

SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
September 29, 2024
WORDS OF WELCOME

INVOCATION:AΩ*

L: Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, make us one as you are one.

A: As we enter worship, may our harmony extend beyond our songs.

**May our distinctiveness be welcomed, our identities be celebrated,
and our differences be a source of delight.**

**May your church serve as a beacon for belonging
and demonstrate the beloved community of the kingdom in your name,
this day and every day. Amen.**

SINGING THE FAITH: 1 HYMN REQUEST

CALL TO WORSHIP:AΩ (Inspired by Psalm 19)

*L: Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts
be acceptable to you, Holy One, our rock and redeemer.*

**C: For we seek your presence, the company of this community,
and the renewal of our minds and spirits.**

*L: Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts
be acceptable to you, Holy One, our rock and redeemer.*

**C: For you impart wisdom, inspire joy, and instill hope
as we reflect on the past, live in the present, and consider the future.**

*L: Let the words of our mouths and the meditation of our hearts
be acceptable to you, Holy One, our rock and redeemer.*

**C: For wherever we gather in your name, we find holy ground;
whenever we call you, we find a fresh encounter;
however we know you, we find belonging. Praise God!**

SINGING THE FAITH: 2 HYMN REQUESTS

MESSAGE: "The Gift of the Hymnal"

I can't remember who said this, but in my reading over the years there was a pastor who temporarily took out of the worship service all hymns because this individual proclaimed that singing in worship can actually hinder true worship. Being a lover of music and experiencing the way it touches me and draws me near to God I thought this person must be crazy. I know that many of you feel the same way. But with further thought, I began to think of how hymn selection, number of verses used, and speed at which they are played and sung can all become points of distraction and division within a congregation, which in turn does hinder our worship of God. As much as I hated to admit it, I had to agree with this individual that music in worship has the potential to do just the opposite for which it was intended.

Whether or not you like to sing, have the voice of an angel or are one of those people who cannot carry a tune in a bucket if your life depended on it, I want to share with you what a gift the hymnal can be. You see the hymnal can be used in so many ways, not only in worship, but as a form of pastoral care (by both clergy and laity), and as a resource for a time of devotions. Since most of our experience with the hymnal is in the worship setting, let me

begin there. I have noticed that even for myself, that sometimes when I sing, I find myself more focused on the melody and timing of the song, and getting the words in the right place, than on the meaning of the words, especially when learning a new hymn. I have found that when I take the time to read through the words before worship, the hymn then becomes what it is meant to be, in some cases a form of prayer of praise or thanksgiving, in other cases a commissioning to carry God's light into the world, still in others I find words of hope and assurance, while others become a form of confession. When I read through the communion hymns, I find myself reflecting on the significance of this sacred meal given to us by God. I encourage us all to take time before worship reading the words to the hymns for that day and others as well as a means of preparing our hearts for worship.

As far as pastoral care is concerned, I began using hymnals in this way during my seminary career when I participated in Clinical Pastoral Education at Genesis Medical Center in Davenport. I found that the hymns, with their gentle melodies and words of assurance brought a sense of peace and hope into some very trying times for people. Often times I could visibly see a sense of calm come over a person who was agitated. I have also found that the hymns often times gave expression to what they were experiencing or gave hope in this time of darkness. I sometimes leave a copy of the hymnal with the family so that they could continue to use it for the benefit of their loved one and for themselves. It didn't make any difference if they sang the hymns, or read the words, it not only offered words of assurance, but brought back treasured memories of Sunday school and times gathered with family, friends, and church family.

Lastly, I would like to share with you the concept of using the hymnal as a resource for devotions. As you look through the hymnals you will find that they contain not only orders of worship, service music, and hymns, they also contain statements and affirmations of faith, creeds (both ancient and new), Psalms, and prayers for a variety of occasions. Like scripture, the words of the hymns, prayers, and creeds that are in the hymnals can help move us from the distractions of our daily lives into a time of noticing the presence of God and nurturing that relationship with our Creator. As I was looking through the hymnals I was amazed at the vast number and wide variety of beautiful and challenging prayers contained in the hymnal. Between the hymns and the prayers, the hymnal is a great resource to use to develop and/or expand your prayer life. All of the resources found in hymnals can be used as study and teaching tools as we consider the challenges, meaning, and beliefs expressed in each hymn, prayer, Psalm, and creed or statement of faith. So next time you see a hymnal, pick it up, open it, and receive the gift that has been given to us through the melodies, words, and resources in these books and allow them to assist you as you draw nearer to God in worship, as you help a loved one through a difficult time, and in your daily life.

PRAYER FOR TRANSFORMATION & NEW LIFE THROUGH SONG

HYMN: #502 v.v. 1 & 2 *"Dear God, Embracing Humankind"* (Public Domain) (Requested)

1 Dear God, embracing humankind, forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives your service find,
In deeper reverence, praise.

2 In simple trust like theirs who heard, beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of your word, let us, like them, by spirit stirred,
Rise up and followers be.

*Moment of Silence, In Confession, Listening to God &
Reflection on God's Forgiveness, Love, Guidance, Redemption, and Renewing of our Lives*

WORDS OF GRACE: (Based on the Hymn Joyful, Joyful We Adore You)

L: Children of God, Our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer

Is both giving and forgiving, Is ever blessing and ever blessed;

Is a Well-spring of the joy of living, ocean-depth of happy rest!

So, let us mortals, join the mighty chorus, which the morning stars began;

For boundless love is reigning o'er us, reconciling race and clan.

A: Ever singing, we will move forward, faithful in the midst of strife;

Joyful music leads us onward in the triumph song of life.

SING THE FAITH: 1 HYMN REQUEST

SCRIPTURE:

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Psalm 19:7-14

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

⁸ The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

⁹ The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever.

The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous.

¹⁰ They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold;

they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

¹¹ By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

¹² But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

¹³ Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me.

Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression.

¹⁴ May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart

be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.

SING THE FAITH: 1 HYMN REQUEST

James 5:13-20 - The Prayer of Faith

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

¹⁷ Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

¹⁹ My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

HYMN OF PRAYER: "If We Just Talk of Thoughts and Prayers" (Requested)

Text: Copyright © 2017 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. Used by Permission. All rights reserved. Tune: O WALY WALY 8.8.8.8 ("Though I May Speak")

- 1 If we just talk of thoughts and prayers, and don't live out a faith that dares,
And don't take on the ways of death, our thoughts and prayers are fleeting breath.
- 2 If we just dream of what could be and do not build community,
And do not seek to change our ways, our dreams of change are false displays.
- 3 If we just sing of doing good and don't walk through our neighborhood
To learn its hope, to ease its pain, our talk of good is simply vain.
- 4 God, may our prayers and dreams and songs lead to a faith that takes on wrongs –
That works for peace and justice, too. Then will our prayers bring joy to you.

A TIME OF PRAYER - Prayers from The New Century Hymnal

#857 - Come Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation. Send the wind and flame of your transforming life to lift us the church in this day. Give wisdom and faith the we may know the great hope to which we are called. Come Holy Spirit, renew the whole creation.

#859 - God of all creation, we thank you for you are our God and God of our fathers and mothers forever. You are the Refuge of our life, the Shield of our help. From generation to generation may we thank you and count your praises - evening, morning, and noon - for our lives which are committed into you hands, for our souls, which are entrust to you, for your miracles which are with us every day, for your wonders and goodness at all times. O Good One, your loving kindness never ceases. Forever we hope in you.

#860 - We bring before you, O God, the troubles and perils of people and nations, the sighing prisoners and captives, the sorrows of the bereaved, the necessities of strangers, the helplessness of the weak, the despondency of the weary, the failing powers of the aged.

LIFTING UP PRAYER REQUESTS - THE LORD'S PRAYER - Sung -

INVITATION TO GENEROSITY: AΩ*

L: James 5:16b reminds us that, "The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective." May we offer our gifts as a prayer of trust that God provides, a prayer of resistance that declares creation's abundance and sufficiency, and a prayer of hope that needs can be met.

A: We pray with our mouths, our hearts, and our spirits.

Let us also pray with our time, our talents, and our treasures.

Let us each give freely and joyfully as the Spirit guides.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: #845

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L: O God, Most merciful and gracious of whose bounty we have all received:

All: Accept we pray, this offering of your people. Remember in your love those who have brought it and those for whom it is given; and so follow it with your blessing that it may promote peace and goodwill among all people and advance the realm of our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen

SUMM-IT UP:

SENDING HYMN: #82 “Go, My Children, with My Blessing” (Requested)

Song #110843 Jaroslav J. Vajda, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams
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1 Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone.
Waking, sleeping, I am with you; You are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing - You are my own.

2 Go, my children, fed and nourished, closer to me;
Grow in love and love by serving, joyful and free.
Here my Spirit's power filled you; here with tender comfort stilled you.
Go, my children, fed and nourished, joyful and free.

CHARGE: “Go Now and Live for the Savior” (Previous Request)

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Go now, and live for the Savior. Go, may this joy be your joy too.
Go, may this presence ever guide you. Go, live this life the whole day through.

BENEDICTION: AΩ*

May the love of God uphold you as your love of neighbor compels you.
May the peace of Christ sustain you as the work of peace inspires you.
May the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit direct you as the call to community beckon you.
Go, in the assurance of belonging to God and one another in hope and joy. Amen.

TABLE BLESSING: (Sung to the Doxology Tune)

**Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored.
These mercies bless, and grant that we may strengthened for thy service be. Amen**

POSTLUDE:

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