

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

“How do you know?” That’s the question we ask so many times. “How do you know it is God and not the secret desires of your own heart?” We want to know; we want to be certain.

But you see the truth is God doesn’t want us to wait until we are certain. God doesn’t want us to figure it all out first, to download the maps and chart our course; he wants us to move. “Move where?” we ask. He says: Anywhere. Somewhere.

As the Lord has told us. We don’t know everything, but we know some things. We know God asks us to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. We know that Jesus said blessed are the peacemakers and that when you do it to the least of these, you do it to him. Maybe that isn’t enough to build a life on, but it is a start.

And along the way is a blessing. Not just at the end. There is blessing in the going, blessing in the following, blessing in the unseen destination.

With those thoughts in mind let us come together this day in praise and thanksgiving of Him who gives us the call to go and discover what is and what will be...

CALL TO WORSHIP

Welcome pilgrims on the way to the cross.

We are learning to follow Jesus.

When God says, “Go!” without telling us the destination,

Show us, Christ, how to go forward in faith.

When re-birth is the impossible way forward,

Christ, be our midwife as we accept God’s call to be reborn.

When we find ourselves in the in-between of where we’ve been and where we’re going,

Christ, meet us on the way and bless us in the going.

Pilgrims on the way, come let us worship God!

We come to worship God as we learn to live inside out!

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, Creator of all that is, Donor of Grace, and Giver of Life:
Hear our prayer.

**There are chasms in our lives, deep valleys that separate us
From one another and from You.**

**We confess that we have allowed those rifts to grow,
For fear of admitting our part in the separation,
For fear of being rejected when we reach out.
You call us to a reconciled life, to healed relationships,
To a wholeness with each other and with You.
Mend us, we pray, and make us new creations
Through the power and love of Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.**

***HYMN OF PRAISE**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading.....John 3:1-17

New Revised Standard Version

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus[a] by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." [b] 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You[c] must be born from above.' [d] 8 The wind[e] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11 "Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you[f] do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.[g] 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.[h]

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.

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

FAITH HYMN FWS

"Message"

INVITATION UMH Page #12

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 before God and one another.

CONFESSION AND PARDON.

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have failed to be an obedient church.
We have not done your will,
we have broken your law,
we have rebelled against your love,
we have not loved our neighbors,
and we have not heard the cry of the needy.
Forgive us, we pray.
Free us for joyful obedience,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love toward us.
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

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

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image
and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed,
your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity,
made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through the prophets.
And so, with your people on earth

and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him
to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come
when you would save your people.
He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.
By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church,
delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant
by water and the Spirit.
When the Lord Jesus ascended,
he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:
"Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

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

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ,
one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory
and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,
now and forever. Amen.

And now with the confidence of the children of God we pray, Our Father...

Sharing of the Elements

WILDERNESS – A PRAYER FOR LENT

Forty days alone,
a wilderness of thoughts,
tempting and inviting thoughts,
which could so easily have distracted you
from your task, your mission,
your vision.

Yet you emerged, stronger and more attuned
to all that had to be done,
despite a time constraint
that to our eyes would have seemed hopeless.

We too live in stressful times.
Demands are made of our time,
that leave so little
for the important things of life.
We are easily distracted
in the wilderness of our lives,
by every call to go this way or that,
to turn stone to bread
leap from mountains,
and do all that would keep us from the truth.

We listen to the voices of this world,
and ignore the one who endured all this
and so much more,
and emerged triumphant,

that we might not have to suffer so.

Forgive us, Father,
when we get distracted from our task.
Forgive us those times when we try
to be all things to all men,
and fail to be anything to anyone
So we take time this day to raise to you those who are in our minds and hearts.....
In the name of the one who gave his life,
so that we might know God, abundance, and life eternal we come to you in prayer...

Offertory (UM Hymnal 95) Doxology

Offertory Prayer

God of unwavering love, we dedicate our offerings to you, lead us away from our tendency to hold back and worry that there will not be enough. Help us to live as the people of love and abundance you have called us to be. In Christ we pray. Amen. (John 3:1-17)

Departing Hymn

Benediction

We came to worship. We go now to serve.

We have been given the light.
We go now to let it shine.

We have been blessed by God's love.
We go now to share it.

We are Christ's disciples.
We go now to witness to all. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**