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

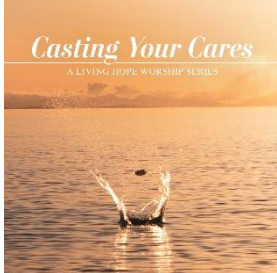
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***We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord***

**Prelude**

**Welcome**

**Announcements – Joys/Concerns**



If you believe that worship should leave you feeling lighter, unburdened, and set free, then this is the week for you. Today Peter tells us to “Cast all our anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7 NRSV).

What could be better than that?

In a text that is full of an admission of suffering and a call to discipline, to hear the call to cast anxiety away is a monumental ask, yet a powerful gift and promise. Peter is telling us that it is about perspective. He isn't saying the problems will go away. But he is inviting us to not let the suffering control us. Cast your inclination to worry away. Trust in the Lord because he cares for you. What a blessing and a promise!

This leads, of course, to the praise filled words of the Psalm 68

68:1 Let God rise up, let his enemies be scattered; let those who hate him flee before him.

68:2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, let the wicked perish before God.

68:3 But let the righteous be joyful; let them exult before God; let them be jubilant with joy.

68:4 Sing to God, sing praises to his name; lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds--his name is the LORD-- be exultant before him.

68:5 Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

68:6 God gives the desolate a home to live in; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious live in a parched land.

68:7 O God, when you went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness,

68:8 the earth quaked, the heavens poured down rain at the presence of God, the God of Sinai, at the presence of God, the God of Israel.

68:9 Rain in abundance, O God, you showered abroad; you restored your heritage when it languished;

68:10 your flock found a dwelling in it; in your goodness, O God, you provided for the needy.

68:32 Sing to God, O kingdoms of the earth; sing praises to the Lord,

68:33 O rider in the heavens, the ancient heavens; listen, he sends out his voice, his mighty voice.

68:34 Ascribe power to God, whose majesty is over Israel; and whose power is in the skies.

68:35 Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel; he gives power and strength to his people. Blessed be God!

These words beg to invite us to sing praise to God's name.

So as we gather today let us sing God's story as it intertwines with our story. Let us sing of promises even in difficult times. And let us sing of a reminder that none of us have to face our suffering alone. We are surrounded and supported by the caring God experienced in the loving community of faith.

### **A Call to Worship** (Psalm 66)

Beloved, let us worship God!

**Let us give praise to God, the one who rides upon the clouds!**

Parent to orphans and Protector of widows,

**God gives the desolate a home and leads the imprisoned into prosperity.**

As God led the Israelites through the wilderness and provided for them,

**we too find our dwelling in God's goodness and provision.**

The Rider in the heavens speaks throughout creation;

**We gather to listen and ascribe power to God!**

Awesome is God in the sanctuary of creation!

**Blessed be God! Amen.**

### **Praise Hymn UMH #98 "To God Be the Glory"**

*Author: Fanny J. Crosby (1875)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Tune Information*

*Composer: William H. Doane (1875)*

**1. To God be the glory, great things he hath done!**

**So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,**

**who yielded his life an atonement for sin,**

**and opened the life-gate that all may go in.**

**Refrain:**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,**

**let the earth hear his voice!**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,**

**let the people rejoice!**

**O come to the Father thru Jesus the Son,**

**and give him the glory, great things he hath done!**

**2. O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,**

to every believer the promise of God;  
the vilest offender who truly believes,  
that moment from Jesus a pardon receives. Refrain)

3. Great things he hath taught us, great things he hath done,  
and great our rejoicing thru Jesus the Son;  
but purer, and higher, and greater will be  
our wonder, our transport, when Jesus we see. (Refrain)

### Opening Prayer

God who loves us and cares for us, grant us the peace of knowing that in all our stresses, hardships, and responsibilities, we are not alone. You are with us. Grow our trust in your care, that we might first turn not to ourselves but to you. Reorient our lives so that in difficult times we would move toward joy in the deep remembering of all you have done, are doing, and will do for us, your Easter people. Amen.

**New Testament Reading..... 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11  
(NRSV)**

### ***Suffering as a Christian***

*12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that is taking place among you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But rejoice insofar as you are sharing Christ's sufferings, so that you may also be glad and shout for joy when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the spirit of glory,[a] which is the Spirit of God,[b] is resting on you.[c]*

*1 Peter 5:6-11*

*6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. 8 Discipline yourselves; keep alert. Like a roaring lion your adversary the devil prowls around, looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in your faith, for you know that your brothers and sisters in all the world are undergoing the same kinds of suffering. 10 And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ,[a] will himself restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. 11 To him be the power[b] forever and ever. Amen.*

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

### **Children's Sermon**

**Faith Hymn UMH #79 "Holy God, We Praise Thy Name (verses 1,2,4)**

*Author (st. 1-4): Ignaz Franz (18th century)*

*Translator: Clarence Walworth (1853)*

*Author (stanzas 5-7): F. Bland Tucker (1982)*

*Publication Date: 1989*

*Copyright: Sts. 5-7 © 1985 The Church Pension Fund*

**1. Holy God, we praise thy name;  
Lord of all, we bow before thee;  
all on earth thy scepter claim;  
all in heaven above adore thee.**

**Infinite thy vast domain;  
everlasting is thy reign.**

**2. Hark the glad celestial hymn  
angel choirs above are raising;  
cherubim and seraphim,  
in unceasing chorus praising,  
fill the heavens with sweet accord:  
Holy, holy, holy Lord.**

**4. Holy Father, Holy Son,  
Holy Spirit: three we name thee,  
though in essence only one;  
undivided God we claim thee,  
and adoring bend the knee  
while we own the mystery.**

### **Message**

#### **Pastoral Prayer**

Merciful God, We come to this space today weighed down, weary, and in need of your tending. As we search our hearts, we lift up these petitions to you.

We lift up the spaces in our lives where we feel like we are walking through fire, beset on each side with seemingly nowhere to turn for relief.

#### **Time for silent reflection.**

We lift up the relationships in our lives marked by strife and unkindness with seemingly no possibility of peace.

#### **Time for silent reflection.**

We lift up the worries that haunt us and keep us up at night with seemingly no solution or resolution.

#### **Time for silent reflection.**

We lift up the burdens we bear and the struggle of carrying heavy responsibilities with seemingly no opportunity for rest.

#### **Time for silent reflection.**

God who loves us and cares for us, grant us the peace of knowing that in all our stresses, hardships, and responsibilities, we are not alone. You are with us. Grow our trust in your care, that we might first turn not to ourselves but to you. Reorient our lives so that in difficult times we would move toward joy in the deep remembering of all you have done, are doing, and will do for us, your Easter people. Who come to you this day as we join our voices in prayer, Our Father...

## **Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer**

*God of wisdom and guidance, steer us, we pray, through our anxious times. The gifts we bring this day are a small part of all we have received. Remind us that it is Jesus we offer to the world, not us. In the name of Jesus, who broke the hold of death once and for all. Amen. (1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11)*

## **Departing Hymn UMH 396**

*Author: John E. Bode (ca. 1866)*

*Tune Information*

*Composer: Arthur H. Mann (1881)*

## **“O Jesus, I Have Promised “ (verses 1 & 4)**

**1. O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
be thou forever near me,  
my Master and my friend.  
I shall not fear the battle  
if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if thou wilt be my guide.**

**4. O Jesus, thou hast promised  
to all who follow thee  
that where thou art in glory  
there shall thy servant be.  
And Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
O give me grace to follow,  
my Master and my Friend.**

## **SENDING FORTH**

Easter people, God has done great things for you! Go, now, carrying the story of God's work in your lives that in all things, good and difficult, you can ask with confidence, "How will God show up now?" knowing all the while that God will, indeed, take all our caring and point us toward joy. Amen.

## **Postlude**