



*Worship Celebration*  
**June 19th, 2022**

*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, 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!

**OPENING PRAYER** - [<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/>]

We do indeed come this day with joy, O God,  
The joy of being yours,  
The joy of being knitted into community,  
The joy of being called, gifted, and accompanied.  
May this joy spur our hearts to thirst for you,  
To draw near to you and each other, and to grow in you.  
We want to build up this world in love  
and be free-flowing conduits of your healing and wholeness.  
May this time of worship bless you as it blesses us. Amen.

**CENTERING HYMN** - “I Come with Joy”

Listen here: <https://youtu.be/rVGjrMgiH5U>

**SCRIPTURE READING** - Ephesians 4:1-7, 11-1, NRSV

I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: <sup>4</sup> there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

<sup>7</sup> But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift.

<sup>11</sup> He himself granted that some are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. <sup>14</sup> We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming; <sup>15</sup> but speaking the

truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,<sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

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

**LISTEN** - You can listen to today's sermon [here](#).

We recently ran into some old friends from Chinese Community UMC. When they caught sight of Milo and Imani, they remarked with surprise, "My goodness how they've grown!" The last time they saw the kiddos was, of course, when Milo and Imani were 4. And indeed, Milo and Imani have grown so much since then.

Kids are like that, aren't they? They grow and grow and grow! They grow physically, emotionally, in skills and capacities, in understanding....Really, in every imaginable way, kids grow. And a lot of times, their growth seems inevitable and even effortless, doesn't it? Growing is what they are programmed to do! And part of the beauty of being kids is recognizing how much there is to learn, how much possibility there is for growth. They expect it and we expect it. For kids, there's never an assumption that they've arrived, that they know it all, that they're at full capacity.

But then we reach "maturity" (whatever that means) and growth, it would seem, slows if not altogether comes to a standstill. We reach our "mature" height, for example, and stop growing taller when we're in our teens (even if the penchant to grow wider remains a constant possibility!) At a certain point, we cap our growth in skills and capacity as we focus and hone in on particular interests and commitments. And sometimes we stop growing in understanding - of ourselves, of each other, of the world - as we figure we know what we know, we don't know what we don't know, we are who we are, and life trucks along. That same expectation - internal and external - that we keep growing disappears, doesn't it?

But what if we are *called* to grow...our whole life long? What if we are to always keep our eyes open, our hearts open, our spirits yearning to stretch, strengthen, transform, and grow? What if we never really reach "maturity", especially as disciples, recognizing that we can always grow deeper and more skillful in key practices of our faith: in humility and gentleness, in patience, in bearing with one another in love, in speaking the truth in love, in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, in exercising the gifts God gives to us? What if, especially as followers of Jesus and lovers of God, we are expected to grow, as Paul put it in today's scripture reading, "in every way into him who is the head, into Christ". In fact, what if the call is to grow "until *all of us* come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity,

to the measure of the full stature of Christ”? That would mean, Friends, that we will always have - individually and collectively - a whole lot of growing to do, won't it? Let's pray.

You might be wondering, just about now, why I would choose this passage from Ephesians to preach on in my next to last sermon at Twin Towers. That's a good wondering! There are really two reasons: first, because my mom instilled in me a sense, a conviction really, that our faith is meant to be alive and dynamic, never static nor boring, and, if I'm honest, always leaning into the challenging. There's a saying that goes something like this: "God sees you, loves you, accepts you just the way you are. But by God's grace, God never leaves you just the way you are." My mother's life of deep faith taught me that, at root, our faith is meant to shape and change us, transform and grow us, to "perfect us in love" in the words of John Wesley. And because this has been one of my key convictions, it has also been my great hope and prayer from the moment that arrived and through each of the seasons we've traveled through these last four years, that you have grown, that I have grown, that we have grown, that by God's grace, we are different today - more like Jesus somehow...than we were when we met each other 4 years ago.

This passage from Ephesians grounds me in my sense, my conviction, my prayer and my hope. Here, Paul is essentially calling the church in Ephesus to grow, to grow up, in fact! We have no evidence he does so because the church was immature or lacking or problematic, but simply because Paul wanted to communicate unequivocally that our "Yes!" to Jesus means a shedding of the old, and a putting on of the new - "Now this I must affirm and insist on in the Lord...You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self...and to clothe yourself with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." We know that doing so is not a one shot deal. It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't even happen just because we assent to Jesus as Lord, as Savior. It requires intention, and prayer, practice, and commitment. And, frankly, it requires a community to grow with!

I shared in my Friday email that churches are, in one sense, "schools of love". They aren't always (too often, I confess, they are not) but, at our best, we can be. At our best, we can create safe space, inspiring space, accountable space for each other to experiment with, try on, test out, mess up, fail even, then try again, and keep practicing, keep growing in what it means to love - love like Jesus, love like God, love extravagantly, radically, tenderly, sacrificially, fiercely, and relentlessly, not just some, but every last one of all.

Here, in the community of faith, is where we are called to grow, and not just for the sake of growing, for the sake of "living a life worthy" of our calling, not just in gratitude and response to God for the gift of grace, but also because the body - Christ's body - depends on it. Our growing, Paul tells us, spurs the whole body of Christ to be built up and equipped, it contributes to the whole body working properly, to becoming - in our context - full on conduits of God's love and

healing. Put another way, if we're not growing, it's a problem...not just to us, but to the whole body. Our growth matters! We make a difference!

Over the last 4 years that I have been your pastor, I am certain that I have grown, not always as quickly or as much as I'd like, but I have grown. One significant area is in my understanding of, hope for, and trust in God's healing. I confess healing was more my mom's thing. I believed in it, appreciated it, but hadn't really grabbed hold of it - what it meant, what it might look like, how I might grow in it - for myself. I still have a long way to go in this arena but I have been stretched and deepened as we took hold of our sense of purpose: to be conduits of God's healing in this neighborhood and beyond. I have been profoundly changed by walking with our healing prayer team, praying with them, crying and laughing with them, and being challenged again and again and again to make available God's mighty healing to others. I have prayed with more people over these last four years - congregants, neighbors, strangers, people in distress, people overflowing with gratitude, community partners - than I have ever before. Why? Because God used our purpose to grow me! I also want to mention how these last four years have exercised my trust muscles in ways I never expected: through serving in a cross-cultural appointment in a community that is majority white, through the eruption and disruption of a global pandemic and how that's changed everything about how we do church and ministry, in being present to the rise of Black Lives Matter, Stop AAPI hate, and the fierce challenges to our shared democracy, down to everything that's happened in my own family. I have worked hard to trust God because of you and for you. We've come through a lot in 4 short years, Friends, and I am profoundly grateful to have been amongst you and had you by my side.

How about you? How have you been growing recently...or over the last 4 years? It would be a deep blessing to hear and share in your witness.

Thank you for all you've shared, Friends. And thanks be to God for all the ways you have grown, you are growing, and you will grow!

May the gift and the hope my mother gave me always be yours: that our faith is alive and dynamic, that we are - individually and collectively - called to grow and change, and that as we do, the wonder, beauty, and blessing of becoming more like Jesus, of being perfected in love would invigorate our collective body and bless the world.

*God, I offer humility and gratitude  
for being part of such a glorious gift,  
the Body of Christ, in all its riotous diversity.  
You have given us this vast, teeming universe,  
this beloved community, in which to embody your grace.*

*Give me confidence to trust my part in the whole,  
to honor my gifts, to give my offering,  
and to relish the strange harmony we make,  
even in our differences.*

*Give me courage to honor the ones some would exclude,  
to treasure their gifts, to tend the ligaments.*

*Help us, O Oneness, to be whole, to speak only truth, to grow continually,  
and to build each other up in love, and so attain the full stature of Christ. Amen.*

*[Rev. Steve Garnaas-Holmes]*

**PRAYERS of the PEOPLE** – *Spend time in prayer. What did you hear for yourself through today's scripture and reflection? Talk to God about it. Then lift up the joys and concerns that are in your heart. You might write them down, speak them aloud, or pray for them in silence.*

*We would be honored to pray with you and for you.*

*Please send a note via text, mail, or email or give a call to our Healing Prayer Team.*

### **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 (visit [www.twintowersumc.org](http://www.twintowersumc.org)). Take a moment and do that now.*

### **CLOSING HYMN - "Living Spirit, Holy Fire", W&S 3109**

*Listen here: <https://youtu.be/WUDdzSZ1kHo>*

### **BENEDICTION -**

May the love of God, so big and wide,  
The peace of Christ, so deep and ever-flowing,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit, so mighty and healing,  
go before you, with you, and behind you  
as you love and serve our God and God's world!

## NOW GO AND PASS CHRIST'S PEACE!

### Please make notes of this news and invitations:

- **A Note from Our “Bon Voyage” Team:**

The days have passed far too quickly after Pastor Emily announced that she and her family have decided to take a leave from her ministerial duties. While we will miss Pastor Emily, Steven, Papa Edgar Lin, Milo, and Imani, we all want the very best for the Chen-Lin Family.

To show our appreciation for Pastor's spiritual guidance, her community spirit, and never ending enthusiasm and encouragement, we want to hold a “bon voyage” Brunch Potluck. As we thank Pastor and her family, we also can pray for and bless their future life experiences.

Date: June 26th                      Time: After TTUMC Services, approximately 10:30 a.m.  
Place: TTUMC Social Hall/Gym\*              Type: Brunch Potluck

We hope to take a group photo after Services on June 26th.

\*Mask protocol: Masks should be worn unless eating.

Although Pastor has said no gifts, should you wish to donate a monetary love gift, please submit your donation no later than June 19th. Please make your check payable to TTUMC with the notation P-Emily. Should you wish to present Pastor with a gift, please bring it to the Brunch.

Should you have any suggestions, comments, or questions, please feel free to contact Cristina or Patty.

- **Welcoming Pastor Akesa Fakava** - We gratefully and excitedly welcome our new pastor on July 1st! P. Akesa brings a wealth of congregational experience as a 34-year member of Hayward First UMC as well as much leadership experience from a long and successful career with PG&E. We are blessed! Please join in our welcome on Sunday, July 3rd, for her first worship followed by a community potluck!
- **Worship Begins at 9:30 a.m.** - We have returned to our pre-pandemic worship time!
- **Showing Up for July 4th!** Our little town is well known for hosting the longest July 4th parade in the entire nation, a fun, family-oriented event. This year, we plan to join the parade with our sibling UMC's - Embrace, Bayside Cambodian, and Buena Vista. Please sign up to participate [here!](#)