

*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



**“Geared Up for Life”**

**Worship Series**

**Week 5**

Paul says to us today – “and remember to what we were called.”

What is that calling? To be like God. To love like Christ. Our initial reaction is to recoil, to raise our hands in defeat and declare that this is something beyond the realm of possibility. How in the world can I act like God? How can I love like Christ? Yet it is our goal to become like Christ. That’s the name we have taken – Christian, little Christ. That’s the road we are on. But since we are striving to imitate God, then we also imitate God’s grace, with ourselves and certainly, with everyone else around us.

At the core of this Christ-like love, this God imitation, Together, we might have a chance to create the kind of community that behaves toward one another, views one another, values one another, as God does.

**A Call to Worship**

**FOR WE ARE MEMBERS OF ONE ANOTHER**

*Eugene Blair, The Africana Worship Book for Year B, Discipleship Resources, 2007, 96.*

*(A Litany based on Ephesians 4 and 5)*

One: Come, let us put away all things that divide us and love one another.

**Many: For we are members of one another (Eph. 4:25b)**

One: Come; let us not be divided from one another by gender, race, color, or status.

**Many: For we are members of one another.**

One: Come; let us put away lies, anger, stealing, and corrupt words.

**Many: For we are members of one another.**

One: Come; let us put away bitterness, wrath, clamor, and malice.

**Many: For we are members of one another.**

One: Come; let us put away uncleanness, idolatry, and deception.

**Many: For we are members of one another.**

One: Together let us speak truth, labor together, and do what is good and edifying to the Lord.

**Many: Let us be imitators of God, walk as the children of God, and love as Christ first loved us.**

One: Come, let us be the people of God we are called to be.

**Many: For we are saints, God’s chosen people, and members of one another. AMEN.**

## **PRAYER: BREAD OF LIFE**

*From Revised Common Lectionary Prayers copyright © 2002 Consultation on Common Texts admin. Augsburg Fortress. Posted on Thematic, Intercessory and Scripture Prayers for the RCL, Vanderbilt Divinity Library, <https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayers.php?id=214>.*

Bread of life, you taught us to put away bitterness and anger, and with tenderhearted kindness to share the fruit of our labor with the needy. Strengthen us by your grace, that in communion with you, we may forgive one another and live in love as Christ loved us. Amen.

## **Praise Hymn # 2128 Come and Find the Quiet Center**

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Come and find the quiet center in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed:  
Clear the chaos and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see  
all the things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us, know our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking, lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel, celebrate the space we gain:  
There's a place for deepest dreaming, there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming there is always room to spare.

## ***We Hear God's Word***

### **New Testament Reading..... Ephesians 4:25-5:2**

25 So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbors, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not make room for the devil. 28 Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labor and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. 29 Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. 31 Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, 32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

### **Ephesians 5:1-2**

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, 2 and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

The word of God for the People of God, **Thanks Be to God**

**Children's Message**

## Faith Hymn #2170 God Made from One Blood

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God made from one blood all the families of earth,  
the circles of nurture that raised us from birth,  
companions who join us to walk through each stage  
of childhood and youth and adulthood and age.

We turn to you, God, with our thanks and our tears  
For all of the families we've known through the years,  
the intimate networks on whom we depend  
of parent and partner and roommate and friend.

Give Lord, to each family in conflict and storm  
a sense of your wisdom and grace that transform  
sharp anger to insight which strengthens the heart  
and makes clear the place where rebuilding can start.

Then widen that wisdom and grace to include  
the races and viewpoints our families exclude  
till peace in each home bears and nurtures the bud  
of peace shared by all you have made from one blood.

### \*Meditation\*

#### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Written by Richard Einerson in Prayers of the People: Pastoral prayers for Worship and Personal Devotion, Bloomington, AuthorHouse, 2006. <http://www.richardeinerson.com/>.*

*(inspired by 2 Samuel 18, Ephesians 4:25-5:2)*

O Eternal One, whose message to us has always been that our relationship to you is inextricably related to how we treat our sisters and brothers, bend low your spirit this day and touch us with your power.

- Wean us from our tendency to nurture perceived slights and to put hot coals to our anger.
- Wean us from all tendencies to take advantage of others for personal gain.
- Wean us from negativity and from becoming bitter whether or not we think we are justified in our feelings.
- Wean us from the all too human and common tendency to gossip about others and to slander them in any way.
- Wean us from carrying malice in our hearts and from giving in to anything that would poison relationships with others.

#### **Make us over again, O gracious God.**

Give us a consistent kindness and compassion for others. Keep us always tender hearted even when the world delivers difficult blows and setbacks to us. Teach us once again about your redeeming grace in order that we may learn, however slowly and however tentatively, how to forgive others. Teach us how to live abundantly into the future as victorious and expectant people, greeting each new day with eagerness and excitement. And indelibly remind us that we are among your forgiven and beloved community as we come to you in prayer, Our Father...

**Departing Hymn UMH #672 “God Be With You till We Meet Again” (verse 1)**

*Author: Jeremiah E. Rankin (1880)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Tune Information*

*Name: GOD BE WITH YOU*

*Composer: William G. Tomer (1880)*

1. God be with you till we meet again;  
by his counsels guide, uphold you,  
with his sheep securely fold you;  
God be with you till we meet again.

**Refrain:**

Till we meet, till we meet,  
till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.

**SENDING FORTH:**

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Go out and imitate God, living in love.  
Put your hope in God's Word  
and let your own words be truthful and constructive.  
. . . In the name of Christ. Amen.