



Laurel Presbyterian Church
Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve

Welcomes You!

Easter 6

May 17, 2026, 10:00 AM

Where Love is Known

PRELUDE

James A. Sudbury

RINGING OF THE HOUR

Janice Berger

WELCOME BELOVED ONES

Rebecca Owen

GATHERING AROUND LOVE

MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Rebecca Owen

Leader: Like the disciples, who huddled around you—

People: We gather to lift our voices in praise to you, Beloved God!

Leader: Like Mary, mother of Jesus, who wondered, “How can this be?”

People: We gather in awe and wonder of your steadfast love for us.

*HYMN

Standing on the Promises

No. 838

RECEIVING LOVE

CALL TO CONFESSION

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Living God, there are so many ways we have not followed the nudging of your indwelling presence. We want to translate your love into practice, but we hesitate: We fear that we will not be received. We fear that we do not know how to love. We fear that we will trip up. We fear—so we stop short. Give us the courage to love others as Jesus loves us. Help us to risk offering lovingkindness rather than jumping to conclusions or withholding a benevolent word or action. Help us to see you in everyone we meet and have mercy on us when we don't. For we pray all of these things in the name of the Risen One, who is and was and always will be, our Christ.

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION. . . AMEN.

FORGIVENESS OF SIN

Leader: Cherished People of God: Hear the good news! We are made from cosmic material, and because we are, we can always return again and again to recover our truth in you.

People: **With great gratitude, we return ourselves to you to reclaim our identity as your Beloved Ones—to trust you as your Love-Led people.**

*OUR RESPONSE

Gloria Patri

Hymn No. 581

*PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PROCLAIMING LOVE

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

SCRIPTURE

John 20:19-23 (NRSVue)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God!**

MUSICAL DEVOTION

I Will Trust in the Lord

Laurel Choir

SERMON

"Breathe"

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

RESPONDING IN LOVE

*HYMN

O Lord My God

No. 625

*PROFESSION OF FAITH

A Brief Statement of Faith

Rebecca Owen

We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God. Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives, teaching by word and deed and blessing the children, healing the sick and binding up the brokenhearted, eating with outcasts, forgiving sinners, and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.

Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition, Jesus was crucified, suffering the depths of human pain and giving his life for the sins of the world. God raised this Jesus from the dead, vindicating his sinless life, breaking the power of sin and evil, delivering us from death to life eternal.

*OUR RESPONSE

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Hymn No. 606

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

Leader: Easter God, we are filled with joy that your love lifts us up and holds us throughout all time. We are so grateful that morning follows darkness, that life follows death, and we give you thanks for loving us so much that you deliver us from death to everlasting life.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that you would soften our hearts so we might “be opened” to your Love.

Silence

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we would take seriously your empowerment of us as a people to receive your Spirit and to live from it—forgiving and releasing people as you have forgiven and released us.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “be light” even in this present darkness—even into our own darkness.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “be instruments of your peace” when the world is shattering before us—even into our own shatterings.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “hold joy” even when we see so much suffering—even into our own suffering.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “be love” even when challenged by our most challenging neighbors—even into our most unlovable places.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We pray that we might “trust” your Goodness at deeper and deeper levels, and “trust who you say we are in you.” And we ask that you might strengthen our identity as your Easter people who are “precious, honored and oh so loved.”

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: We lift up all those who are dealing with forthcoming surgeries, harsh realities, enduring medical challenges, recovering from surgeries, gripping grief, isolation, uncertainty, unforgiving timelines, sleep deprivation, addiction, housing and food deserts, lack of resources for basic needs, and those who are emotionally under the weather or feeling unloved—and we pray that you would hold us tenderly—surfacing tangible forms of comfort, while finding ways for us to be merciful.

Silence.

Leader: Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayers.

Leader: For we dare to pray all these things in the name of our Risen Lord, who taught us to pray:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

BEARING LOVE INTO THE WORLD

*HYMN	<i>How Lovely, Lord</i>	No. 402
*THE CHARGE AND BLESSING		The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench
*POSTLUDE		James A. Sudbury
*RECESSION AND GREETING		The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench

***Please feel free to stand and move during our worship service.**

****Please wait to greet each other until the minister have recessed down the aisle.**

Welcome to The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench: We are thrilled to welcome back to our pulpit, The Rev. Dr. Roger Gench, a national guru in our denomination and a local fan favorite at Laurel.

Gratitude to our Liturgist: Thank you to Rebecca Owen for serving as our liturgist this week.

Gratitude for the Steady Presence of Laurel Love: Thank you to Carolyn Stinger for her copy editing, Billy Shepherd for tending to our church sign, Mary Scarce, Beverley Shepherd and Carolyn for our printing, Brenda and Pete MacRae, for serving as our newsletter editors, Brenda MacRae, our website master, and Tod Balsbaugh, Marshall Chamberlayne, Wayne Alvis and Pete MacRae for tending to our building and grounds.

All Are Welcome! The signature gift of Laurel Love is our affection and love for God and for one another.

Laurel Presbyterian Church

The Rev. Ann D. Cherry, Minister
Marcy Deisher, Treasurer
Peter MacRae, Bookkeeper
Gladys Chamberlayne, Elder, MCM Team
Julie Messick, Elder, WE
Thomas Miller, Elder, WE Team

James A. Sudbury, Director of Music
Jill Day, Clerk
Rebecca Owen, Elder, MCM Team
Rudy Van't Riet, Elder, SP Team
Bill Shepherd, Elder, SP Team

You can contact Rev. Ann D. Cherry at (804) 873-1990 or at laurelpres.cherry@gmail.com

You can reach James Sudbury at (661) 466-7347 or at jamesandrewsudbury@gmail.com

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Where Love Is Known

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“You are precious in my sight and honored and oh so loved.” Isaiah 43:4