

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH
A UNITED METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA) COMMUNITY
WILDE LAKE INTERFAITH CENTER • COLUMBIA, MARYLAND
UNITED IN LOVE – UNITED FOR SERVICE

August 6, 2023

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST // IN-PERSON & ONLINE SERVICE

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Liturgist: Susan Moody

[CC] = closed-captioned

WE GATHER IN GOD'S NAME

PRELUDE

Patricia Hammer
Accompanist

WORDS OF WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING SONG

“Be Thou My Vision”

GTG #450

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true Word
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord
Thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tower
Raise thou me heavenward, O Power of my power

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only, first in my heart
High King of Heaven, my treasure thou art

High King of Heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright Heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come all who are heavy-laden with too much, with too little, with anxiety, with fear, with anger.

We gather together to hear the words of the One who is Love.

Come all who have hope for liberation, for peace, for freedom, for the kingdom.

Come, let us worship!

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you.

You are beyond our busy imaginings, far above our elevated constructions of thought.

Yet you look upon us through the face of the poor; you bless us in the nurture of friendship; you challenge us in the cries for justice.

Yoked to Jesus your Son, joined in oneness with yourself, we strain against your direction and we know ourselves irksome;

Summoned to follow your way, we burden ourselves and others;

Asked to stand up, we cower in our own inadequacy and our own discrediting.

Forgive us our bondage to fixed patterns when they no longer serve you; our surrender to newness when newness is folly.

Lift us from our fear so that we may see your vision, know your wisdom, and find our rest in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

Our God is full of mercy and grace, slow to anger, and rich in love. When we fall, God is there to help us up again.

When we find ourselves burdened by past events and circumstances, God's Spirit comes alongside to support and encourage us.

God is always close at hand, ready to listen when we call out. God hears our prayers, and answers them.

So be at peace. God has heard your prayer.

AMEN.

HYMN

“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”

GTG #418

Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling
Calling for you and for me
See, on the portals he's waiting and watching
Watching for you and for me

Refrain:

*"Come home, come home, you who are weary, come home"
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is calling
Calling, "O sinner, come home"*

Why should we tarry when Jesus is pleading
Pleading for you and for me
Why should we linger and heed not his mercies
Mercies for you and for me

Refrain

O for the wonderful love he has promised
Promised for you and for me
Though we have sinned, he has mercy and pardon
Pardon for you and for me

Refrain

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 14:13 – 21

TIME WITH CHILDREN & YOUTH

Rev. Lon Chesnutt

CALL TO GENEROSITY

God of power and glory, as we bring our tithes and offerings to be dedicated to the building of your kingdom here on earth, we are reminded of all the blessings we have received. As we hear again the story of Jacob wrestling with the stranger to receive his blessing, remind us that the best blessings come when we are working hard, breaking a sweat, getting our hands dirty working for justice, compassion, and mercy for all your children. Steer us away from being content with the blessings that require little effort. In Christ, we pray. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to The Lord's Table

When the time was right, God sent Jesus to be among us.

Born into this life, seeing Your grace revealed in all things, he laughed with those who laughed, and mourned with those who mourned.

Through Your love, he healed the sick, he welcomed the outcast, he challenged those in power, and the structures that kept them there. And he called us back to Your love.

In the power of the Holy Spirit, the Christ laughs and cries, heals and welcomes, challenges and loves, again and again and again.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

This was just a cup filled with wine. This was just ordinary bread, baked for guests ... until Jesus took them, took and drank from the cup, even though it was his cup of pain, filled with the agony of the world; he took and broke the bread – even though his body was too young to be broken.

This person before you And you folks before me would be ordinary lives unless this bread, unless this wine, receives a spirit that is poured into them: and the mystery of grace takes place.

Come, not because you fully understand, but because you need to reach out and receive the life that is offered to you.

The Lord's PrayerReceiving the Elements

COMMUNION SONG “Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore”

(video; [CC])

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O Lord, giver of joy and laughter, we thank you for giving us these gifts.

For the moments of laughter and unbridled joy you give to us:

for opportunities to laugh at ourselves,

for the belly laughs of children,

for friends and family who love us because of our quirks, and not just in spite of them,

for artists who give us the opportunity to see the world through the surreal,

for the courage to smile even when difficulties arise, for those who have hope even when others think there is no hope,

for saints in the Lord who overflow with laughter and spread your joy to all of us.

For the great reversal of the Gospel:

that the last shall be made first,

that the rejected stone becomes the cornerstone,

that those who wish to become great must serve,

that the lost will be found,

that the small will become great,

that through you is Wisdom, that you choose to forgive our sins,

that when we are weak, your strength shines through us.

O Lord, giver of joy and laughter,

we thank you for giving us these gifts. Amen.

CLOSING SONG

“God Be With You Till We Meet Again”

GTG #541

God be with you till we meet again
Loving counsels guide, uphold you
With a shepherd's care enfold you:
God be with you till we meet again

God be with you till we meet again
Unseen wings protecting hide you
Daily manna still provide you:
God be with you till we meet again

God be with you till we meet again
When life's perils thick confound you
Put unfailing arms around you
God be with you till we meet again

God be with you till we meet again
Keep love's banner floating o'er you
Smite death's threatening wave before you
God be with you till we meet again

BENEDICTION

So now we leave this space of worship and while so much of the road ahead is uncertain, we know some things that are as solid and sure as the ground beneath our feet, and the sky above our heads.

We know God is love. We know Christ's light endures.

We know the Holy Spirit is here, found in the space between all things, closer to us than our next breath,

binding us to each other, until we meet we again,

Go in peace.

POSTLUDE

Patricia Hammer
accompanist

Matthew 14:13 – 21

14:13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns.

14:14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

14:15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

14:16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

14:17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish."

14:18 And he said, "Bring them here to me."

14:19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

14:20 And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

14:21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

