**

One: But, it seems that you don't really hear our objections, our excuses all you ever seem to say is just, "Follow me." So if you see in us something worth calling;

**All: If you are committed to empowering us, infilling us, using us,**

One: Then all we can do is seek your leading, and respond, nervously, but wholeheartedly,

**All: "Yes."**

## Invocation

Fearless One, You have called us to be in awe of You, but we have allowed our fears to get the better of us. We easily slip back to old habits and patterns. We have difficulty accepting change. We set boundaries and walls to keep everything contained, but You have come to erase those boundaries and break down the walls. The Holy Spirit cannot be contained in a box, and neither can our faith, O God. Help us to follow You wherever You lead us, even when it is unfamiliar, even when we are afraid. O God, Your perfect love casts out our fear, and we are renewed and restored in You. Call us to be open to where You are leading us, on this journey of faith. Amen.

## Scripture Reading - Acts 9:1-6 NIV

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest

and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.

He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied.

"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

## Hymn (Video)

### [\*Have Thine Own Way\*](#)

**504**

with Lyrics by John Jones, written by Adelaide Addison Pollard and George Coles Stebbins

## A Time of Prayer

## Joys and Concerns

## Pastoral Prayer

Holy Risen One, Signs of your resurrection surprise us with their ordinary sacred. We go about our lives, not knowing how to live into the new life you promise, so we do what we know to do –

As the disciples go back to fishing, we get back to business. All the while, in the back of our minds and hearts, we grieve Your Absence, we miss Your Presence.

And just as we start to think You were just a dream, You show up as ordinary sacred, grilling fish on the beach, offering a small kindness through a stranger on the street, a simple magic moment with a friend, a tulip blooming in the rain.

Help us to remember that everything is different in the living of our lives because of You.

As we celebrate new life, we are mindful of the places and peoples and creatures who suffer in mind, body, and spirit.

We are mindful of war-torn countries, and refugee children who pick scraps of bread off the street to eat...

We are mindful for those who deal with the stress of caring for a loved one and those whose bodies are racked with disease and sickness.

We pause here to remember them. *(pause to name concerns/or silent prayer)*

Like Paul, make the scales fall from our hearts' eyes so that we can see your world in the way You see it. Clear our vision so that we can love with the love you so freely offer us.

In the name of Christ, our brother and friend, Amen.

## **Gospel Reading      John 21:1-19 NIV**

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way:

Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus ), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.

He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.

The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.

Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.

This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

## **Message – Do Over**

When you were growing up, do you remember the phrase "Do-Over" that was often used during playtime? It would sometime happen during games like kick ball. The kicker would wallop the ball into the air over toward the trees. The ball would then bounce its way down through the branch and then get stuck. The ball would now be out-of-play and the game

would have to stop until the ball was freed. Instead of penalizing the defensive team by allowing the kicker to run the bases and to insure a fair game, the phrase is yelled out, "Do-Over." At that, the kicker would be allowed the chance to kick a "Do-over." It was always nice to have a "do-over," a second chance. Then once we grow up and get older, it seems like we don't seem to have as many opportunities for "do-overs." And the ones we get we can't always take advantage of, such as the following letter sent by the County of Greenville in South Carolina which read, "Your food stamps will be stopped effective March, 1992, because we received notice that you passed away. May God bless you. You may reapply if there is a change in your circumstances." Yet we do appreciate those rare occasions when we are alive and able to take advantage of a second chance, don't we?

So much of our lives are spent forging ahead, not looking back, trying to make sure we do things right the first time. But we make mistakes, we have regrets, and often we never get or take the opportunity to make things right, to get a "do-over." Which makes those rare opportunities when they arise so very valuable.

Our friend Peter found such an opportunity in our gospel lesson this morning. Today's reading is a little different. At the end of the previous chapter, we have a clear closing and commission, then we have this last chapter which seems kind of "tacked on." Most biblical scholars agree that this was added much later to the original text. So our job then is to decide what was so important to add this epilogue to a work that had already been circulating a little while.

We come upon a scene in this reading of some of the disciples who had returned to Galilee, probably more accurately they sought refuge back in their home turf of Galilee. They had had a pretty rough time of it. Jesus was dead, then he was alive and in the room with them, then not, then back. Everyone seemed to be after them, like they had come for him, so they headed back north, to their old, familiar world, the one they knew and felt safe and comfortable in. And Peter, probably feeling the most stress, decides to take his mind off of things and go fishing. After all, it's what his livelihood was for years before this prophet-rabbi showed up and turned his whole world upside-down. Besides, he probably had a lot of guilt that was pulling him down.

Jesus told him he would betray him three times. He was shocked and quite frankly a little offended that his beloved teacher would even suggest this. Yet, before the cock crowed in the morning, he had in fact done it. How could he be so weak he was probably thinking to himself, and unfaithful. He just needed to get on the water and get busy with work, take his mind off of things. Yet the fish just weren't biting. Figures, he probably thought. Just one more thing gone wrong. Then this guy on the shore shows up cooking breakfast and lo and behold, the nets fill with fish.

It's Jesus and he gets so excited he wades through the water to get to him. But that's where it gets interesting. Initially it seems like old times. Table fellowship with Jesus, sitting around

and talking, Jesus serving them food. However he seems aloof, the warmth seems to be lacking. Jesus is not addressing him by the nickname, Peter, that he gave him, the rock. Instead he's using his old name, Simon. Three times he asks him, "Do you love me?" Man, no missing the symbolism there. Three times Peter denied him, three times he asks, "Do you love me?" It's almost like he's testing the waters, wondering if Peter really does love him anymore. Or is it something different? Is Jesus instead giving Peter a second, or even a third chance? After all, this is brash old Peter we are talking about. Someone whose voice often seems to be ahead of his thought. He seems to speak without thinking, to jump into action with little thought for the consequences. Yet here was Jesus giving him another chance, granting him forgiveness despite his denial of Jesus when it really mattered, when Jesus was being persecuted, not just on Peter's behalf, but everyone's. But that's part of the reason we're all here, isn't it?

We, too, can really mess up, and this is one place we can come and not worry about judgment for our mistakes. Instead we're greeted with love and acceptance. That's the point Jesus is making with Peter. It all comes down to love, "do you love me?" Love is lifted up as the basic qualification for Christian service. To hear the strong call of God's chosen that one is forgiven and free from guilt helps take the pressure off and relax, and makes it possible to settle into a place, to become part of a community, to set down roots. It means being able to offer hospitality, to "feed my sheep", to offer some grilled fish and bread to those who are hungry, whether symbolically in spiritual nourishment, or in real food for physical needs. It means learning the stories of joy and struggles of those who come through the doors, not just meet and greet and move on.

What does it mean to be invested in the stories of others? Hearing the stories of others expands the horizons of one's own social location and cultural experiences. It gives insight into the work of God in the lives of others, in the community around us, and gives God's community insight into how they can incarnate God's freedom and forgiveness for the world around them. But Peter is also told to "tend or care for my sheep." This is a reminder that ministry is not simply about putting down roots and dwelling in a place and being hospitable when people come into the congregation. There is always the tension of being rooted as well as being sent as ambassadors and servants of Christ. The cries beyond the congregation can be deafening. Stepping out and responding to God's call in our lives may prompt one to go in unanticipated directions for which one feels totally unprepared, as an individual, and as a community of faith.

Jesus points out in our message today that contrast. When we are young, before we set down faith roots, we go where we will, and do what we want. Yet when we've matured in our faith, and been called by Christ, we are led by our belts in directions that may not be familiar. But answering the call is what we're all about, what Jesus was certainly about. However, we are not immune from the weariness of life in this world. We too sometimes just need this place to be the sanctuary it is also meant to be.

God's strong message in both of today's passages is that forgiveness is always available, always possible. Both Peter and Paul, or in these stories, Simon and Saul, were given second chances, opportunities to not only receive forgiveness, but to seek it, and to witness it. Jesus' forgiveness of Peter opens the way for Peter to try again to be a faithful follower of Jesus. He certainly knows he failed in the moment of crisis. Likewise, Paul now realizes his shortcomings in persecuting the early believers, using sacred texts to clobber others instead of seeking their stories of struggle, and seeking to welcome them into a faith family built on love, not judgment. Freedom comes as grace when one knows that one has erred, has failed to do the right and just thing in the moment of crisis, and is given another chance to try again.

That freedom that came to Peter at the end of the Gospel opens new ways that bear witness to Jesus in concrete ways. When one has been given another chance to get it right, there is often a sense of urgency to take action to make things right again. The theme throughout the Gospel of John, and amplified in John's epistles, is one of a community founded in and witnessing to love in all that they do.

I'd like to close with a short example of the impact seeking and caring for lost sheep can have. John Kevin Hines is one of a handful of people who have survived an attempted suicide jump off the Golden Gate Bridge. He claims to have told himself that if any one of the people he rubbed shoulders with on the way to the bridge noticed he was distraught, and asked him what was wrong, he wouldn't jump. That's all it would have taken-another human being to acknowledge his existence. No one did. On his way down he got a hold on his life and asked God for a second chance, which is miraculously what he got, or we never would have heard how he was a smile away from death. How many John Kevin Hines' live around us, desperate for a kind word, an open ear to hear their story and to be offered the comfort they so desperately seek and need. What are those needs around us and how can we be witnesses to God's love and grace to the hurt, outside our doors, as well as inside? Part of my job is certainly to give comfort to our own flock, but sometimes it's not my voice the sheep needs or seeks. Is it yours? Can you reach out to that someone whose eyes look like they just want to be engaged by someone, anyone? How do we witness that compassion to the community around us? How can become part of the neighborhood? Those are the questions we need to work on together, the action we are called to, as the body of Christ in the world of today. Amen.

## **A Call to Serve**

We give in grateful thanksgiving for all that God has given us. In the upside down world of the gospel, we measure our wealth not by what we have, but what we can give away. Let us give away generously, in this offering, To bless your church, your people, your creation.

## **A Time for Reflection**     *Musical Interlude (Video)* *How Shall I Sing To God,*

written by Brian Arthur Wren, Lloyd Larson, played by Annie Center, CCLI Song number 2940476, Words: Hope Publishing Company, Music: 1999 GlorySound (Admin. by Hal Leonard LLC) (Admin. by Tom Cat Music), used and reported under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

## **The Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Thank you, God, for the gifts and ministries of your people. Grant that this offering given in thanksgiving for all the blessings you have given us will fill empty hearts with love and will proclaim your honor and glory in the name of Christ Jesus to all people. Amen

## **Hymn (Video)**     *Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling* 491

Artists: Micah Spruth-Janssen, John Gosswein, Stephanie Straatmann, and Carolyn Hahn Text and Music: Will Lamartine Thompson , posted to YouTube by Micah S-J

## **BENEDICTION**

Christ asks if we love him? If we say yes, he says; “Then care for one another.” This is our opportunity to make a difference, to live lovingly on the frontiers of his bright new world.

May God bless the world in which you move, and bless your home and bless your friends. May God bless the eyes with which you see, and bless the ears with which you listen. May God bless the way you use your hands, bless the way you employ your tongues.

May grace mercy and peace will be yours, today and always. Amen!

(Adapted from a blessing written by Bruce Prewer, and posted on [Bruce Prewer's Homepage](http://www.bruceprewer.com/).  
<http://www.bruceprewer.com/>)

## **Postlude (Video)**     *Duo, 3rd movement,*

WA Mozart, Bryan Young, bassoon; Annie Center, viola