

PRELUDE

GREETING & GATHERING

When all seems to be lost, God is most near to us. When we struggle to make meaning of the fractures in our world, God opens to us a new vision of shalom.

CALL TO WORSHIP

When hatred and division separate us,

God's love binds us together.

When quarrels estrange us from one another,

Christ's light shows us the way to reconciliation.

When we feel excluded and left out,

The Spirit's peace eases our pain.

When all hope of fellowship seems lost,

God's grace restores our hope.

Come! Let us worship God, who makes us one.

HYMN - JOYFUL, JOYFUL, WE ADORE THEE UMH 89

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee,
God of glory, Lord of love;
hearts unfold like flowers before thee,
opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness;
drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness,
fill us with the light of day!

2. All thy works with joy surround thee,
earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
stars and angels sing around thee,
center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain,
flowery meadow, flashing sea,
chanting bird and flowing fountain,
call us to rejoice in thee.

3. Thou art giving and forgiving,
ever blessing, ever blest,
wellspring of the joy of living,
ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother,
all who live in love are thine;
teach us how to love each other,
lift us to the joy divine.

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus
which the morning stars began;
love divine is reigning o'er us,
binding all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward,
victors in the midst of strife;
joyful music leads us sunward,
in the triumph song of life.

PRAYER

The wisdom and forgiveness of our Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray together:

Eternal God, part the veil that blinds us to our unity as your beloved children. When those we love hurt and betray us, help us let go of our pain and find the promise of forgiveness. When we feel abandoned by those we trust, help us seek your peace and reconciliation. When our hearts are pierced with anguish, help us find those who will bring us comfort through your loving Spirit.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

RESPONSE - AND ARE WE YET ALIVE UMH 553 (verses 3 & 4)

What troubles have we seen, what mighty
conflicts past, fightings without, and
fears within, since we assembled last!

Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us
by his love; and still he doth his
help afford, and hides our life above.

MINISTRY MOMENT/THE RED STEPS

Back To School Sunday
Thanksgiving for Educators and Students
Prayer for Peace and Provision

THE OFFERING

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 45:1-15

45 Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Send everyone away from me." So no one stayed with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. **2** And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard it, and the household of Pharaoh heard it. **3** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers could not answer him, so dismayed were they at his presence.

4 Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come closer to me." And they came closer. He said, "I am your brother, Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. **5** And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. **6** For the famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither plowing nor harvest. **7** God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. **8** So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt. **9** Hurry and go up to my father and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph, God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not delay. **10** You shall settle in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near me, you and your children and your children's children, as well as your flocks, your herds, and all that you have. **11** I will provide for you there—since there are five more years of famine to come—so that you and your household, and all that you have, will not come to poverty.' **12** And now your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that it is my own mouth that speaks to you. **13** You must tell my father how greatly I am honored in Egypt, and all that you have seen. Hurry and bring my father down here." **14** Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, while Benjamin wept upon his neck. **15** And he kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

HOMILY

"Signs (When Making Meaning Is All We Can Really Do)"



ANTHEM

INVITATION

HYMN - PRAISE THE LORD WHO REIGNS ABOVE UMH 96

1 All praise to our redeeming Lord,
who joins us by his grace,
and bids us, each to each restored,
together seek his face.

2 He bids us build each other up;
and, gathered into one,
to our high calling's glorious hope
we hand in hand go on.

3 The gift which he on one bestows,
we all delight to prove,
the grace through every vessel flows
in purest streams of love.

4 E'en now we think and speak the same,
and cordially agree,
concentered all, through Jesus' name,
in perfect harmony.

5 We all partake the joy of one;
the common peace we feel,
a peace to sensual minds unknown,
a joy unspeakable.

6 And if our fellowship below
in Jesus be so sweet,
what height of rapture shall we know
when round his throne we meet!

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE