

Scriptural Meditation

*Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children  
and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us.  
(Ephesians 5:1-2, NIV)*

~Gathering the Family of God~

**The Peal of Our Church Bell**

**Welcome and Greeting One Another with the Peace of Christ**

**\*Peace**

One: The love of God surrounds us.

**All: We rejoice in that love and remember  
that since God loves us so much,  
we too should love one another.**

One: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

**All: And also with you!**

*Let us greet one another in that love, in that hope, in that abiding faith.*

**Prelude**

*The Summons*

by Mark Hayes

**Call to Worship**

One: God is calling each one of us.

**All: Lord, help us to hear your call.**

One: If you answer the summons, your life will be totally changed.

**All: Lord, help us to be ready for that change.**

One: People may not understand and may ridicule us.

**All: Lord, give us courage and strength to withstand the ridicule and taunting.**

One: Lord, we come with willing hearts today  
to learn how to fulfill the promises given to the people.

**All: Make us ready, O Lord, to be true disciples  
offering ministries of hope and compassion.**

**Prayer of Invocation**

**\* Gathering Song**

*Will You Come and Follow Me?/The Summons*

# 726

**\* Prayer of Reconciliation** *(adapted from 1 Corinthians 13)*

*Let us remain standing and express ourselves to God.*

One: Love is patient and kind.

**All: Lord, it is hard to be patient when there is so much we need and want to  
do. When other people slow us down, it is easy to forget to be kind.**

One: Love is not jealous or conceited or proud.

**All: But we are, God. We look at some people and think we are better than  
they are. We look at other people and feel jealous of what they have and  
what they can do. Forgive us.**

One: Love is not ill-mannered or selfish or irritable.

**All: But we often blurt out rude, hurting names and accusations, almost before  
we know what we are saying. Help us learn to think before we speak.**

One: Love does not keep a record of wrongs.

**All: But we remember even those wrongs we have really tried to forgive. We  
remember them and bring them up when we are angry or when we want  
our own way. We use them to hurt even the people we love. Help s to  
forgive and forget.**

One: Love is not happy with evil. Love is happy with the truth.

**All: But it is hard not to take secret delight when people get what they have  
coming to them. Teach us compassion, God.**

One: Love never gives up; and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.

**All: But we give up easily. We give up on other people. We give up on  
ourselves. We give up on making a difference. We lose hope that  
anything will ever be any different. Forgive us, for we pray in Jesus'  
name. Amen.**

**\*A Time for Contemplation** (a private time for you and God)

**\*Words of Forgiveness**

One: The One who knew us before we were born knows our secret failings.  
The One who saw us in our mothers' wombs sees into our shadowed hearts.  
The One who bends down to listen to our words speaks grace and hope to us.  
God's love never ends! Now we know we are forgiven;  
Now, we know we are healed.

**All: We can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all  
things. Thanks be to God!**

One: Friends, believe the good news of the Gospel.

**All: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.**

**\*Gloria Patri**

# 581

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen, Amen.**

**God's Word for Little Ears**

Melissa Harris

~Hearing God's Word~

**Prayer for Understanding God's Word**

**All: Hear God's word—the words of call, the words of promise, the words of  
faith, the words of hope, the words of love. Live God's word—the words of life.  
Amen.**

**Old Testament Lesson**

Psalm 71:1-6

page 532

*Prayer for Lifelong Protection and Help*

<sup>71:1</sup> In you, O LORD, I take refuge; let me never be put to shame.

<sup>2</sup> In your righteousness deliver me and rescue me; incline your ear to me and save me.

<sup>3</sup> Be to me a rock of refuge, a strong fortress to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.

<sup>4</sup> Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of the unjust and cruel.

<sup>5</sup> For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth.

<sup>6</sup> Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother's womb.

My praise is continually of you. (NRSV)

**Anthem** *The Greatest Gift is Love* by Mark Hayes

Though I speak with tongues of angels, Though my voice is touched with gold,  
Without love each word is discord, clanging brass and cymbals bold.

Though I know as much as prophets, Though my faith is strong and sure,  
Without love these are as nothing, Neither words nor work endure.

Though I give my goods to others, And my flesh I give to burn,  
Without love each gift is worthless, till the gift of love I learn.

Love is always kind and patient, Neither jealous, boastful, rude;  
Neither selfish nor conceited, but with every grace imbued.

Love releases all resentment, Takes no pleasure in the wrong;

Love finds truth delightful always And endures what comes along.

Though not easily offended, Love is eager to forgive,

Always trusting, always hoping, Precious love will always live!

In a world that is imperfect, Many gifts will pass away;

Faith and hope and love are endless; These, and these alone will stay.

To a world where all is changing Comes the promise from above:

Faith and hope will last forever, But the greatest gift is love.

[Based on 1 Corinthians 13, adapted by Beth Rice Luttrell]

**New Testament Epistle** I Corinthians 13 page 175

One: The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Lesson** Luke 4:14-30 page 61

One: The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

**Message** *Hometown Reputation* The Rev. Greg Heinsman

~Responding to God's Word~

**\*Affirmation of Faith**

*Let us stand and affirm our faith.*

**All: I refuse to believe that we are unable to influence the events which surround us.**

**I refuse to believe that we are so bound to racism and war, that peace, brotherhood and sisterhood are not possible.**

**I believe there is an urgent need for people to overcome oppression and violence, without resorting to violence and oppression.**

**I believe that we need to discover a way to live together in peace, a way which rejects revenge, aggression and retaliation. The foundation of this way is love.**

**I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality.**

**I believe that right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant.**

**I believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits.**

**I believe that what self-centered people have torn down, other-centered people can build up.**

**By the goodness of God at work within people, I believe that brokenness can be healed. "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and everyone will sit under their own vine and fig tree, and none shall be afraid."**

[An Affirmation Based on the Writings of Dr. Martin Luther King]

**Invitation to Become a Joyful Giver**

**Giving of our Tithes and Offerings & Friendship Pad**

*Please take a moment to sign your name and contact information in the pew pad.*

**Offertory** *Gift of Love (#693)* arr. by Dale Wood

**\*Doxology** *Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow* (# 606)

**All: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A-men.**

Tune: Old Hundredth LM, Genevan Psalter 1551, Public Domain.

**Prayers of the People followed by The Lord's Prayer**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**All: Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**Sung Prayer Response**

(adapted from *Kum ba Yah* # 472)

v.1) **Come by here, my Lord, come by here!  
Come by here, my Lord, come by here!  
Come by here, my Lord, come by here!  
O Lord, come by here!**

v. 2) **Someone needs you, Lord, come by here!  
Someone needs you, Lord, come by here!  
Someone needs you, Lord, come by here!  
O Lord, come by here!**

Text and Melody: African-American Spiritual, Public Domain.

~Going Forth to Serve God~

Life in Our Church Community

\*Song of Going Forth                      *I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me*                      # 700

\*Benediction

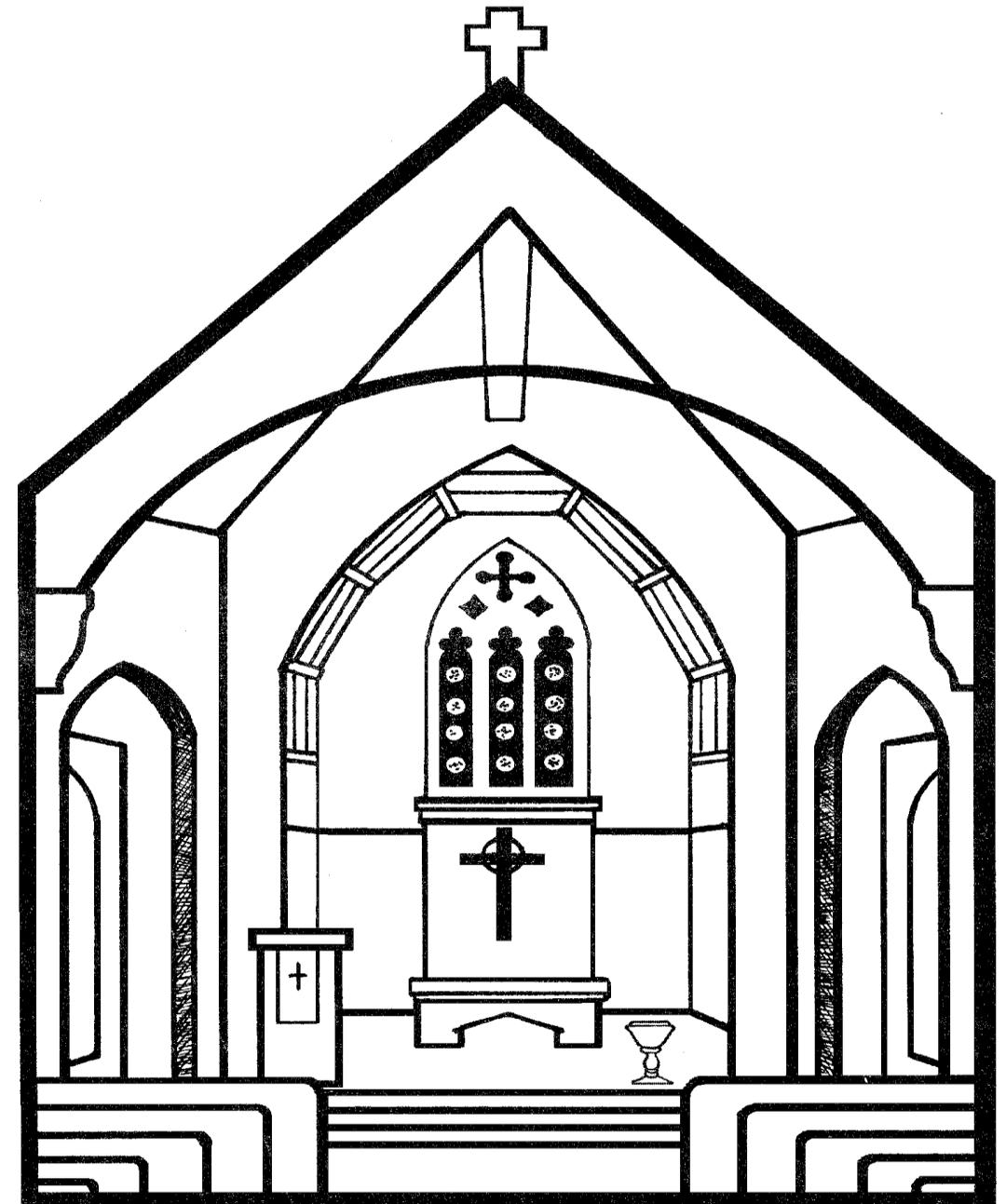
\*Postlude                                      *Te Deum*                                      by M. A. Charpentier

+++++

\*Please stand, if you are able.

Electronic aid for the hearing impaired is available from the usher.

Music printed and recorded for congregational use only under CCLI # 11373529



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