



WORSHIP AT HOME

*with UCC Westerly
during the Covid-19 outbreak*

June 7, 2020

□ Create a small worship space in your home anywhere. Add a candle, a bible and perhaps a small summer bouquet!

□ If you are doing this on your own, settle into your worship space around 9:30am on Sunday and begin. Make your list of prayer concerns. Then sit in silence and let your mind calm down. When you reach the Prayer Time in the service, aloud or just in your own mind, ask God to bless each of the persons and situations on your list. End with the Lord's Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you.

□ If you are joining in the prayers during the Facebook Live broadcast, before worship take a few minutes to send them to me via text, email or Facebook message. It is helpful for me to receive them at least 30 minutes before the service begins.

□ A reminder I will be streaming our worship service on Facebook Live beginning at 9:45am. You can still access it even if you are not on Facebook by going to the church website, www.uccwesterly.org, and clicking on the Facebook icon on the homepage.

□ Since we will be celebrating the sacrament of Communion together though scattered you will need to have your own Communion elements ready. The kind of bread or cracker and juice is your choice!

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Light your candle as a reminder of God's presence with you

Gathering Music –

CALL TO WORSHIP [*Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, Editors, p. 93]

Let us worship the eternal God, the source of Love and Life, who creates us.

Let us worship Jesus Christ, the Risen One who lives among us.

Let us worship the Spirit, the Holy Fire, who renews us.

To the one true God be praise in all times and places, through the grace of Jesus Christ.

OPENING SONG – “Many Gifts, One Spirit”

[**WORDS & MUSIC:** Al Carmines, © 1974 by Al Carmines, appearing in United Methodist Hymnal, 1989 edition. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A-734569]

1. *God of change and glory, God of time and space,
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.
Refrain: Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise One Giver,
One Lord, one Spirit, one Word, known in many ways,
Hallowing our days. For the Giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!*

2. *God of many colors, God of many signs,
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear.
Refrain*

3. *Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,
You are still creating endless love and light.
This we see as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart.
Refrain*

UNISON PRAYER OF REFLECTION [*Touch Holiness*, Duck & Tirabassi, Editors, p. 102]

O God, there is a dark and lonesome gulf in worship, a cavern of the awesome into which we rarely go. We prefer catchy tunes, bright vestments, and holiday prayers. We would rather exchange fellowship than touch holiness. Enable us in this precious time to venture into the depths of worship which can never be found totally in individual spirituality but which open slowly before the shared pain, struggle, and love of the communion of saints. Amen.

THE CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION*

Statement of Faith (adapted from *Gifts of Many Cultures*, Tirabassi & Eddy, Eds., p. 118)

We believe in God, our Heavenly Father;

We believe in Jesus Christ our Savior;

We trust in our dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit;

We seek to live in God's presence according to all God has made known and will make known to us.

We covenant to worship, work and witness together in the fellowship of this church for the building up of the Body of Christ and manifesting the Kingdom of God on earth.

COMMUNION HYMN -- "Let Us Break Bread Together"

[CONTRIBUTORS: William Farley Smith; TUNE: United Methodist Publishing House/Abingdon Press. All rights reserved. Reprinted under ONE LICENSE#A-734569]

V. 1 -- *Let us break bread together on our knees (2 X)*

When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,

O Lord, have mercy on me.

Words of Invitation and Prayer

Sharing of the Elements

Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving

May we be as living loaves, kneaded and shaped by the hands of God. May we be as wine of the Spirit, poured out that others might know joy. Love be the leaven within. Love be the flavor of thought and word and deed. Peace be among us, always. Amen.

COMMUNION HYMN – Let Us Break Bread Together”

*V. 3 -- Let us praise God together on our knees (2 X)
When I fall on my knees with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.*

SCRIPTURE READING

Morning Message

Listening for Angel Voices

Acts 8:26-39

Rev. Ruth

A TIME OF PRAYER

Pastoral Prayers

Silent Prayers

The Lord’s Prayer in whatever words are most comfortable for you

OUR RESPONSE TO GOD

Acknowledgement of Gifts & Offerings*

**Doxology “Praise God from who all blessings flow; Praise Christ all creatures here below; Praise Holy Spirit, Comforter; One God, Triune, whom we adore. Amen.”*

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CLOSING SONG – “Let There Be Peace on Earth”

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*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth, the pace that was meant to be.
With God our Creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.
Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.
With every step I take let this be my solemn vow:
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PRAYER OF BENEDICTION –

May God bless you and keep you. May God’s face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God’s very being be lifted up upon you and give you peace, this day and forever more. Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

Music as the Service ends –

SCRIPTURE READING – Acts 8:26-39

Morning Message

Listening for Angel Voices

Rev. Ruth

The story we read this morning is a favorite of mine. It is known as the story of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion by the Apostle Philip. It's a favorite because it is so very unusual and unique. For one thing, angels and even the Holy Spirit have a very direct and hands on approach to Philip's ministry in this story. An angel tells him to get up and take a trip to someplace he had not previously intended to go. He was to travel on a wilderness road connecting Jerusalem and Gaza. Yes, these are the same places we know by those names today. Anyhow, Philip was to travel along that road and await further instructions which he did. Sure enough, he received them from the Holy Spirit which told him to approach a chariot containing an official from the Ethiopian court. He was the person in charge of the entire treasury of the Ethiopian queen, whose official title was "Candace." The Ethiopians were ruled by women at that time, which is also why the male court officials, like this one, were all eunuchs.

As this story begins, we have two highly unusual factors in play in what is about to become the story of the first non-Jewish convert to Christianity. First, this high ranking official reported to a woman. Second, this high ranking royal official as well as the queen he reported were both black. They had to have been since their home was Ethiopia. These two facts so central to the story of the conversion of the first Gentile (non-Jewish) to become a follower of Christ are what make it so pertinent to the events roiling in this country and around the world in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd. A black man – think about that for a moment – a black man was the first non-Jewish convert to the new faith the apostles had been charged by Jesus himself to take everywhere. This man (we don't know his name) was the first. And Philip found him because an angel gave him very specific directions on where to go and then the Holy Spirit told him exactly what to do when he found him. Dear ones, God's own self created this moment and there is no better time than right now to remind ourselves that a black man who worked for a woman, herself one of the most powerful rulers in the world in her time, became the first Christian. A black man who worked for a woman became the first Christian. He literally made "us" possible. And, an angel talking to a man made it happen.

So, as we gather together this morning in this scattered fashion after a week where the whole world has been turned upside down, where everything we thought we understood about so many things has been pushed to the brink and beyond, I thought the best way for us to begin to process some of what's been happening is to hear the words of black folks themselves. I am going to do this by sharing with you a little poetry by three black poets, most of whom will be familiar to you. Their words are amazingly, hauntingly beautiful and, if we listen deeply with the ears of our souls, I think they can help us toward that deeper understanding of current realities we seek.

First, two poems by Maya Angelou:

Caged Bird

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still

and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

Still I Rise

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.
Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.
Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?
Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines
Diggin' in my own backyard.
You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.
Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?
Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise I rise I rise I rise

And now several poems by Langston Hughes:

My People

Top of Form
Bottom of Form
The night is beautiful,
So the faces of my people.
The stars are beautiful,
So the eyes of my people.
Beautiful, also, is the sun.
Beautiful, also, are the souls of my people.

Kids Who Die

This is for the kids who die,
Black and white,
For kids will die certainly.
The old and rich will live on awhile,
As Always,
Eating blood and gold,
Letting kids die.
Kids will die in the swamps of Mississippi
Organizing sharecroppers
Kids will die in the streets of Chicago
Organizing workers
Kids will die in the orange groves of California
Telling others to get together
Whites and Filipinos,
Negroes and Mexicans,
All kinds of kids will die
Who don't believe in lies, and bribes, and contentment
And a lousy peace.
Evil
Looks like what drives me crazy
Don't have no effects on you—
But I'm gonna keep on at it
Till it drives you crazy, too.

Harlem

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

The Negro Speaks of Rivers (To W.E.B. DuBois)

I've known rivers:
I've known rivers ancient as the world and older than the flow
of human blood in human veins.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.
I bathed in the Euphrates when dawns were young.
I built my hut near the Congo and it lulled me to sleep.
I looked upon the Nile and raised the pyramids above it.
I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went
down to New Orleans, and I've seen its muddy bosom
turn all golden in the sunset.
I've known rivers:
Ancient, dusky rivers.
My soul has grown deep like the rivers.

May God open our eyes and ears, our minds and hearts, this day and forevermore.
Amen

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