

*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



**“Gathered up in Jesus”
Worship series**

Week 2

Announcements/Joys & Concerns

There are some experiences, some people who can make us feel small, make us feel insignificant, make us feel unloved. It is a common human experience. A reality sung about in the spiritual, “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child.”

Now, it needs to be said that I don’t presume to know what it felt like to be a slave during those terrible years in our nation’s history. Whatever I have experienced in my life is but a pale shadow of what thousands faced under an unjust system made worse by cruel and dehumanizing treatment. And what millions still face under the ripples of those systems that continue to this very day. I can only stand silent as I listen to their stories of neglect or suspicion or abuse.

Yet, a part of the power of the spiritual is identification. “Sometimes I feel like a motherless child, a long way from home”:

Who hasn’t had that experience? Who hasn’t felt that fear grip them at a weak or a painful moment? It is part of the human condition that there are times when we feel disconnected, diminished, and unloved. There might be tragic circumstances to cause such a feeling, or it may be the result of our own failures. Or it may be a misunderstanding. Or . . . well, you know. Don’t you? There are a million things, a million moments that can drive a wedge between us and the world, or between us and those we want to love, or between us and God.

So, what is the antidote? How do we continue in those moments when we are a long way from where we long to be? We listen. We remember. And sometimes we lament.

We need to know love like Christ offers. We need to cling to that love, to that hope when we walk through those valleys, and when we feel like motherless children. We also need to be in the business of loving like that. All around us at any given time there are those who feel disconnected, those who feel as though no one cares, no one is there for them.

There are those who feel that their mistakes define them in your eyes, who need for you to spread your wings and gather them in.

The second verse of the spiritual says, “sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone.” To be forgotten, to be insignificant, to be unloved is a common experience in our world today. Jesus’ love, flowing through us, each of us, as we deal with one another—in the midst of success and failure—is the antidote. It doesn’t matter how much you’ve messed up, he still wants to gather you as a hen gathers her brood. So, come home. Be gathered up by Jesus. The one who longs to wrap his wings around you is waiting, and offering, and hoping. It may seem like a long way, but it isn’t. It’s as close as a prayer.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Written by Stephen Fearing, and posted on Wild and Precious Life, <http://www.stephenmfearing.com>. Reposted: <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2014/02/call-to-worship-for-first-sunday-in-lent.html>.

Ashes have been smeared and sins have been confessed...

We follow our faithful Lord.

These times, they are troubling. This journey, it is hard...

We follow our faithful Lord.

It is God who sustains, not the temptations of this world...

We follow our faithful Lord.

In the Lord is our trust, our protection from harm...

We follow our faithful Lord.

Come, let us worship the One whom we serve...

We follow our faithful Lord.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

LEADER: O God, whose loving knows no ending, still you long to gather us under your wings. For the words of hatred we have spoken and the words of love we have withheld:

PEOPLE: O God, forgive us and gather us under your wings of mercy.

LEADER: For the walls we have built up and the barriers we have refused to take down,

PEOPLE: O God, forgive us and gather us under your wings of mercy.

LEADER: For the greed that makes us frantic and the gifts we pass by without seeing,

PEOPLE: O God, forgive us and gather us under your wings of mercy.

LEADER: For what we have done and for what we have left undone,

PEOPLE: O God, forgive us and gather us under your wings of mercy.

LEADER: Sisters and brothers, God’s promise of mercy is sure: you are forgiven and loved as you are. Come now and rest under God’s sheltering wings and know that you are home.

***HYMN OF PRAISE, UMH 348 “Softly and Tenderly Jesus is Calling”**

Author: Will L. Thompson (1880)

Refrain First Line: Come home, come home

Publication Date: 1989

Composer: Will L. Thompson (1880)

**1 Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling,
calling for you and for me;
see, on the portals he's waiting and
watching, watching for you and for me.**

Refrain:

**Come home, come home;
you who are weary come home;
earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling,
calling, O sinner, come home!**

**2 Why should we tarry when Jesus is
pleading, pleading for you and for me?
Why should we linger and heed not his
mercies, mercies for you and for me?
[Refrain]**

**3 Time is now fleeting, the moments
are passing, passing from you and from
me;
shadows are gathering, deathbeds are
coming, coming for you and for me.
[Refrain]**

**4 O for the wonderful love he has
promised, promised for you and for me!
Though we have sinned, he has mercy
and pardon, pardon for you and for me.
[Refrain]**

We Hear God’s Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 13:31-35

New Revised Standard Version

The Lament over Jerusalem

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, “Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you.” 32 He said to them, “Go and tell that fox for me,[a] ‘Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. 33 Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.’ 34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! 35 See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when[b] you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

CHILDREN’S SERMON

FAITH HYMN UMH #127 "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"

Author: William Williams (1745)

Publication Date: 1989

Name: CWM RHONDDA

Composer: John Hughes (1907)

**1. Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
pilgrim through this barren land.
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand.
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,
feed me till I want no more;
feed me till I want no more.**

**2. Open now the crystal fountain,
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fire and cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through.
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield;
be thou still my strength and shield.**

**3. When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side.
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever give to thee;
I will ever give to thee.**

"Message"

PASTORAL PRAYER

Jesus, as a mother you gather your people to you;
You are gentle with us as a mother with her children;
Often you weep over our sins and our pride;
tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds;
in sickness you nurse us,
and with pure milk you feed us.

Jesus, by your dying, we are born to new life;
By your anguish and labour, we come forth in joy.

Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;
through your gentleness, we find comfort in fear.

Your warmth gives life to the dead;
your touch makes sinners righteous.

Lord Jesus, in your mercy, heal us;
in your love and tenderness, remake us.
In your compassion, bring grace and forgiveness;
for the beauty of heaven, may your love prepare us.
We come before you this day, many voices sharing
one prayer, the prayer your beloved Son taught
us to pray, our Father...

Departing Hymn UMH #2001 “We Sing to You, O God”

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**1. We sing to You O God,
the Rock who gave us birth,
let our rejoicing sing Your name
in all the earth.
To You O God, let songs be raised,
In joyful hymns, our feast of praise**

**2. We wandered far from home
out in a desert land,
you shielded with your love
our fearful pilgrim band.
You kept us safe within
your arms and sheltered us
against the storm.**

**3. You bear us through the world,
an eagle to her young,
who rises on her wings and
Bears us toward the sun.
We ride the vaults of light
and air and trust in Your unfailing care.**

**4. O God, eternal God,
we hide within your wings,
the everlasting arms to whom
our praises ring.
Your Word is true,
your way is just,
you are the God in whom we trust.**

BENEDICTION

Like an eagle lifting up her weary children, God will carry you.
Like a mother hen gathering her brood, Jesus Christ will shelter you.
“Like the murmur of the dove’s song,” the Holy Spirit will dwell with you.
Do not be afraid. Go forth in God’s peace. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**