

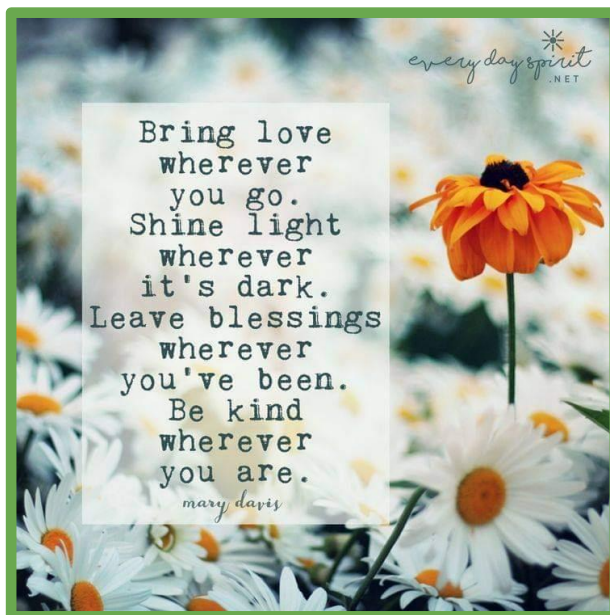
SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Caldwell United Methodist Church, 8 Academy Road, Caldwell, N. J. 07006

Rev. Vivian L. Rodeffer, Pastor

Ms. Maxine Alstrom, Music Director



## PRELUDE

## WELCOME AND INVOCATION

Pastor Viv

*God of unending surprises, This life is a tapestry of moments woven together, and we long to be weavers of love. Today we gather and pray that you would unravel our bias. Unravel our assumptions. Unravel whatever it is that keeps us from you. And as you do, clear space in our hearts for your Word. We are listening. We are praying. Amen.*

## \*CALL TO WORSHIP

We seek the word of God, but may not hear the messenger.

**Open our eyes and ears to accept the message without judging.**

Help us to see the truth.

**With a loving ear, let us hear the word of God at work in the world.**

With trust, we can all be instruments of God.

## \*HYMN # 152 "I Sing the Almighty Power of God"

1 I sing the mighty pow'r of God, that made the mountains rise,  
That spread the flowing seas abroad, and built the lofty skies.  
I sing the wisdom that ordained the sun to rule the day;  
The moon shines full at His command, and all the stars obey.

**2 I sing the goodness of the Lord, who filled the earth with food,  
Who formed the creatures through the Word, and then pronounced them good.  
Lord, how Thy wonders are displayed, where'er I turn my eye,  
If I survey the ground I tread, or gaze upon the sky.**

**3 There's not a plant or flow'r below, but makes Thy glories known,  
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, by order from Thy throne;  
While all that borrows life from Thee is ever in Thy care;  
And everywhere that we can be, Thou, God, art present there.**

### **CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER**

**Eternal God, at times we let presumptions block us from seeing your gifts in other people. Change us by the power of your Holy Spirit. Renew our hearts; open our spiritual eyes to see your greater purpose and potential in all persons. Walk beside us as we obey your call to encourage one another, create space, and help each other use our God-given gifts for your work in the world. Amen.**

### **SCRIPTURE**

**Acts 9: 1-22**

**Tracy Voca, Reader**

**9** Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. **3** Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. **4** He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" **5** He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. **6** But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." **7** The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. **8** Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. **9** For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank.

**10** Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." **11** The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, **12** and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." **13** But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem, **14** and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." **15** But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel;

**16** I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.” **17** So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, “Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” **18** And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, **19** and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

The word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God.**

**CHOIR**

**“I Believe”**

**Mark Miller**

**THE MESSAGE**

**From Judgment to Connection**

*“For several days [Saul] was with the disciples in Damascus, **20** and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, “He is the Son of God.” **21** All who heard him were amazed and said, “Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem among those who invoked this name? And has he not come here for the purpose of bringing them bound before the chief priests?” **22** Saul became increasingly more powerful and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was the Messiah.”*

**DEDICATION OF OURSELVES AND OUR GIFTS TO THE LORD**

**\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION**

**God of Love, we offer you our gifts and energy to help our church and people of the world who are hurting. Pour out your blessings on these gifts and help us to remember to be thankful as we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.**

**\*DOXOLOGY**

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God all creatures here below: Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Praise God the source of all our gifts!  
Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!  
Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**THE MORNING PRAYER, SILENT PRAYER & THE LORD’S PRAYER** Pastor Karen

**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.**

**\*HYMN TFWS # 2162****“Grace Alone”**

1 Every promise we can make, every prayer and step of faith,  
 Every difference we can make is only by His grace.  
 Every mountain we will climb, every ray of hope we shine,  
 Every blessing left behind is only by His grace.

**REFRAIN**

Grace alone, which God supplies;  
 Strength unknown He will provide;  
 Christ in us, our cornerstone –  
 We will go forth in grace alone.

2 Every soul we long to reach, every heart we hope to teach,  
 Everywhere we share His peace is only by His grace.  
 Every loving word we say, every tear we wipe away,  
 Every sorrow turned to praise is only by His grace. **REFRAIN**

**\*BENEDICTION**

*Love God and see Christ in each person you meet. and do not withhold love from any, for we do not know who may yet turn to the light. **Amen.***

**POSTLUDE****\*Stand as able.****Monday, May 1****CALENDAR**

10:00 AM	Zoom Prayer/Discussion Group
7:00 PM	Nurture Outreach Witness Mtg

**“HEADS UP” FOR MAY MEETINGS**

Monday, May 8	7 and 8 PM	Zoom Finance and Trustees Meetings
Monday, May 15	7 PM	Zoom Council Meeting