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

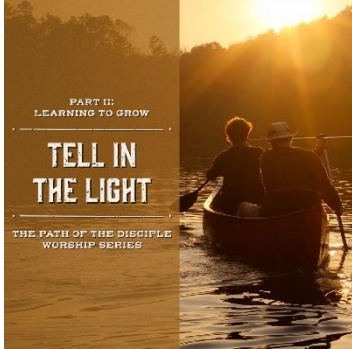
+++++

We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome

Announcements – Joys/Concerns



Having accepted the call to become a disciple and to help others become disciples, we begin to understand what we don't know. Or rather we embrace what we have to learn. Sometimes we get the impression that the end of faith is that initial yes to Jesus.

As important as that confession is, it is only the beginning of the path to becoming a disciple. Paul, in the twelfth chapter of his wonderful letter to the Romans, invites us to embrace transformation so that we can know the will of God for our lives and for the world. He tells us that this takes place, at least in part, through the "renewing of your minds." (Romans 12:2 NRSV) "2 Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect."

So, let us consider together today what it means to be a disciple. Let's embrace the truth, even when it is difficult and takes effort, even when we learn of the commitment that is involved in following Jesus. Because we also discover the joy in serving and loving and working for justice.

It may be hard, and we may mess up at times, or lose focus, but we're learning and we're growing. Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ isn't an instantaneous event, but a lifelong process. Wesley called it sanctification, this process of becoming more like Christ, and acknowledged that it is a journey. But we're on the way, or as Wesley claimed, moving on to perfection in love. There's a lot to learn as we grow. But together we will be all that much stronger...

A Call to Worship

People of God, tell it!

We are not alone! We are children of God!

People of Christ, tell it!

The Light has come in love and truth, teaching us to live in the Light.

People of the Spirit, tell it!

The Spirit of truth reveals hidden things, offering healing through honest confession.

People of God, tell it!

We are not alone! We are children of God! Amen.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God of Justice and Mercy, we know that we have fallen silent when we should have spoken up. We have ignored the cries of the innocent and joined the crowds in calls of judgment. We have mistaken justice for revenge and have sought punishment to ease our pain. Forgive us, God, for not seeing our own faults, our own sins, and for not holding ourselves responsible for our inaction and injustice. Restore us, God, to the ways Jesus taught us, to drop our stones and instead seek forgiveness and restoration. Call us into the paths of love and reconciliation, knowing Your mercy extends to all of us, Your grace is a gift, and there is nothing we can do to deserve or earn it. Guide us into living into Your forgiveness, peace and reconciliation, in the name of the Prince of Peace. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God has opened our ears and our hearts to know God's love and forgiveness. There is nothing we need to do other than love one another and love God, for all things come from God's love. Go forth knowing You have been forgiven and You are restored to God. Live in the way of Christ. Amen.

Praise Hymn UMH #707 "Hymn of Promise"

Author: Natalie Sleeth, 1930-1992

Copyright: © 1986 Hope Publishing Company

**1 In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**2 There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**3 In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;**

**in our life, eternity;
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**Gospel Reading..... Matthew 10:24-39
New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

24 "A disciple is not above the teacher nor a slave above the master; 25 it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

Whom to Fear

26 "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered and nothing secret that will not become known. 27 What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. 28 Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell.[a] 29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. 30 And even the hairs of your head are all counted. 31 So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

32 "Everyone, therefore, who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven, 33 but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

34 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword.

*35 For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law,
36 and one's foes will be members of one's own household.*

37 "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me, 38 and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

going through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

*This is the Word of God, for the people of God, **Thanks be to God!***

Children's Sermon

Faith Hymn UMH #398 "Jesus Calls Us"

Author: Cecil Frances Alexander (1852)

Composer: William H. Jude (1874)

**1. Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
of our life's wild, restless sea;
day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
saying, "Christian, follow me!"**

**2. As of old the apostles heard it
by the Galilean lake,
turned from home and toil and kindred,
leaving all for Jesus' sake.**

**3. Jesus calls us from the worship
of the vain world's golden store,
from each idol that would keep us,
saying, "Christian, love me more!"**

**4. In our joys and in our sorrows,
days of toil and hours of ease,
still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these!"**

**5. Jesus calls us! By thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear thy call,
give our hearts to thine obedience,
serve and love thee best of all.**

Message

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Loving God, You tell us it is enough for us to be like you. Yet we are overwhelmed and discouraged by the injustice that surrounds us and our seeming inability to do anything about it. How are we supposed to be like you, all-powerful God, when we feel so powerless?

God, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

You tell us not to fear those who can kill the body but not the soul. Yet the violence in the world threatens to deaden our hearts, and that scares us. How are we supposed to resist fear when threats seem to abound on all sides?

God, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

You tell us we are of more value than sparrows. Yet we notice so many in our neighborhoods and our world who are treated as less than human, even less than a sparrow. How are we supposed to restore dignity to all those whom the world has devalued?

God, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

You tell us to tell in the light what we receive in the dark, to shout from the rooftops what is whispered in secret. In the face of the world's suffering, violence, and despair, whisper in our hearts that we learn to grow as your disciples who declare in the light the love and goodness of God with our voices and our lives as we unite in your prayer, Our Father...

Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer

Generous, giving God: the gifts we present this day are supposed to represent the best of our discipleship. Why then do we hide what we give, and why do we worry about who might know? Grant us the boldness we need to move out of the dark and proclaim our decision to be Christ's disciples to all, to shout it from the rooftops. May we speak to those we know and even to strangers of the love of Jesus without fear. May the way we live our lives be a proclamation of our decision to follow Christ! In His holy name, we pray. Amen. (Matt 10:24-39)

Departing Hymn UMH #130

"God Will Take Care of You" (verse 1)

Author: Civilla D. Martin (1904)

Composer: W. Stillman Martin (1905)

**1. Be not dismayed whate'er betide,
God will take care of you;
beneath his wings of love abide,
God will take care of you.**

Refrain:

**God will take care of you,
through every day, o'er all the way;
he will take care of you,
God will take care of you.**

SENDING FORTH

People of God, go and tell it! When it's hard, when it's joyous, when it's inconvenient, when it's healing—go tell the good news of the Light in the light. And remember that you do not go alone. We are children of God! Thanks be to God. Amen.

Postlude