

CELEBRATION AND WORSHIP – IN PERSON AND VIRTUAL

FEBRUARY 28, 2021

To those joining in person: thank you for remaining masked, keeping distance, and NOT singing for now.

GATHERING MUSIC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE AND BRINGING IN THE LIGHT

INVITATION TO WORSHIP AND HOPE

Do not be afraid. We gather together to worship and praise, to remember. We do not need to fear. We can discover hope to carry us.

Here, we can speak the truth. We have been afraid. We've feared so much in this past year for ourselves, for people of color, immigrants and refugees, for the common good, and the goodness of people. We have felt lost, unknowing what was ahead. We felt like we couldn't do anything to change the arrogance and hate that overpowered our hope.

Today, we come to hope again. To the candle of hope we lit last week, we add another.
light two candles along the front of the altar

We come to put those things behind us and lean into the possibility of what will be in the days ahead. We come to worship the One who makes all things new and assures us again and again not to be afraid. Let us worship God.

OPENING HYMN

Lead Me Lord

(repeat)

Lead me, Lord, lead me in thy righteousness; make thy way plain before my face.

For it is thou, Lord, thou Lord only, that makest me dwell in safety.

TIME OF PRAYER

O God, we need to feel your presence behind us as much as we need to know you are leading us forward. We need you behind us to encourage us and push us forward for if you are not there, we will drag our feet and refuse to move.

We have wondered so much this year about what our lives are worth. Masks have covered our nose and mouth because we believe that others have worth but if we are honest, O God, we haven't found our own worth.

We have been so aware of our humanity and all of its limitations so that we haven't really allowed ourselves to see beyond this moment.

We are just trying to get through this disaster so that we can think of blessings and other such divine things.

We are wrong, O God. We need to feel your push square in the center of our backs to dream and wonder and believe that there will be more than this. Get behind us and push us toward the fruitfulness of tomorrow. *Time of silent reflection*

God is merciful and full of steadfast love. God will not forget us. God calls us by name, and will lead us on paths of steadfast love and faithfulness.

We pray together, as Jesus taught. *Our Father....*

WORDS FOR THE YOUNGER DISCIPLES

SCRIPTURE Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16

MORNING REFLECTION Walk Before Me

HYMN OF RESPONSE *The Summons*

John L. Bell & Graham Maule

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around,
through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me.

BLESSING OF GIFTS, TITHES AND OURSELVES

God of all, you love us and have claimed us. As you blessed Sarah and Abraham, you have invited us into the blessing of connection within the family of humanity whom you continue to bless.

We give our tithes and offerings in celebration of the depths of our blessing and pray that they will strengthen the church across the world to bless all your children. We continue daily at home to make small gifts so that together, we will purchase blankets to help your children in need. We give, that we may become agents of your hope. In the holy name of Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we pray in gratitude. Amen.

BENEDICTION AND SENDING FORTH

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