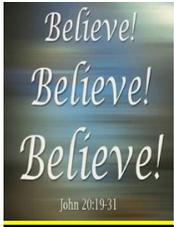


*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.  
May we together experience the presence of God*

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



**Prelude – Welcome – Announcements**

**Opening Meditation**

We gather today with Thomas and his need to see something real before his belief can kick in. We all can relate to Thomas and his response because we all have uttered the words. I must see it before I believe it. Simply because it easier to believe when we can see something.

So, let me ask you this. Are you prepared to be the one who is charged with being the presenter, the one who is tasked with showing the truth to those who need tangible proof to believe? Jesus Christ has said – “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” And our mission is to show the gospel at work in not only our lives but other people’s lives as well.

We must show the difference it makes in how we live each day. We must show a motivating hope that keeps joy at work in the community of faith. God is at work through this world, many people are so distracted they have lost sight of Him. We are the ones being sent to give new vision, renewed hope, and undeniable truth that Jesus Christ has risen! Christ has risen indeed!

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Let us come to worship with Joyful thanksgiving as we shout, Halleluiah  
Christ has risen! **Christ has risen indeed!**

Let us raise our voices with song and put the rhythm of dance in our hearts as we spread the good news, Christ has risen! **Christ has risen indeed!**

**OPENING PRAYER**

**God our Creator, we come today thanking you for your unconditional love. It was with your love that you painted the sky. It was with your love that you produced the sun to keep us company as we travel during the day and the moon to accompany us as we slumber at night. Your love continues to let us know that we are never alone, that you are always with us. So, God, tattoo your word on our hearts so that our souls may forever be revived. Let your precepts run through our veins, causing us to rejoice and be glad. We know the troubles that we see, but we shall rejoice and be glad. We know the hurt and the pain that we must endure, but we shall rejoice and be glad. We shall rejoice because the same God who painted upon the velvety night sky is the same God who is still painting our way out. Lord, we’re depending on you, and it’s in Jesus’ name, we pray. AMEN!!!**

**Praise Hymn UMH #548 "In Christ There Is No East or West" (verses 1, 2, & 4)**

Author (stanzas 1, 2, 4): John Oxenham (1913)

Author (st. 3): Laurence Hull Stookey (1987)

Publication Date: 1989

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**1. In Christ there is no east or west,  
in him no south or north;  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.**

**2. In Christ shall true hearts everywhere  
their high communion find;  
his service is the golden cord  
close binding humankind.**

**4. In Christ now meet both east and west,  
in him meet south and north;  
all Christly souls are one in him  
throughout the whole wide earth.**

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

**Gospel Reading..... John 20:19-31 (NRSV)**

**Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

19 When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." 22 When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

**Jesus and Thomas**

24 But Thomas (who was called the Twin[a]), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe."

26 A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." 28 Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" 29 Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe."

**The Purpose of This Book**

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue[b] to believe that Jesus is the Messiah,[c] the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

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

## **Faith Hymn UMH # 407. "Close to Thee"**

Author: *Fanny J. Crosby (1874)*

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Composer: *Silas J. Vail (1874)*

**1. Thou my everlasting portion,  
more than friend or life to me,  
all along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with thee.**

**Refrain:**

**Close to thee, close to thee,  
close to thee, close to thee,  
all along my pilgrim journey,  
Savior, let me walk with thee.**

**2. Not for ease or worldly pleasure,  
nor for fame my prayer shall be;  
gladly will I toil and suffer,  
only let me walk with thee.**

**Refrain:**

**3. Lead me through the vale of shadows,  
bear me o'er life's fitful sea;  
then the gate of life eternal  
may I enter, Lord, with thee.**

**Refrain:**

**\*Message\***

**Joys/Concerns**

### **PRAYER FOR DOUBTERS**

You call us to be people of faith, yet we are often people with doubts. We doubt that love can grow again in relationships where anger and bitterness reign supreme. You know the strength of love and the power of prayer: help us to be faithful lovers. We doubt that peace can come in when hearts are turned to cold. You know that peace is always growing help us to be faithful peacemakers. We doubt that the hungry can be fed. You know that there is enough food in the world; help us to be generous and faithful. You specialize in impossibilities; you walked on water, you heal the nations you forgive sins you set the captive free. This morning we pray for people here who are filled with doubts, who wonder whether you exist and whether you are listening to our prayers, who wonder what this whole community is about. We pray for people who doubt the purpose of life, who wonder whether to end it all, who face feelings of meaningless and despair. Even when we have that sinking feeling, give us the wisdom to turn to you.

Today we raise to you those we have named and ask that you wash their doubts away as you make your presence known in their lives.

Lord we want to believe, help our unbelief! Give us faith, small as a mustard seed, so that we can be your faithful people, believing in your power to save, believing in your power to reign supreme, believing that we can share this good news with everyone we meet.  
Amen

### **Offertory – Doxology (UM Hymnal 95) - - Prayer**

There are so many reasons to thank God. We thank God for being patient and for loving us. We know that God also loves those who are having a tough time. God uses us to help them. Thank you, this morning, for remembering their needs in this offering. Amen!

## ***We Go Forth To Serve God and Our Neighbors***

### **Departing Hymn FWS #2149. “Living for Jesus”**

*Author: Thomas O. Chisholm (1917)*

*Copyright: Public Domain*

**1. Living for Jesus a life that is true,  
Striving to please Him in all that I do;  
Yielding allegiance, glad-hearted and  
free,  
This is the pathway of blessing for me.**

**O Jesus, Lord and Savior,  
I give myself to Thee,  
For Thou, in Thy [redemption],\*  
Didst give Thyself for me;  
I own no other Master,  
My heart shall be Thy throne,  
My life I give, henceforth to live,  
O Christ, for Thee alone.**

**2. Living for Jesus who died in my  
place,  
Bearing on Calv’ry my sin and disgrace;  
Such love constrains me to answer His  
call,  
Follow His leading and give Him my all.**

**3. Living for Jesus wherever I am,  
Doing each duty in His holy name;  
Willing to suffer affliction and loss,  
Deeming each trial a part of my cross.**

**4. Living for Jesus through earth’s little  
while,  
My dearest treasure, the light of His  
smile;  
Seeking the lost ones He died to  
redeem,  
Bringing the weary to find rest in Him.**

**BENEDICTION:** Jesus said: “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so I am now sending you.” He believes in you. The busy world awaits your compassion. The help of the saving Christ, the wisdom of the Living God, and the support of the loving Spirit will be with you every step of the way, now and always. Amen!

Postlude