

CELEBRATION OF GRADUATION & HOLY COMMUNION

with prayers for Aldersgate Day (May 24)

*(adapted from a service by Gary Best, Methodist Church historical consultant,
The New Room, Bristol, England UK)*

PRELUDE "Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast" UMH 616

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Grace Wallace, COSSO Coordinator

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples, COSSO Spiritual Formation Director

Today we celebrate graduation from COS with prayers for Aldersgate Day, sometimes called Wesley Day, is on May 24. It is as close to a saint's day as we get in the Methodist Church. It commemorates the spiritual experience of John Wesley, sometimes wrongly called "a conversion experience." But John was already a believing Christian. It was the nature of his faith (and also that of his brother Charles) which dramatically changed in May 1738. They realized for the first time just how much God loved them without trying to earn salvation. John inspired a religious revival through his faith and "methodical" approach to the spiritual disciplines, and Charles became a prolific hymnwriter.

To mark the first anniversary of Aldersgate and their spiritual experiences, Charles wrote "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" which is found in most hymn books today. He went on to write over 6,000 hymns often inspired by John's sermons. Through their enduring faith, Methodism has spread around the globe, with over 80 million Methodists worldwide.

Today we honor our graduates in the spirit of our rich Methodist tradition, and we begin by singing perhaps the most famous and best loved of Charles Wesley's hymns, "Love Divine."

HYMN "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

UMH 384

THE COLLECT

Loving God,
by whose grace John and Charles Wesley
received both the assurance of faith
and power to proclaim your love;
increase among us
the same gifts of your Spirit
that in both word and deed
we may share with all
the good news of salvation
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

ALDERSGATE DAY

On May 24, 1738 John Wesley attended a religious society meeting at the chapel on Aldersgate Street in London, and it is thought that Charles' hymn, "And Can It Be," was either read or sung. John later wrote in his journal of his deep spiritual experience at that service:

About a quarter before nine, while the preacher was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

"And Can It Be" is a deeply personal and powerful account of how we can rely entirely on God's amazing love.

HYMN "And Can It Be That I Should Gain" **UMH 363**

SCRIPTURE John 21:15-19 Read by Pastor Ann Birchmeier, COS 521 student

SERMON "Love... and Strategy" **Rev. Dr. Mark A. Powell**
Dr. Mark Allan Powell received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He is retired Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

HYMN "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" **UMH 57**

CELEBRATION OF GRADUATION

GREETING COSSO Director, Rev Dr Joon-Sik Park

RESPONSIVE READING

Director: Beloved in Christ, the Church is the Body of Christ, and we are God's holy people, called by name and guided by the Holy Spirit.

All: We are received into the Church at baptism, and called to proclaim the mighty acts of God in the name of Jesus Christ, to serve him in the Church and the world.

Director: God sent us a Savior and called the apostles to witness to his words and deeds. Through him, the Church was formed. Now God has called you into ministry with The United Methodist Church.

All: We honor this tradition and celebrate our call to ministry, as servants of the Church, as pastors, preachers, teachers, and bearers of God's word.

Director: In all things, God's grace is sufficient to strengthen you, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

All: By the same Spirit, God has called each of us. We stand with joy to honor these graduates, and celebrate their completion of the Course of Study.

Director: May God increase in you the gifts of grace for your life and ministry.

PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES

Director: Who is presented for graduation from the Course of Study?

COS Coordinator: I present these candidates for graduation:

Mark Armstrong	(West Ohio Conference)
Wendy Brown	(East Ohio Conference)
John Mansur	(Indiana Conference)
Christi Murray	(Indiana Conference)
Matt West	(Michigan Conference)

BLESSING & ANOINTING *(each candidate receives a blessing)*

Director: In the name of Almighty God, our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, we celebrate your graduation from the Course of Study. We commend you to your ministry as a Local Pastor in The United Methodist Church and pledge our continued prayers.

Spiritual Director: May the Holy Spirit strengthen you and guide you, that in all things you may do God's will in service to the church, in the name of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

PRAYER

(we offer our virtual blessing as a sign of our connection in the body of Christ)

COS Coordinator: Our congratulations and prayers go with you all. Your certificates will be sent to you. Let us pray together:

Gracious God, we thank you for calling faithful servants to be Local Pastors in your Church. We humbly place these graduates in your care. Give them courage, patience, and vision, and bless them with caring communities; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Director: And now, remember your call. Preach the Good News. Shepherd the flock of Christ. And in all things, give God the glory, now and always.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, I declare that you have graduated from the Course of Study.

Please unmute to cheer as we congratulate our graduates.

GRADUATION SONG

“Here I Am, Lord”

UMH 593

THE LORD'S SUPPER

(adapted from Holy Communion for The Covenant Service in The Methodist Worship Book, Peterborough, England: Methodist Publishing House, 1999, p 291)

The Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

O God, creator of all goodness,
you have made us in your own image.
You have given us life and reason,
and love for one another,
setting in our hearts a hunger for you.

In the fullness of time you came to us in love and mercy
in Jesus Christ, your living Word, full of grace and truth.
Through him you sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your people,
gathered together in every time and place to glorify your holy name.
With them and all the company of heaven
we join in the unending hymn of praise:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night in which he was betrayed,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,

(lift bread) "Take this and eat it. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it to them, saying,
(lift cup) "Drink from this all of you. This is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Holy God, pour out your Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
Grant that we, who share in this holy sacrament,
may be united by your Spirit with all those who have done your will,
and bring us into the light of your presence and the joy of your kingdom.

**Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the power of the Holy Spirit,
we worship you in songs of everlasting praise.
Blessing and honor and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

Jesus is the bread of life, eat and never hunger. *(all break bread and eat)*
Drink from his cup and never thirst. *(all drink from cup)*

Prayer after Communion

**Faithful God, who blessed your servants
John and Charles Wesley,
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit;
by the same Spirit,
open our hearts to the gifts of your grace
that we may live to your praise and glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

SENDING FORTH & BLESSING

This statement is commonly referred to as "John Wesley's Rule" or "Rule of Life," and is frequently attributed to Wesley. However, there is no evidence that Wesley ever wrote the rule. Nevertheless, it is in full agreement with Wesley's teachings and writings. The statement calls us to holy living and acts of justice and mercy. So let us go forth with these words:

***Do all the good you can,
by all the means you can,
in all the ways you can,
in all the places you can,
at all the times you can,
to all the people you can,
as long as ever you can.***

The God of hope

fill you with all joy and peace,
and the blessing of Almighty God,
the Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
remain with you now and always. **Amen.**
Go in the peace of Christ.
Amen. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “Forth in Your Name, Lord I Go”

UMH 438

Sources:

For a much longer and informative service, with different readers and Wesley hymns, which can be adapted to fit your setting, and for a communion order, please see:

<https://www.newroombristol.org.uk> (by Gary Best, The New Room, Bristol, England)

An Order of Communion Wesley Day A4 (by Norman Wallwork)

For a comprehensive list of Charles Wesley's hymns, please see:

https://hymnary.org/person/Wesley_Charles

For notes on "John Wesley's Rule," see:

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/rule-of-life>, UMC Discipleship Ministries

Other sources:

The Methodist Worship Book, (Peterborough, England: Methodist Publishing House, 1999).

The UMC Worship Book.