

Annual Gathering and Meeting Closing Worship

Prelude

Greeting

***Call to Worship**

My friends, as we prepare to depart, let us celebrate all that is the Penn West Conference of the United Church of Christ!

We are 99 churches, who have finally embraced one another in conversation, meals, laughter, and reflection.

We are led by a Conference Minister with a spirit that embodies Paul's hospitality to rejoice when we are rejoicing and weep when we weep.

We have heard Paul's words anew and are excited to open ourselves to God's vision in our communities.

May these final moments together nourish us for the beautifully messiness of God's transformation within us.

Come, let us worship God as the Penn West Conference of the Body of Christ!

***Hymn "There is a Name I Love to Hear (O How I Love Jesus)" #52NCH**

There Is a Name I Love to Hear (O How I Love Jesus)

Frederick Whitfield, 1855; alt.

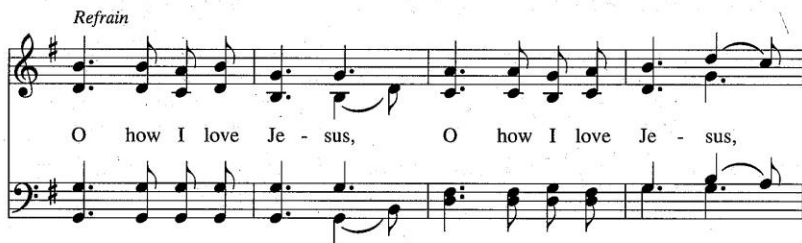


1 There is a name I love to hear, I love to sing its worth;
2 It tells my Sav - ior's love for all; Christ died to set us free;
3 It bids me serve a - mid the wrath God's peo - ple face each day,

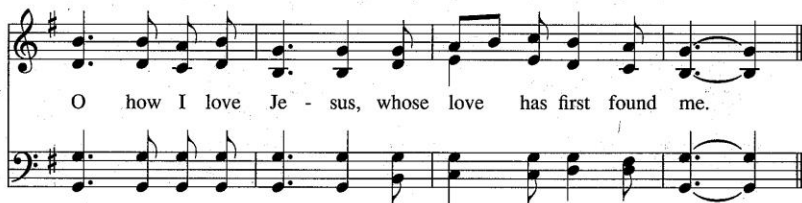


It sounds like mu - sic to my ear, the sweet - est name on earth.
What - ev - er prob - lems may be - fall, we'll live in dig - ni - ty.
And sheds a - long life's trou - bled path bright sun - shine on my way.

Refrain



O how I love Je - sus, O how I love Je - sus,



O how I love Je - sus, whose love has first found me.

Call to Confession

We are told to live in harmony with one another. Let us pause to confess when we have created conflict rather than harmony in ourselves, our neighbor, and God.

Prayer of Confession

Creator God, we hear your call to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, and we celebrate that you are not done with us yet as your Beloved Community. And yet, we confess that transformation is uncomfortable and messy. We wish we could snap our fingers and your transformation would suddenly appear. Instead, O God, you call us to be patient in suffering, bless those who persecute us, and feed our enemies as actions that will open us to your creative vision for all. Help us, O God, in your transforming ways. In your name we pray, Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

My friends, you are forgiven in God's love so now live peaceably with all as an expression of God's love. Amen.

Special Music

Reading from the Christian Scriptures Romans 12: 12-21

Sermon "It's Not Easy Being Transformed!"

*Hymn "O Savior, Let Me Walk With You" #503 NCH

O Savior, Let Me Walk with You

Washington Gladden, 1879; alt.

1 O Sav - ior, let me walk with you in earth - ly
2 Help me the slow of heart to move by some clear
3 Teach me your pa - tience; let me be in clos - er,
4 In hope that sends a shin - ing ray far down the

paths of ser - vice true; Tell me your se - cret,
win - ning word of love. Teach me the way - ward
dear - er com - pa - ny, In work that keeps faith
fu - ture's broad - ening way, In peace that on - ly

help me bear the strain of toil, the fret of care.
feet to stay, and guide them in the home - ward way.
sweet and strong, in trust that tri - umphs o - ver wrong.
you can give, with you, O Sav - ior, let me live.

Washington Gladden was a Congregational minister, distinguished preacher and lecturer, and author of over thirty works. Gladden wrote extensively on civic and social affairs of his day. This hymn was penned in 1879 and published in his periodical, The Sunday Afternoon.

Tune: MARYTON L.M.
H. Percy Smith, 1874

Installation of Elected Conference Officers (From the UCC Book of Worship)

Introduction

Affirmation of ministry is the act whereby we recognize the diverse gifts of our members and celebrate the particular ministry of each person in the life of the conference or in various settings in the life of the world. There are different ways of serving, but the same God is served. There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to each of us for our particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all.

Christ is like a single body, which has many parts. It is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. If one part of the body suffers, all the other parts suffer with it; if one part is praised, all the other parts share its happiness. All of us are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it.

Presentation

These people have been called by God, in accordance with the faith and order of our conference, to serve among us. They have accepted their call and are before us in witness to their willingness to serve.

Covenant

Siblings in Christ, it is an honor to be entrusted with responsibility for particular service in the ministry of the church, whether gathered or scattered. Having prayerfully considered the duties and responsibilities of your ministry, are you prepared to serve in your capacities, with the help of God in Christ's name, for the glory of God? If so, please respond, "I am."

I am.

Do you promise to exercise your ministry diligently and faithfully, showing forth the love of Christ? If so, respond saying, "I do, relying on God's grace."

I do, relying on God's grace.

Congregational Response

All you gathered here, you have heard the promises of our siblings in Christ, who have answered God's call to service. Let us affirm our intention to live in covenant with them. Please rise in body or spirit.

We gather in celebration of the joy that is ours to be partners with you in the service of Jesus Christ. We promise to love you, honor your leadership, and assist you, that together we may be a faithful church of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Let us pray, Eternal God, you have called these people to serve you in the Penn West Conference and in the world, which you have entrusted to our care and keeping. Send your Holy Spirit on them that they may serve among us with honor and faithfulness. Help them to be diligent in their duties that your church may prosper in the mission you place before it. May their example prove worthy for all of us to follow, as we are united Christ's ministry, to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Declaration

In the name of Jesus Christ and on behalf of the people of the Penn West Conference, I rejoice to announce that you are installed and commissioned in your respective positions.

Thanks be to God!

UCC Statement of Faith in the Form of a Doxology

Prayers of the People

Offering

Offertory

Prayer of Blessing for the Offering

Creator God, receive our gifts as a living expression of our worship of you so that your creation may be fully realized through justice and love in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Invitation to Holy Communion

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 bread.

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

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

Communion Prayer

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God

Let us give thanks to God most high

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Prayer of Our Savior (debts/debtors)

Distribution of Holy Communion

Communion Anthem

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the gifts of our Savior's presence in the simplicity and splendor of this holy meal. Bless the hands and hearts of all who grew, sold, and served these elements to us for they are our teachers of our hospitality for all. May we

be untied in the good news of your justice and love so all of our living may be our worship of you! In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Unite us

* Closing Hymn "We are People on a Journey" #340NCH, verses 1, 3, & 4 English

Somos pueblo que camina (We Are People on a Journey)

"Misa Popular Nicaragüense," 20th century; alt.
English version, Carolyn Jennings, 1993

John 6:32-35

1 So-mos pue-blo que ca - mi - na por la sen - da del do - lor.
 2 Los hu - mil-des y los po - bres in - vi - ta - dos son de Dios.
 1 We are peo-ple on a jour - ney; pain is with us all the way.
 2 God has sent the in - vi - ta - tion to the hum-ble and the poor.

Estribillo (Refrain)

A - cu - da-mos ju - bi - lo - sos a la san - ta co - mu - nión.
 Joy - ful - ly we come to - geth - er at the ho - ly feast of God.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 Es-te pan que Dios nos brin-da
a-li-men-ta nues-tra u-nión. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 3 This is bread that God pro-vides us,
nour-ish-ing our u-ni-ty. (<i>Refrain</i>) |
| 4 Cris-to a-quí se ha-ce pre-sen-te;
al reu-nir-nos es su a-mor. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 4 Christ is ev-er pres-ent with us
to u-nite us all in love. (<i>Refrain</i>) |
| 5 Los se-dien-tos de jus-ti-cia
bus-can su li-be-ra-ción. (<i>Estribillo</i>) | 5 All who tru-ly thirst for jus-tice
seek their lib-er-a-tion here. (<i>Refrain</i>) |

The "Misa Popular Nicaragüense," in which this hymn appeared, was composed for the Eucharist liturgy by members of the "comunidades de base"—a group of laypersons who organized to deal with issues in the Latin American church and community.

Tune: SOMOS PUEBLO 8.7. with refrain (8.7.)
"Misa Popular Nicaragüense," 20th century

Commissioning

Benediction

Postlude

*Please stand as you are able in body or spirit.