
*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome

Announcements – Joys/Concerns

A Call to Worship

Jesus interrupts the busyness of our lives, offering sweet words of invitation: "Follow me."
It is so hard for us to walk away from what we have known and trust Jesus to provide for our needs, stepping into an unexpected, unknown future. But we will go anyway, trusting his love for us.

Jesus invites us to sit at table and share a meal with him; even in our sinfulness.

Does he know who we are? Does he understand the temptations to which we have yielded, and the sins we have committed? We will receive whatever he offers to us, trusting his love for us.

Jesus allows us to touch him without first asking, that we might be healed.

We feel unworthy to touch even the hem of his garment. We are so in need of restoration that we will try this one last thing; we have already tried everything else. We reach out to him, regardless of the consequences, trusting his love for us.

Jesus stretches out his hand, lifts us up, and invites us to new life.

We have been dead so long that we are dry, brittle, and dusty. Our faith has been all but blown away by the winds of stress, distress, and worry. We are in need of new life. We beg you, make us well again; we trust in your love.

Praise Hymn UMH 519 "Lift Every Voice and Sing"

Author: James Weldon Johnson (1921)

Copyright: © 1921 Edward B. Marks Music Company, renewed

Notes: Now Public Domain

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpj3K1N0r8g>

**1 Lift ev'ry voice and sing,
till earth and heaven ring,
ring with the harmonies of liberty.**

**Let our rejoicing rise
high as the list'ning skies,
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.**

**Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us.
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us.
Facing the rising sun
of our new day begun,
let us march on till victory is won.**

**2 Stony the road we trod,
bitter the chast'ning rod,
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
yet with a steady beat,**

**have not our weary feet
come to the place for which our people sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.
We have come, treading our path thro' the blood of the slaughtered,
out from the gloomy past,
till now we stand at last
where the bright gleam of our bright star is cast.**

**3 God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way,
thou who hast by thy might
led us into the light,
keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;
lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;
shadowed beneath thy hand,
may we forever stand,
true to our God, true to our native land.**

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

**How we long for that day
when all creation will join the song,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
We thank you and praise you
for your presence with us, here, now,
to strengthen us for our walk
and our work with you and one another.**

**Speak to us now through your word
proclaimed among us,
and focus our hearts
on you.**

WORD AND RESPONSE

Somewhere in my past
the locusts have destroyed
so much of what I know
it's hard to FOCUS
on just us as we travel
through these barren lands.

It's easier to focus on poverty
you see it is real, deep
and depressing no need
in suppressing the grief
that goes with it...

I get it. Focus.
On not just us...
but on our longing
for days gone by
when life was on a high
when peace and politics
were best friends
and every conflict found
an amends...

Being in an oppressive cave
for so long it's hard to trust
freedom...and then some.

It's hard to trust new beginnings...
that may turn sour.

It's hard to trust new opportunities
they could collapse in an hour.

SCRIPTURE ISAIAH 40:21-31 (NRSV, ALT.)

The Prophet:

Have you not known? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?

It is the One who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
and spreads them like a tent to live in;
who brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them,
and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off
like stubble.

The Holy One says to you...

The Lord

To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal?

The Prophet

Lift up your eyes on high and see:

Who created these?

It is the Holy One who brings out their host and numbers them,
calling them all by name;
for our God is great in strength, mighty in power,
not one is missing.

So why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,

ALL:

"My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God"?

The Speaker

Then, the Voice emerges again.
We have been delivered...
how we quiver with the good news.
We have been rescued
no miscued message this time.

We have been heard...
our walk will no longer be disturbed
with fear...our running will no longer
be short circuited due to poor gear...

The Prophet

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth,
who does not faint or grow weary;
whose understanding is unsearchable.

The Holy One gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.

Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

The Speaker

It's time to FOCUS...
Not on past locust damage...
but FOCUS on Jesus' FOCUS...

Come now, we've been heard,

come out of exile now...
FOCUS...FOLKS God loves US.
FOCUS...God SPOKE us into being
FOCUS...God woke us up into dreaming
FOCUS...will you...can you...GO THUS
and know...this race is designed FOR US!

LET'S GO!

Faith Hymn UMH #454 "Open My Eyes, That I May See"

Author: Clara H. Scott (1895)

Copyright: Public Domain

**1 Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

**2 Open my ears that I may hear
voices of truth thou sendest clear,
and while the wave notes fall on my ear,
ev'rything false will disappear.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my ears, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

**3 Open my mouth and let me bear
gladly the warm truth ev'rywhere.
Open my heart and let me prepare
love with thy children thus to share.
Silently now I wait for thee,
ready, my God, thy will to see.
Open my mouth, illumine me,
Spirit divine!**

Message

THANKSGIVING AND COMMUNION - INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him,
who earnestly repent of their sin
and seek to live in peace with one another.
Therefore, let us confess our sin to God.

CONFESSION AND PARDON

**Most merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned against you,
against one another,
and against the world and the creatures you have called us to tend.
We have broken our covenants.
We have lost our passion for your mission.
We have ignored the needs of others.
We have failed to love you
and our neighbors in your creation
as we have loved ourselves.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience.
Give us the wisdom to focus on you
and the courage to abide in your freedom,
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

Our Lord Jesus Christ is with us.
Yes he is. Hallelujah!

**The Holy Spirit is in this place!
Ignite our hearts!**

Raise your hands! Lift your voices!
Father, we are yours!

**We are yours, all yours, blessed Triune God,
all our lives, all our thanks, all our praise,
all our hesitations, all our grumbling, all our fears,
we give it all to you, with all our bodies, and minds, and voices.
Yours, all yours!**

Yours the blessing, yours the praise,
from the unimaginable silence before the big bang,
beyond the farthest reaches of time and space our instruments may ever find,
from infinity to infinity, everlasting to everlasting,
you are God, boundless in love and power.
We stand in awe, trembling in the light of your glory!

What are we that you should notice us?

What are we that you should love us?

**What are we that you should call us into covenant with you,
a covenant we continually broke,
and you continuously sustained.**

Mercy! How full of mercy!

How can we but praise you,

joining our voices with the song of angels and saints,
with seraphim and martyrs,
with the elders in heaven and all creatures on the earth, under the earth,
and in the rivers, oceans, streams, and skies,
with strangers and family in every generation, singing:

**Jesus Christ who comes in our God's name,
you are worthy, worthy!**

Lamb of God for all creation slain,
you are worthy, worthy!

Hosanna to our King!

Hosanna to our King!

You are holy, O God!

You are worthy, O Christ!

Worthy in your birth! Worthy in your living!

Worthy in your loving!

Worthy in your serving!

Worthy when you preached good news

that God's kingdom has drawn near

and gathered disciples, then and now, to learn and show the world

what life in God's reign means:

healing for the sick.

new life for the dead,

cleansing for the lepers,

deliverance for the oppressed,

freedom for the possessed,

beauty for the lilies,

care for the sparrows,

new birth, new life, new creation breaking in for all.

Worthy! Worthy! Worthy above all!

Worthy too, the night we betrayed you,

when you took the bread, blessed it and broke it,

and gave it to your disciples.

Worthy when you told them,

"This is my body broken for you. Remember me."

We remember.

Worthy when you took the cup,

praised God and shared it,

and worthy when you said,

"This is my blood of the new covenant for you.

Remember me."

We remember.

We remember, and we praise you with our lives

and these gifts of bread and wine,

proclaiming with one voice the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Come upon us, Holy Spirit.

Come upon these gifts.
Make them be for us Christ's body, Christ's blood.
Make us one body in Christ enlivened by his blood.
One in heart, one in mind, one in you, Holy Spirit,
as you move us to pray for the church and the world:
That we may proclaim the gospel boldly:

Hear us, Lord.

That we may offer your healing for all who are sick, and people who are torn and weary:

Hear us, Lord.

That we may be channels of your mercy over all your works, in earth, and sky and sea:

Hear us, Lord.

That many dead and left for dead may be raised, and death itself vanquished:

Hear us, Lord.

That all who are unclean may receive your cleansing grace:

Hear us, Lord.

That all who are possessed, oppressed, distressed, depressed and downcast may be set free at last.

Hear us, Lord.

Even so, come and fill this feast, Holy Spirit,
this day, and every day until that day
when we eat it new at the marriage supper of the Lamb!

All blessing and glory,
thanksgiving and power,
wisdom and honor and might,
be yours, Holy Triune God,
now and forever.

Amen!

BREAKING AND SHARING

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, God, for uniting us with Jesus in this holy mystery.
We are no longer our own, but yours.
So, send us, and put us
to leading and serving in your mission
wherever we go. We come to you this day joining
a one in the prayer your beloved Son taught us to pray.

Our Father...

Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer

Loving God, you continue to provide for our every need, even when it seems that the resources we have taken for granted seem to be shrinking. We trust that your love for us will be sufficient to supply all our needs. So with glad and generous hearts, we present our tithes and offerings to you, not counting the cost, but counting our blessings. Thank you for the opportunity to demonstrate our faith in you by unselfishly sharing your bounty with others. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Departing Hymn UMH 733 “Marching to Zion “ (verse 1 & 4)

Author (refrain): Robert Lowry (1867)

Publication Date: 1989

**1. Come, we that love the Lord,
and let our joys be known;
join in a song with sweet accord,
join in a song with sweet accord
and thus surround the throne,
and thus surround the throne.**

Refrain:

**We're marching to Zion,
beautiful, beautiful Zion;
we're marching upward to Zion,
the beautiful city of God.**

**4. Then let our songs abound,
and every tear be dry;
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
we're marching through Emmanuel's ground,
to fairer worlds on high,
to fairer worlds on high.
(Refrain)**

SENDING FORTH

Come now, we've been heard,
come out of exile now...
FOCUS...FOLKS God loves US.
FOCUS...God SPOKE us into being
FOCUS...God woke us up into dreaming
FOCUS...you can...we will...GO THUS
and know...this race is designed FOR US!
LET'S GO!

Postlude