

MOMENTS OF CENTERING

Spiritual disciplines teach us to live our lives in harmony with something larger than ourselves and larger than that which the world values as ultimate. Joan Chittister puts it this way, "All we have in life is life. Things—the cars, the houses, the educations, the jobs, the money—come and go, turn to dust between our fingers, change and disappear.... the secret of life...is that it must be developed from the inside out."

Living in the presence of and in harmony with the living God who is made known in Jesus Christ and companions us in the Holy Spirit is to live life from the inside out. It is to find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus. *-Three Simple Rules, Reuben Job, p. 54.*

Thanks be to God! Welcome to Worship!

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

Carolyn Brown

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND HOSPITALITY

PRELUDE

Dan Martin

SERVICE OF LIGHT The Acolytes

Jesus said, "I am the Light of the world."

+CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP

UMH 140

Great Is Thy Faithfulness, v. 1

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father; there is no shadow of turning with thee; thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not; as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain: Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see; all I have needed thy hand hath provided; great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

+CALL TO WORSHIP

Responsively

Children of God, when you are surrounded on every side by shadows that frighten and voices that deride and confuse, what do you say?

God is our light and our salvation! Whom shall we fear?

When threats bombard you from every corner, stealing the security and peace you long for, what do you say?

God is the stronghold of our lives! Of whom shall we be afraid?

When anxiety and loneliness overwhelm and you do not know who or what to trust any more, what do you say?

Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the Lord!

Because God knows our suffering. God makes a home among us, welcoming us to come home to God and one another.

Come! Let us worship God who hides us in the day of trouble and conceals us together under the cover of the tent of Love.

+INVOCATION

Responsively

Lord, we come to you this morning with so many concerns and issues that demand our attention. Our lives are burdened; our spirits are tired.

Guide our lives and our steps as we walk this Lenten journey, inward and outward. Help us to discern what you would have us do, that others may be healed. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

+HYMN OF PRAISE

UMH 100

God Whose Love Is Reigning O'er Us

THE CHURCH IN MOMENTS OF CONFESSION

THE PSALTER

Psalm 27

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Responsively

There is a certain winter in our spirits today, O Lord. We feel that the journey on which we have embarked will demand too much of us. There are so many other things in our lives which claim our spirits, our energy, our hopes and fears. It is easy to be like Jerusalem, turning our backs on those whom you send. The world shouts its solutions to us and then deserts us when we are in need.

Forgive us for the many times in which we have strayed from your pathway of life; when we have chosen not to hear the cries of those in need; when we have belittled the gifts and skills you have given us in order to avoid serving others. Heal us, O Lord. Place us back on your path to Jerusalem, to live, for we ask this in Jesus' name.

PERSONAL PRAYER OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

When God called your name, God called you to a journey of faith. Do not be afraid to look inside to see those things which are holding you back from being who God created you to be. Place your trust in God who is always with you, loving you into wholeness.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Unison

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

THE CHURCH SHARES ITS BLESSINGS OFFERTORY INVITATION

God is always with us, not just when everything seems clear and times are good, but also when we struggle with questions and doubt. When we cry out to God, our prayers are heard. When the world cries out to God, we are part of God's answer, offering nourishment to a world that is spiritually hungry. Our gifts this morning are our answer to God's own goodness. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise. I invite you to share God's abundance—today in these moments of stewardship or online by using the church website: www.FirstChurchUM.com.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Unison

Loving God, our shelter and hope, as we walk through this holy season, we come to you with hearts open to your grace. In our giving, may we reflect the love that sustains us, and may we lift one another up in times of need. Use these offerings to bring comfort to the weary and hope to the brokenhearted, just as you draw near to us in our struggles. Strengthen us to be a source of light and love in this world, reflecting your compassion in all we do. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

OFFERTORY

Dan Martin

+DOXOLOGY

UMH 95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE CHURCH LISTENS FOR THE WORD

THE WORD

CHORAL CALL TO CHILDRENS SERMON

We Sing to You, O God, v. 4

FWS 2001

O God, eternal God, we hide within your wings, the everlasting arms to whom our praises ring.

Your word is true, your way is just, you are the God in whom we trust.

WIGGLETIME ... Then, time for Children's Church!

THE WORD IN MUSIC

Chancel Choir

SERMON

Rev. M. Steven Meadows

THE CHURCH SCATTERS TO SHARE GOOD NEWS

+HYMN OF DEDICATION

UMH 261

Lord of the Dance

+SERVICE OF LIGHT The Acolytes

Jesus said, "You are the Light of the world."

+BENEDICTION

Responsively

Be strong in the Lord. You can walk in God's ways, for God is with you, offering you peace, hope, courage, and joy. God's love abides with you always. Go in peace. **Amen.**

+POSTLUDE

Dan Martin

...and the worship continues.

Bring a fingerfood and share in today's celebration and fellowship!



Micah Outreach Ministry Team Invites You...
MICAH MEAL, SUNDAY, MAR. 23
FOLLOWING WORSHIP
BAKED POTATO BAR AND SALAD
Donations will support
Southern West Virginia Flood Relief.
March Loose Change Offering will support
Southern West Virginia Flood Relief

