

First Congregational Church of Pelham  
United Church of Christ  
**An Open and Affirming Church**  
*"Sharing What God's Love Looks Like"*

Dare to Dance Again  
Easter Season Series  
**May 5, 2024**

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Ministers: All the Members of the Church

Pastor: Rev. Carlos Jauhola-Straight

Director of Music: Tom Seniow

Organist: Carolyn (Sue) Howard

Bell Choir Director: Sharon Hone

Church Administrator: Stephanie Noel

Sexton: Lupe Nova

Deacons: Cheryl Andrews and Harmony Campbell

*~ We Gather in God's Presence ~*  
*+Please rise in body or spirit.*

Prelude

Welcome

Introit

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

German-Latin Carol

*'Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice. Now ye need not fear the grave: Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls to all to gain His everlasting hall. Christ was born to save!'*

Call to Worship

The sun breaks through the clouds.

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

We know that God is at work in our lives.

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

And when rain comes again, we will open our umbrellas and set out anyway.

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

+Hymn

"Spirit Of The Living God"

#226

Prayer

**Holy One, Justice-Seeker, Lover of Creation – Let us be open to learn from the dances of others. Open us to new steps for a new day. 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. Amen.**

What's in the Bag?

Singing Praises to God

"Gloria Patri"

#558

***Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen***

Psalter

Psalms 98 #679

Scripture

Acts 10: 44-48  
Gospel John 15:9, 11-15a

Anthem

"Praise! Praise!"

G.F. Handel, arr Patrick M. Liebergen

*"Let every nation give praise to the Lord. Rejoice and be glad for the Lord comes to all.  
Resound joyful praise. The glory and power of God we proclaim and sing with a loud voice  
the Lord's holy name. O give praise; give the Lord joyful praise."*

Reflection

"Who Can Withhold: Break Forth"

Hymn

"Taste and See"

insert

Communion

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

As we prepare to attend the heavenly feast, we especially pray for those who have no earthly tables, or no place at a table, and so little daily bread. We confess that we have been slow to join the dance that brings life to all, brings love to all, brings sustenance to all. In silence, let us lift up our prayers of confession...

Assurance

Hear this good news! God has loved you from the very beginning. The invitation of Christ is never-ending because resurrection can happen at any moment. The Holy Spirit is transforming you even now!

**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven! Glory to God! Amen!**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Jesus is with us! **With us now and forever!**

So lift up your hearts and voices! **We lift them up to God!**  
Let's join in thanks and praise! **How right it is to do this together!**

Holy Living One, you transformed a whole lot of nothing into this amazing creation. You breathed life all around and called it good. You invited us to the wonder of it all and when we could not face you, you turned us around. You keep bringing us around and around, time and again, offering the chance to join the freedom-dance. And so we join with the glorious chorus of saints past and present, in the never-ending hymn of praise:

**Holy, Holy, Holy! God of power and might, everywhere we see your glory!  
Blessed are they who come in your name. Hosanna in the Highest! Alleluia! May it  
be so!**

Indeed, you are holy! And blessed is your son Jesus, Anointed One, Liberator, Dance Partner, Sibling, Friend. Jesus sat at tables with those who had no place and offered fulfilling food for bodies and souls. And on the night when he would give all love for us, he sat at the table with extended family—just as he hosts this table here and now with this extended family. He offered the usual prayers of thanks to you, God, over bread and cup, and then disrupted the gathering with uncustomary words:

“Take and eat this bread—it is my body given for you.  
Whenever you gather around the table together, remember me.”

“Take and drink from this cup, each and every one—it is the sign of a new covenant, (for business-as-usual is over and done and the resurrection dance goes on). This love is poured out for all people. Whenever you gather around the table together, remember me.”

And so we remember. And we believe:  
**Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again!**

Pour out your Spirit upon us now! 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. All glory to you, Living Presence, Holy One, Holy God, through Jesus our Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit our Advocate. Amen.

### COMMUNION

The table extends beyond this physical space and into the space of the Spirit that unites us. May this meal ready us to love, trust, hope, and dance to the beat of God’s heart.

### PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

**Thank you for meeting us at the table and in our hunger. Teach us to pray in the power of Easter, following Christ in a life resurrected, teach us to act with compassion and justice, teach us to dance with the beat of your heart. AMEN**

*~ We Respond to God's Word with our Prayers and Offerings ~*

Prayers of God's People

Sung Call to Prayer

"In The Garden"

#205 vs 3

*Silence*

Sharing our Prayer Requests

Prayers of the People

The Lord's Prayer (*unison*)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

Prayer Response

Offering Our Gifts to God

Invitation to the Offering

Offertory

+Doxology

Tune: Old Hundredth

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below;  
Praise Holy Spirit, comforter; One God triune, whom we adore. Amen.***

+Prayer of Dedication

**Living God, these offerings show how we have accepted your invitation to dance with joy and thanksgiving. Take the gifts we offer for the work of this congregation and for your work across New Hampshire and around the world. Amen.**

*~ We Go Forth to Share What God's Love Looks Like ~*

+Hymn

"You Shall Go Out With Joy"

#219

Benediction

Sung Benediction

"Because He Lives"

#204

"And life is worth the living just because He lives."

Postlude

**WEEKLY**

**Morning Prayer** - Monday & Wednesday 7:30 am Zoom ID: contact church office

**Bell Choir Rehearsal** - 6:30 pm

**Knitters** - Tuesday 1pm

**Lazarus House Food Pantry** 8:30 am - 12 noon

**Coffeebreak** - Wednesday 1pm

**Choir Rehearsal** - Wednesday 7:30 pm

### LOOKING AHEAD

Tuesday, May7	<b>Faith Formation</b> 7pm
Thursday, May 9	<b>Women's Fellowship</b> 7pm
Sunday, May 12	<b>Worship</b> 10am
Monday, May 13	<b>Holy Habits</b> 7pm
Tuesday, May 14	<b>Diaconate</b> 7pm
Thursday May 16	<b>Lazarus House Breakfast</b> 7:30am <b>Mission Meeting</b> 7pm
Sunday, May 19	<b>Pentecost and Confirmation</b> <b>Worship</b> 10am
Tuesday, May7	<b>Faith Formation</b> 7pm