

*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.*

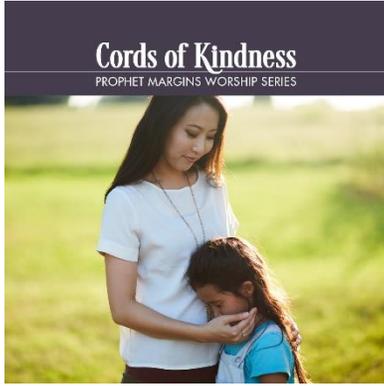
*May we together experience the presence of God*

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***We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord***

**Prelude**

**Welcome**



**Announcements/Joys & Concerns**

Last week we were given the model of love of husband and wife. Today our text brings us the image of the love of children given to our care. This seems like familiar ground, even if we've not been parents.

There's no question that caring for children is hard work. It's often thankless. The other obvious point is that this is transformational love. You teach and guide and set boundaries and encourage and support, and more. There are ages and stages in the life of those in our care, and each one has its own struggles. Some find one stage easier than another, but all take effort and perseverance.

There is a subtext to the passage this week. There is evidence that the child (Israel) rebels against the parent (God). What parent hasn't been there? What teacher doesn't face opposition? What mentor isn't moved to throw up his/her hands and want to give up? Even God seems pushed to the brink. Yet, the commitment to love, the faithfulness of God's love perseveres, even in the hard times. So, we continue to proclaim with understanding and with forgiveness and we remember that only God is always faithful. So, we offer grace wherever we can. That's what can make risky love work. Here this words from Hosea 11:1-3 this morning:

**God Loves Israel**

*The Lord continues,*

*"When Israel was a young nation, I loved them.*

*I chose to bring my son out of Egypt.*

*But the more I called out to Israel,*

*the more they went away from me.*

*They brought sacrifices to the statues of the gods*

*that were named Baal.*

*And they burned incense to them.*

*I taught Ephraim to walk.*

*I took them up in my arms.  
But they did not realize  
I was the one who took care of them.*

When Hosea tried to explain how much God loved the people of Israel, he compared that love to a caregiver's love for a small child. God fed and carried Israel and taught Israel how to walk and to talk. God taught the people of Israel to do many things.

Just like children who sometimes grow up and are ungrateful and go against their parents' wishes, so did the people of Israel. The more God spoke to them, the more they ran away from God. God suffered and hurt when the people of Israel were unfaithful to Him because He loves each of us so much even when we aren't grateful for all He has given.

But the people of Israel had consequences that came with not being grateful for God's kindness. They went against God's wishes for their lives. They experienced bad things, but we must remember that wasn't God's fault. The people of Israel learned that God loves them just as a loving parent loves little children, no matter what. And praise God for His unconditional love! Let us come together in worship this day!

## **CALL TO WORSHIP**

Give thanks to God! For God is good.

**We give thanks for God's steadfast love.**

Give thanks to God! For God's love endures.

**We give thanks that God is at work among humankind.**

Give thanks to God! For only God can satisfy us.

**We give thanks to God for filling our spiritual hunger with good things.**

## **OPENING PRAYER**

**God of Compassion, today, remind us of what really matters. Often, we show up for worship expecting to be entertained. Instead, may we be active participants in worship today, focusing on kindness, love, and our sacred worth in you. God, you are so good! And you are in our midst! Amen.**

## **\*HYMN OF PRAISE UMH #140 "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"**

Author: *Thomas O. Chisholm (1923)*

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**1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father, there is no shadow of turning with thee. Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.**

**Refrain:**

**Great is thy faithfulness!**

**Great is thy faithfulness!**

**Morning by morning new mercies I see;**

**all I have needed thy hand hath provided.**

**Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!**

**2 Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. [Refrain]**

**3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth, thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide, strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! [Refrain]**

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

**Gospel Reading..... Luke 12:13-21  
New Revised Standard Version**

### ***The Parable of the Rich Fool***

*13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me." 14 But he said to him, "Friend, who set me to be a judge or arbitrator over you?" 15 And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." 16 Then he told them a parable: "The land of a rich man produced abundantly. 17 And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' 18 Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' 20 But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' 21 So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God."*

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

### **FAITH HYMN UMH #522 "Leave It There"**

*Author: Charles Albert Tindley (ca. 1906)*

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**1 If the world from you withhold of its silver and its gold,  
And you have to get along with meager fare,  
Just remember, in His Word, how He feeds the little bird,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**Refrain:**

**Leave it there, leave it there,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.  
If you trust and never doubt, He will surely bring you out,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there.**

**2 If your body suffers pain and your health you can't regain,  
And your soul is almost sinking in despair,  
Jesus knows the pain you feel, He can save and He can heal,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. [Refrain]**

**3 When your enemies assail and your heart begins to fail,**

**Don't forget that God in heaven answers prayer;  
He will make a way for you and will lead you safely through,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. [Refrain]**

**4 When your youthful days are gone and old age is stealing on,  
And your body bends beneath the weight of care,  
He will never leave you then, He'll go with you to the end,  
Take your burden to the Lord and leave it there. [Refrain]**

### **"Message"**

#### **PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE**

God of Healing, As you spoke through the prophet, Hosea,  
Lead us with cords of human kindness; Lead us with bands of love  
Yet what does it mean to be led with cords of human kindness and bands of love?  
Remind us of the connection our souls have to you, O God.

You tug at our cords to remind us that we also need the kindness of other humans.  
You pluck at our heartstrings to remind us of the love you've placed within each of us.  
But we still become distracted.

We get lost in our aggravations, disappointments, and deep-seated longings.  
Sometimes, it seems as though the negativity and sadness will swallow us whole.  
How are we to turn this pain into love and kindness?

God, you know these feelings all too well; oftentimes, as a result of human action or  
inaction. The story, repeated over and over again in our sacred texts, tells of your  
incredible love for us.

You, O God, choose love, despite the pain.  
May we do the same, trusting that the Holy One is in our midst.

We gather today in praise of your Holy name as we join our voices together in the words  
that Jesus taught us.  
Our Father...

#### **Departing Hymn UMH#666 "Shalom to You"**

*Author: Elise S. Eslinger (1980)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

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*Tune Information*

*Harmonizer: Carlton R. Young (1989)*

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**Shalom to you now, shalom, my friends.  
May God's full mercies bless you, my friends.  
In all your living and through your loving,  
Christ be your shalom, Christ be your shalom.**

**BENEDICTION**

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

**\*POSTLUDE**