

*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

The command to “love your neighbor as yourself” means not only to love them as much as you love yourself, but to love them as if they are yourself. We don’t live according to the flesh, our “self” defined by and confined to our physical bodies, but according to the Spirit: even though we appear in separate bodies we are all one, in one spirit. You and your neighbor are part of the same body. To love our neighbor is to love ourselves.

Today we look at the teaching of Jesus

In Luke 6.27-38 in which Jesus lays out the heart of his message: God loves us perfectly—“God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked”—and we are to have that same love for others, even for our enemies.

And we extend this teaching by Paul’s words to the people of Corinth - through 1 Corinthians 15. 35-50 where he tells of the greatest love God has blessed us with, eternal life. Paul says we are raised in a resurrection body which is different from our biological body. But, as with a seed, the first body must die for the second to come. What we sow does not come to life unless it dies; it is sown in weakness and raised in power.

To live a life of love is the message and the promise is that we will receive the power of love through salvation.

CALL TO WORSHIP

God, you who are love, you create us in love.

We are the body of your love.

Christ, love made flesh, you come to us in grace and healing.

We are your Beloved, blessed and embraced.

Holy Spirit, energy of love, your fire alone in us is our life.

We are bearers of your love to this world.

Fill us with your love, fill us to overflowing,

for the sake of the world, you love. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, set us free from our desires to be right, to be safe, to be comfortable. With the love of Christ warm in our hearts, we turn to you to receive your Spirit, the spirit of gentleness and mercy, the spirit of courage and generosity. Bless us, that we may be vessels of your love for our neighbors, even for our enemies, in the spirit of Christ. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE, UMH 707 "Hymn of Promise"**

Author: Natalie Sleeth (1986)

Publication Date: 1989

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**1 In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**something God alone can see.
3 In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
in our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.**

**2 There's a song in every silence,
seeking word and melody;
there's a dawn in every darkness
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
unrevealed until its season,**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 6:27-38

New Revised Standard Version

Love for Enemies

27 "But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. 35 But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return.[a] Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Judging Others

37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

FAITH HYMN UMH #572

"Pass It On"

Author: Kurt Kaiser (1969)

Publication Date: 1989

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[Verse 1]

**It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around can warm up
in its glowing.
That's how it is with God's love.
Once you've experienced it,
You spread the love to everyone.
You want to pass it on.**

(Chorus)

**I'll shout it from the mountaintop,
"Praise God!"
I want the world to know
The Lord of Love has come to me.
I want to pass it on.**

[Verse 2]

**What a wond'rous time is spring,
When all the tress are budding.
The birds begin to sing, the flowers
start their blooming.
That's how it is with God's love,
Once you've experienced it.
You want to sing, it's fresh like spring,
You want to pass it on.**

[Verse 3]

**I wish for you my friend
This happiness that I've found.
You can depend on God,
It matters not where you're bound.
I'll shout it from the mountaintop,
"Praise God!"
I want the world to know
The Lord of Love has come to me.
I want to pass it on.**

"Message"

Joys/Concerns

PASTORAL PRAYER

Holy loving God, we come to your house on this day of worship because we seek to live in your ways. We want to be children of God. We want to walk in the footsteps of Jesus

Christ. We want to be those who you lift up as "good and wonderful servants." But, God, our humanity gets in the way. Our presumption gets in the way. We want all the benefits of the job without any of the work. We want a grace that doesn't call us to accountability in

how we live it out. Holy God, in the midst of our willingness and our weakness, walk with us. Guide us to walk with the footsteps of faithfulness, the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ. Help us to find compassion in our hearts when we'd rather find fault. Help us to

love one another when we want to mock and gossip. Help us to find energy to look deeper when we think we have it all figured out. Gracious God, help us to live into a selfless attitude that reflects your qualities of care and compassion. In other words, God, help us to be godly in our hearts and godly outward in our actions. In that spirit of care, we lift up the prayers of our loved ones, the prayers of those we distantly know, and the prayers of those we will never know. We pray for the wellbeing of those we love and those we'd rather not love, in your spirit, God of all. We pray for those in war; we pray for those in peace. Hear our requests, already said aloud and those within our hearts, as we lift our prayers to you. Fashion us to be your instruments in a world needing your goodness. We pray to be godly as we pray the prayer that Jesus taught us together, in one voice

Offertory/Doxology/Prayer

Holy God of light and life that overcomes darkness and death: as we offer our tithes and offerings to you this morning, we pray that we may give the confidence and assurance of those fully convinced in our promise of Resurrection! Help us to experience our generosity as those who have no need to hold back or hedge our bets. May we live our days giving freely with love and grace, not as those who have the hope of salvation, but the promise! In Christ, we pray. Amen. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50)

Departing Hymn UMH #389 "Freely, Freely"

Author: Carol Owens (1972)

Publication Date: 1989

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**God forgave my sin in Jesus' name
I've been born again in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His love as He told me to
He said, "Freely, freely you have
received
Freely, freely give
Go in my name, and because you
believe
Others will know that I live"**

**All power is givin' in Jesus' name
In earth and Heaven in Jesus' name
And in Jesus' name I come to you
To share His power as He told me to
He said, "Freely, freely you have
received
Freely, freely give
Go in my name, and because you
believe
Others will know that I live"**

BENEDICTION

May the Source of life hold you in the faith;
the Word of life speak clearly in truth around you;
and Breath of life, of grace, of wisdom,
sing in your inmost being this day and all your days. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**