

Prairieland Parish

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**



**Opening Meditation**

As we continue our journey of faith, the question today is this: are we called to look for signs of God’s presence or are we called to be a sign of God’s presence? The answer, as you might expect, is yes! We are the ones who are trying to be tuned into God’s wavelength, listening to God’s broadcast. Therefore, we must look for the signs that God is at work in and around us always.

Today let our prayer time not just call for God to act around us, but to give thanks for the activity that is already happening.

Remember, we are more than passive observers. We are active presenters, active signs of God’s presence in the world. Today let us gather to once again commit ourselves to presenting the goodness of God in the world around us each day.

And we do that best by how we care. How we care for one another and seek reconciliation whenever possible. Seek opportunity to care for God’s people everywhere by giving and helping and loving. Let us make time to care for the whole family of God by advocating for a just distribution of the resources that God has given for our use and by standing with those who have been pushed to the margins of our society.

As Disciples of Jesus Christ, it is our daily duty to care and by remembering our call to care as a way of being a sign of God’s care for creation. What is the sign? It is us.

**Blessing of the Backpacks**

Today we show how much we care for our students of all ages and those in the educational profession by bringing forth any and all backpacks here in sanctuary but also extending our prayers to all in our community. (If there are any students that have brought backpacks have them bring to altar at this time and stand together for the blessing)

**(To the congregation)** Will you fill the backpacks of these students and those throughout our community with your love, prayers, and support? If so, say we will.

At the age of twelve Jesus was found “in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.” (Luke 2:46).

It is also written that God's promise is to instruct us and teach us the way we should go (Ps. 32:1); and that we may gain wisdom for the future. (Prov. 19:20).

With His words in our hearts let us pray:

God of wisdom and knowledge, enlighten by your Holy Spirit those who teach and those who learn. Make the schools of our community lively centers for sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom.

We thank you for teachers and administrators. Continually renew and affirm in them a sense of calling to the sacred vocation of teaching. Give them loving hearts, wise minds, strong spirits, and a passion for their students. Fill them with joy, sustain and strengthen them, and give them rest when they are weary. Let them trust the seeds they plant even when they do not see the harvest. Let them hear deep within themselves your words, “Well done, good and trustworthy servant.”

We thank you for each student, their life among us, and the future before them. Lead them in your way, your truth, and your life. Let each classroom they enter be a place of life and light, warmth and welcome, discovery and growth. Give them good friends and let be good friends for others. Set them at tasks which demand their best efforts and lead them to accomplishments which satisfy and delight. Let them not take failures and disappointments as a measure of their worth but as opportunities for new learning and new beginnings. Open their hearts to life and their minds to learning. Let Holy Wisdom be their companion.

Send your holy angels to stand guard and keep watch over all students and teachers. Let their names be always on the lips of your saints in prayer. Bless and keep them. Let your face shine upon them. Be gracious to them. Lift up your countenance upon them and give them peace.

Accept and bless these backpacks and all that are throughout our community to be for those who carry them a sign of your and our love, support, and presence.

All this we ask in the name of your Son Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

### **A Call to Worship**

Pilgrims on the way, when we feel lost and ask for a sign to show us the way out of our confusion,

**We remember that when we gather to worship, we find God in our midst.**

When we face obstacles and barriers that keep us from the life God has called us to,

**We remember that God is always at work among us, protecting and tending our well-being.**

When cannot find our way out of conflict and discord,

**We remember that God calls and equips us for the work of reconciliation.**

When we struggle to pay attention to how God is at work all around us,

**We remember God's call to sit, eat, and tell one another the stories of God's faithfulness.**

Pilgrims on the way, when we watch for signs of God among us,

**Let us remember that we too are signs of God's presence for others!**

### **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

The act of confessing our sin is not simply a recitation of our faults and wrongs, but also an opportunity to receive God's mercy and share in that abundant grace. Confident of God's love for us, let us offer our prayers, first in silence.

*Silent prayer.*

**Holy God, we ask for your help, your power, your Spirit, so that we can amend our lives and grow more each day into the image of Christ.**

**We confess that we fear what is different. We confess that it's easier to lock the doors of our community than to receive those who don't look like we look, love like we love, or vote the way we vote. We confess that we have not lived out your call to share in abundant life and unconditional love.**

**We believe that you have the power to turn us around to a more inclusive way of living, so we ask you to do that. We ask you to give us the courage to change. We ask that you give us the energy, intelligence, imagination, and love to be your people in all we say and do.**

**Amen.**

### **Praise Hymn UMH #558 "We Are the Church" (verses 1-4)**

*Author: Richard K.  
Avery (1972)*

*Author: Donald S.  
March (1972)*

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Publishing Co.*

#### **[Refrain:]**

**I am the church! You are the church!**

**We are the church together!**

**All who follow Jesus, all around the world!**

**Yes, we're the church together!**

**1 The church is not a building,  
the church is not a steeple,  
the church is not a resting place,  
the church is a people.**

**(Refrain)**

**2 We're many kinds of people,  
with many kinds of faces,  
all colors and all ages, too,  
from all times and places.**

**(Refrain)**

**3 Sometimes the church is marching,  
sometimes it's bravely burning,  
sometimes it's riding, sometimes hiding,**

always it's learning.  
(Refrain)

4 And when the people gather,  
there's singing and there's praying,  
there's laughing and there's crying  
sometimes, all of it saying:  
(Refrain)

Gospel Reading..... Matthew 18:15-20(NRSV)

### Reproving Another Who Sins

<sup>15</sup> "If your brother or sister sins against you,<sup>[a]</sup> go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If you are listened to, you have regained that one. <sup>16</sup> But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If that person refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

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

### Faith Hymn FWS #2222 "The Servant Song"

Author: Richard Gillard

Copyright: 1197 Scripture Song (c/0 Integrity Music, Inc.)

1. Brother, let me be your servant.  
Let me be as Christ to you.  
Pray that I might have the grace  
To let you be my servant, too.

2. We are pilgrims on a journey.  
We are brothers on the road.  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.

3. I will hold the Christ-light for you  
In the night time of your fear.  
I will hold my hand out to you;  
Speak the peace you long to hear.

4. I will weep when you are weeping.  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you.  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through.

**5. When we sing to God in heaven,  
We shall find such harmony  
Born of all we've known together  
Of Christ's love and agony.**

**(Repeat Verse #1)**

## Message

### PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Let us pray.

Loving God, Friend of the neglected and the despised folk, Friend also of the cherished and honored ones, we offer to you our prayers for this world for which Christ gave his all. We pray for the overthrow of the arrogant and cruel, and for discontent in the souls of the greedy and the careless.

We pray for the uplifting of the meek and merciful, and for the encouragement of the poor and the pure.

We pray for the recovery of the bruised and the lost, and the peace of those who thirst for righteousness.

We pray for the feeding of the hungry in body or spirit, and for the healing of those who are dis-eased in body or mind.

We pray for the comfort of the suffering and the grieving, and for the befriending of the lonely, timid, or socially awkward people.

We pray for the humbling of the church if it becomes proud, and for courage wherever it is shunned or persecuted.

We pray for the strong and the weak in this congregation, and for the spiritual health of all other churches in the community.

You, Holy Friend, are more eager to give than we are to receive. Deal firmly with your servants gathered here now, that we get rid of everything that clutters our souls and make way for all the new blessings you have in store for us.

Through Christ Jesus our Lord who taught us to pray, Our Father...

### Offertory/Doxology

#### Offertory Prayer

*God of love and compassion, we ask you to dedicate the tithes and offerings we bring to worship. We do this in the hope that you will do more with them than we could ever do on our own to heal the brokenness and division in our world. Remind us that the work of reconciliation does not get removed from our list because we put something in the offering and that mission field is within our arms' reach. This we pray in the redeemer's holy name, Jesus the Christ. Amen.*

*([Matthew 18:15-20](#))*

### Departing Hymn UMH #473 "Lead, Me, Lord"

Composer: [Samuel Sebastian Wesley](#) (1861)

**Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness;  
make thy way plain before my face.**

**For it is thou, Lord, thou, Lord only,  
that makest me dwell in safety.**

**SENDING FORTH**

Travelers on the journey of faith, pay attention! God is at work all around you. May you go ready to witness the signs of God's love in your midst and to be a sign of God's love wherever you go. Amen.

**Postlude**