



Human Relations Sunday

January 17th, 2021

Twin Towers United Methodist Church

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WORSHIP GUIDE

Before you begin your time of worship, find a comfortable place to be and gather whatever you might need: your Bible, your Advent candles, something to write on and with, your computer/connected device (if you intend to listen to music online), etc. Feel free to adapt this worship guide in any way that makes best sense to you and those you might be gathered with. (Consider inviting someone – a friend, a family member – to worship with you.) Commit to spending the next hour with God.

PRELUDE - Listen and sing along to a song or hymn that blesses and centers your spirit!

WELCOME - **From “I Still have a Dream: Service Prayers for Martin Luther King, Jr. Weekend 2020” by Rev. Trayce Potter*

God of our ancestors and God of our dreams,
we gather today to remember that you have created us all in your image
and in your likeness

And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.

We remember how you spoke into the darkness
and created light

And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.

We remember the ways you have delivered your people through trials and tribulations
since the beginning of time, right up until this present moment

And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.

You have comforted us
through the middle passage, racism, segregation,
stripped identities and unjust laws

And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.

God, you have been the guiding light
along the paths of Hope and Love
leading toward a beloved community
where all are equally seen and radically loved

And so, we still have the courage to dream the impossible.

We gather today remembering your presence amongst us
and the call to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with you and our neighbors.

OPENING HYMN - "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kVXbISMGaUg>

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| 1. Praise the one who breaks the darkness
With a liberating light.
Praise the one who frees the prisoners,
Turning blindness into sight.
Praise the one who preached the Gospel,
Healing every dread disease,
Calming storms and feeding thousands
With the very bread of peace. | To the desert's burning sand.
From this well comes living water,
Quenching thirst in every land. |
| 2. Praise the one who blessed the children
With a strong yet gentle word.
Praise the one who drove out demons
With a piercing two-edged sword.
Praise the one who brings cool water | 3. Praise the one true love incarnate:
Christ who suffered in our place.
Jesus died and rose for many
That we may know God by grace.
Let us sing for joy and gladness,
Seeing what our God has done.
Praise the one redeeming glory,
Praise the One who makes us one. |

SCRIPTURE - Amos 5:14-24 ; Matthew 10:34-39 / NRSV

¹⁴ Seek good and not evil, that you may live;
and so the Lord, the God of hosts, will be with you,
just as you have said.

¹⁵ Hate evil and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

¹⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the Lord:
In all the squares there shall be wailing;
and in all the streets they shall say, "Alas! alas!"
They shall call the farmers to mourning,
and those skilled in lamentation, to wailing;

¹⁷ in all the vineyards there shall be wailing,

for I will pass through the midst of you,
says the Lord.

¹⁸ Alas for you who desire the day of the Lord!

Why do you want the day of the Lord?

It is darkness, not light;

¹⁹ as if someone fled from a lion,
and was met by a bear;

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,
and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰ Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,
and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹ I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.

²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

³⁴ “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but
a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one’s foes will be members of one’s own household.

³⁷ Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or
daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and
follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their
life for my sake will find it.

This is the Word of God for the people of God. **Thanks be to God!**

LISTEN - Today's sermon was shared by our District Superintendent, the Rev. Staci Current. You can listen in via Lake Merritt UMC's Facebook page found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/LakeMerrittUMC> .

DS Staci invited to consider how we might, in the words of Dr. King, "hue a stone of hope out of a mountain of despair" during these challenging times. Grounded in the vision of John from Revelations (Revelations 21:1-7), Rev. Staci exhorted us to:

- "Wake up!"
- "Keep our eyes on God"
- "Write it down" or, in other words, get busy!

May we be inspired and transformed by the witness of Dr. King. May we be called and convicted by the hope and the possibility of the new heaven and new earth that are, even now, on their way.

PRAYERS of the PEOPLE – *Spend time in prayer. You are invited to use the prayers of Dr. King shared via radio broadcast between July and September, 1953, from Ebenezer Baptist Church.*

O thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being. We humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive, we love our friends and hate our enemies, we go the first mile but dare not travel the second, we forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against thee. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know thy will. Give us the courage to do thy will. Give us the devotion to love thy will. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Our Holy Father, we confess the weakness and sinfulness of our lives. We have often turned away from thee to seek our own desires. And often when we have done no evil, we have undertaken nothing of good, and so have been guilty of uselessness and

neglect. From this sin of idleness and indifference set us free. Lead us into fruitful effort, and deliver us from profitless lives. We ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Most Gracious and all wise God; Before whose face the generations rise and fall; Thou in whom we live, and move, and have our being. We thank thee for all of thy good and gracious gifts, for life and for health; for food and for raiment; for the beauties of nature and the love of human nature. We come before thee painfully aware of our inadequacies and shortcomings. We realize that we stand surrounded with the mountains of love and we deliberately dwell in the valley of hate. We stand amid the forces of truth and deliberately lie; We are forever offered the high road and yet we choose to travel the low road. For these sins O God forgive. Break the spell of that which blinds our minds. Purify our hearts that we may see thee. O God in these turbulent days when fear and doubt are mounting high give us broad visions, penetrating eyes, and power of endurance. Help us to work with renewed vigor for a warless world, for a better distribution of wealth, and for a brotherhood that transcends race or color. In the name and spirit of Jesus we pray. Amen.

Our loving Father, from Thy hand have come all the days of the past. To Thee we look for whatever good the future holds. We are not satisfied with the world as we have found it. It is too little the kingdom of God as yet. Grant us the privilege of a part in its regeneration. We are looking for a new earth in which dwells righteousness. It is our prayer that we may be children of light, the kind of people for whose coming and ministry the world is waiting. Amen.

SHARING OUR GIFTS— *How might you offer yourself and all that you have to God this week? How are you being invited to practice generosity? Spend a moment listening for God's direction.*

You are invited to contribute financially towards the purpose and ministry of TTUMC. We are a congregation committed to being conduits of God's healing in our neighborhood and beyond, and in so doing, impact the last and the least. You can contribute by mailing in a check, dropping off cash, or giving online via PayPal (visit www.twintowersumc.org). Take a moment and do that now. In addition to your regular giving, we also invite a 2nd mile giving towards Human Relations Day and the shared commitment to build the beloved community through the

amazing work of the Community Developers Program, the UM Voluntary Service, and the At-Risk Youth Rehabilitation Program. These are all supported by the UMC.

CLOSING HYMN - "I Have a Dream" W&S 3127

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHx2uWjECW4>

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| 1. "I have a dream," a man once said,
"Where all is perfect peace;
where men and women, black and white,
stand hand in hand, and all unite
in freedom and in love, in freedom and in
love. | of standing for the right,
of standing for the right. |
| 2. But in this world of bitter strife
the dream can often fade;
reality seems dark as night,
we catch but glimpses of the light
Christ sheds on humankind,
Christ sheds on humankind. | 4. So dream the dreams and sing the songs,
but never be content;
for thoughts and words don't ease the
pain:
unless there's action, all is vain;
faith proves itself in deeds,
faith proves itself in deeds. |
| 3. Fierce persecution, war, and hate
are raging everywhere;
God calls us now to pay the price
through struggles and through sacrifice | 5. Lord, give us vision, make us strong,
help us to do your will;
don't let us rest until we see
your love throughout humanity
uniting us in peace,
uniting us in peace. |

BENEDICTION -

Go in faith and hope that a new day is coming!

May God's vision for that day fill your heart and spirit.

May it ground you, inspire you, nourish you, and encourage you.

And may the love of God, the presence of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit go before you, today and always.

NOW GO AND PASS CHRIST'S PEACE!

PRAYER INVITES:

- For a peaceful transition in national leadership that opens doors for hope and justice.
- For **P. Bob**'s recovery from hip surgery!
- For the healing and wholeness of **Gary B., Doug M., Dale P., Rose, Ruth.**