

Annual Gathering and Meeting

Closing Worship

Prelude

Gathering:

The Grace of our Savior Jesus Christ, the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Hymn: "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go" (NCH 485)

COMFORT AND ASSURANCE

O Love That Will Not Let Me Go

485

George Matheson, 1882; alt.

Rom. 8:38-39; John 8:12

1 O Love that will not let me go,
2 O Light that fol - lows all my way,
3 O Joy that seeks me through my pain,
4 O Cross that rais - es up my head,

I rest my wea - ry soul in you;
to you I yield my flick - ering flame;
to you I can - not close my heart;
from you I dare not seek to flee;

I give you back the life I owe, that
Re - new my spir - it's fee - ble ray, that
I trace the rain - bow through the rain, and
Life's glo - ries with - er and are dead, but

in your o - cean depths its flow may swell with ar - dor true.
from your bril - liant sun - lit day it may new bright - ness claim.
know the prom - ise is not vain that you will ne'er de - part.
from the ground there blos - soms red, life that shall end - less be.

Although he was nearly blind, George Matheson studied for the Church of Scotland ministry, assisted by his sisters, who learned Latin, Greek, and Hebrew to help him. Matheson wrote this hymn in five minutes on June 6, 1882, at his parsonage.

Tune: ST. MARGARET 8.8.8.8.6
Albert L. Peace, 1885

Call to Worship:

We all wear different shoes. Some shoes help us to look well dressed. Some protect us when we work. Some shoes correct the way we walk. Some cover and protect feet that cannot support us. Some help us play and relax. The most important shoes we wear are not on our feet but within our hearts. Sisters come and let us put on our "Love Shoes."

Call to confession:

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. Let us, then, confess our sins to the God who loves us.

Prayer of confession:

Most merciful God, we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbor as ourselves. For the sake of Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in your love and share that love with all creation, to the glory of your Holy Name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Know that in God's loving embrace, we are forgiven. Amen.

Special Music: "Holy, Holy, Holy" Arr. Mark Hayes

Prayer of the Day:

Most loving God, fill us with your grace and is able to make all things new. Guide us by your Holy Spirit, that we may love you with our whole heart and love one another with that perfect love which casts out all fears. In the name of Jesus our Savior. Amen.

Special Music: "Just A Closer Walk with Thee" Arr. Jack Schrader

Gospel Reading: **Matthew 22: 34-40**

Sermon: **Love God and Love One Another** ~ **Bishop Csaba Krasznai**

Hymn: "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ" (NCH 347)

HOLY COMMUNION

347

Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ

Luke 10:1-9

Fred Kaan, 1975; alt.

C F G Dm G C G

1 Let us tal - ents and tongues em - ploy, reach - ing out with a shout of joy:
 2 Christ is a - ble to make us one, at his ta - ble he set the tone,
 3 Je - sus calls us in, sends us out bear - ing fruit in a world of doubt,

C F G Dm7 C G C

bread is bro - ken, the wine is poured, Christ is spo - ken and seen and heard.
 teach - ing peo - ple to live to bless, love in word and in deed ex - press.
 gives us love to tell, bread to share: God (Im - man - u - el) ev - ery - where!

Refrain (first time *p.*, second time *f.*)

C C7 F Dm G C F C

Je - sus lives a - gain, earth can breathe a - gain, pass the Word a - round: loaves a - bound!

This hymn came into being when composer Doreen Potter asked poet Fred Kaan to write a text for her adaptation of a Jamaican folk melody. It was first used at the World Council of Churches Assembly in Nairobi (1975), and in Vancouver (1983).

Tune: LINSTEAD L.M. with refrain
 Jamaican folk song
 Adapt. Doreen Potter, 1975

Installation of Elected Conference Officers (Book of Worship: Affirmation of Ministry)

UCC Statement of Faith

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

- ◆ You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each the ways of life and death.
- ◆ You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.
- ◆ You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.
- ◆ In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.
- ◆ You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues and races.
- ◆ You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.
- ◆ You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you.

Amen.

Offering

Leader: Beloved, the Gospel of Matthew reminds us that in the eyes of Jesus, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Some days it is hard to see past the noise and confusion of our own lives to find the least among us. Other days it is even harder to know our own selves, and ever harder to know our brothers and sisters. One thing that we can know without a doubt is that whether we are gathered, or scattered, we are all God’s beloved children. We are all called to love and care for each other. To that end, we share with each other our time, talent, and treasures not in the hopes that we will be rewarded, but in knowledge that it will bring us everlasting joy.

Offertory

Prayer of Blessing for the Offering:

Let Us Pray:

All Gathered:

Lord, as we approach the end of our time here together, we thank you for the love and mercy that you have shown each of us. Many are the days. For some the days are long and unforgiving, and for others they are all too short, but you are an abundant God and your love and mercy never ceases. You carry all of us forward each and every day, and for that we give thanks.

Today Lord, we freely give to you the gifts of our time, talents, and treasures. Take them we ask, multiply them, and scatter them to the four corners of the earth, that wherever the least among us are gathered these treasures might find them, and be a blessing to our brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask all this in your holy name. Amen.

Invitation to Holy Communion

Leader:

Beloved in Christ, the Gospel tells us that on the first day of the week Jesus Christ was raised from death, appeared to Mary Magdalene, on the same day sat at the table with two disciples, and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

All Gathered:

This is the joyful feast of the people of God. Men and women, youth and children come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and gather about Christ's table.

Leader:

This table is for all Christians who wish to know the presence of Christ and to share in the community of God's people.

Communion Prayer (Book of Worship p. 84-86)

Prayer of Our Savior

Distribution of Holy Communion

Special Music: "Follow Rain and Rivers" by Robert Gielas

"Here I Am Lord" by Dan Schutte/Arr. Craig Courtney

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

Let Us Pray Together

Gracious God, we thank you that in this sacrament you assure us of your goodness and helped us put on our love shoes. Accept our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving and help us to grow in our love shoes and obedience, that we may serve you in the world and finally be brought to that table where all your saints feast with you forever and you will hear, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." Amen

Hymn: "Awake, Awake to Love and Word"

MORNING

89

Awake, Awake to Love and Work

Geoffrey A. Studdert-Kennedy, 1921; alt.

1 A - wake, a - wake to love and work! The lark is in the sky;
2 Come, let your voice be one with theirs, shout with their shout of praise;
3 To give and give, and give a - gain, as God's own grace is free;

the fields are wet with dia - mond dew; The worlds a - wake to cry
See how the gi - ant sun soars up, God's gift for all your days!
To spend your-self nor count the cost; To serve most glo - rious - ly

their prais-es to the Fount of Life; Christ Je - sus pass-es by.
So let the love of Je - sus come and set your soul a - blaze,
the God who gave all worlds that are, and all that are to be.

Geoffrey Studdert-Kennedy was known in the United States as an eloquent preacher. He was a famed chaplain (Woodbine Willie) in World War I and later chaplain to the King of England. This hymn is part of a longer poem, "At a Harvest Festival."

Tune: MORNING SONG 8.6.8.6.8.6.
Kentucky Harmony, 1816
Harm. C. Winfred Douglas, 1940

Commissioning

Benediction

Postlude