

October 10, 2021 + 10:30 A.M.
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

We Join in Worship

PRELUDE *He's Always Been Faithful*

Chisholm and Runyan/arr. Jan Sanborn

INTROIT

***THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

Christ's peace is with us always, no matter where we may be. And so, Christ's peace is with each and every one of us in this moment. Let us take it in. Let us really feel it. If able, please stand where you are, look around, and make signs of Christ's peace to each other. If you are at home, give somebody a call after the service to share Christ's peace!

*** CALL TO WORSHIP** (Adapted from *Psalms* 26)

Leader: Vindicate us, O LORD, for we have walked in integrity, and we have trusted in the LORD without wavering.

ALL: Prove us, O LORD, and try us; test our hearts and minds. For your steadfast love is before our eyes, and we walk in faithfulness to you.

Leader: We do not sit with the worthless, nor do we consort with hypocrites; we hate the company of evildoers and will not sit with the wicked.

ALL: We wash our hands in innocence and go around your altar, O LORD, singing aloud a song of thanksgiving and telling all your wondrous deeds.

Leader: O LORD, we love the house in which you dwell and the place where your glory abides.

ALL: We walk in our integrity; redeem us and be gracious to us. Our feet stand on level ground; in the great congregation we will bless the LORD.

***OPENING HYMN (Gentle singing):** "Blest Be the Tie That Binds" (438)

INVITATION TO CONFESSION:

Leader: The author of *Hebrews* writes, "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." Together, let us confess how we have not been listening to the Son, who continues to speak to us.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (unison)

O God, we join our hearts and voices in repentance. Help us to repair what we have broken with our transgressions and so to reconcile with each other and with you. We confess that we have not listened to what your Son said to us in the scriptures nor to what your Son continues to say to us today. Your Son tells us to sell all that we own and to give the money to the poor. Instead, we buy more and more for ourselves. Your Son tells us to focus on treasure in heaven. Instead, we focus our lives upon building up treasure in this life. Your Son tells us to follow him. Instead, we follow false prophets and ideologues. Forgive us not only for not listening, but for doing the opposite of what your Son commands. Help us to open up our hearts and ears. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

KYRIE (Gentle singing)

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Leader: Friends, hear the good news! Jesus made purification for our sin, and when he did he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He became superior to the angels.

ALL: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

GLORIA PATRI (Gentle Singing)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

STATEMENT OF FAITH: (adapted from *The Second Helvetic Confession*)

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ, in his same flesh, ascended above all visible heavens into the highest heaven, that is, the dwelling-place of God and the blessed ones, at the right hand of God the Father. Although it signifies an equal participation in glory and majesty, it is also taken to be a certain place about which the Lord, speaking in the Gospel, says: "I go to prepare a place for you." The apostle Peter also says: "Heaven must receive Christ until the time of restoring all things." And from heaven the same Christ will return.

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| <h2>We Hear God's Word</h2> |
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PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION: (Unison)

God, source of all light, by your Word, you give light to the soul. Pour out on us the spirit of wisdom and understanding, that our hearts and minds may be opened to know your truth and your way. Amen.

HEBREW BIBLE LESSON: *Job 1:1-12*

EPISTLE LESSON: *Hebrews 1:1-4*

GOSPEL LESSON: *Mark 10:17-25*

SERMON: Do You *Still* Persist in Your Integrity?

ANTHEM *His Eye Is on the Sparrow* Martin/Gabriel

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CHORAL RESPONSE

OFFERING INVITATION:

Leader: Jesus told the rich man to sell all that he had and to give the money to the poor. Let us give our tithes and offerings so that we can continue our mission of eradicating systemic poverty. If you are here in person today and have not yet done so, please place your offering in the plate as you leave. If you are here virtually today, please mail in your checks or use our online giving option. Now let us take a moment to reflect on stewardship as we hear the offertory.

***DOXOLOGY (Gentle singing)**

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God, above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: (Unison)

O God, we dedicate these gifts to you, trusting in your guidance and Wisdom to use them according to your purpose. Help us to listen for your voice so that we may always discern how best to steward your abundance. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN (Gentle Singing):** “O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee” (357)

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| We Go Into the World |
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BENEDICTION

CHORAL BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE *I Will Keep My Eyes On You*

Berry

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| Life of the Church |
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- **YOUTH CONNECTIONS:** We are meeting immediately following worship until 1:00 PM. If you are in middle school or high school, join us for food, fellowship, and fun!
- **WORSHIP AND MUSIC MINISTRY MEETING:** Immediately following worship today.
- **OUTDOOR WORSHIP IN OUR GARDEN** will take place next Sunday, October 17, if weather permits. Be sure to bring your lawn chairs and warm clothes in case it is a bit chilly! Unless November is unseasonably warm, this will likely be our final outdoor worship for the year.
- **ADULT CONNECTIONS CLASS SUNDAY MORNINGS AT 9AM.** We are doing the “Testimony: Vocabulary of Faith” study from the Presbyterian Outlook. This study will help us remember, reclaim, and rearticulate what we believe about who God is and who we are so the patterns of our lives embody the liberating love and grace of Jesus Christ. There are no books required, so just show up and enjoy the short videos and participate in the discussions.
- **BRING YOUR OWN BIBLE** Our weekly virtual Bible study is Wednesdays from 7:00-8:00 PM on Zoom. Watch your email for a link. All are welcome! We start with a new passage each week, so there is no way to fall behind!
- **PRAYGROUND** If you need extra space for a wheelchair or walker or if you have young children with you, please feel free to make use of the extra space we have across the aisle from the sound booth!

Opportunities to serve as the HEART, HANDS, and FEET of Jesus Christ:

- **BLESSING BOX** Our Blessing Box has gained even more importance in this pandemic. Economic impacts are dire, and the most vulnerable in our midst are the most harmed. Please continue to place items in the Blessing Box and take items if you are a person in need! Items most commonly donated: Canned goods with pull tabs, socks, toilet paper, non-perishable foods, small snacks, toiletries, baby wipes and diapers. Please check expiration dates on food items before donating them.
- **GOT SNEAKERS FUNDRAISER** We are collecting pairs of gently worn, used and new sneakers to help earn money for our projects and programs here at FPCH and help the environment at the same time! Can we count on you? Blue bins for the shoes will be located in the sanctuary narthex, inside door D by the office, and outside the church building by door D. *Please note that we can only use sneakers/tennis shoes!*

Prayer List

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| Anthony | Brandon Chong |
| Avery | U. Chong |
| Mike Bennett | Rodney |
| Family of Barbara Nelson | Calvin Scott |
| George Nelson | Steve & Melinda |
| Brady Vanes | Gary Studer |
| Sonny Buono | Richard Terpstra |
| Family of Ina Chappell | Laura Buono Domsic |
| Danielle | Kevin Windstrup |
| Dave | Ruth Dekker |
| George Griner | Rick Parker |
| Guy Hendricks | Barbara Morton |
| Bill and Anettia Holmes | Cookie C |
| Daniel Litwicki | Jim and Katie Lively |
| Frank | Carol Osgerby |
| David Markley | Elwyn Studer |
| David Kingen | Jackie (Casianos' Neighbor) |
| Garry Sknerski | Linda Kubiak |
| Carmelo | Robert Lestina |
| Diana and Ray Mendoza | Laura Wisner |
| Jamie Orem and Janet Orem | Cary Pearson |
| Glenda Munger | Bob Dignam |
| Linda | Carol Finley |
| Claudia Szymaszczak | Clester Goins |
| Jessica | Huilin |
| Jill and John Mullen | Holly Letnich |
| Jeanne Nestor | Jan Oprea |
| Lester Schmock | Lily Renfro |
| Cindy Waltz and Sister | Marla and Jerry Renfro |
| Andrew Bobalik | |

Job 1:1-12

¹ There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job. That man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil. ² There were born to him seven sons and three daughters. ³ He had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred donkeys, and very many servants; so that this man was the greatest of all the people of the east. ⁴ His sons used to go and hold feasts in one another's houses in turn; and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. ⁵ And when the feast days had run their course, Job would send and sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning and offer burnt offerings according to the number of them all; for Job said, "It may be that my children have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." This is what Job always did.

⁶ One day the heavenly beings came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. ⁷ The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?" Satan answered the LORD, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." ⁸ The LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil." ⁹ Then Satan answered the LORD, "Does Job fear God for nothing? ¹⁰ Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. ¹¹ But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." ¹² The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!" So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Hebrews 1:1-4

¹ Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. ³ He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴ having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs.

Mark 10:17-25

¹⁷ As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" ¹⁸ Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. ¹⁹ You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" ²⁰ He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." ²¹ Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²² When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³ Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" ²⁴ And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Do You *Still* Persist in Your Integrity?

Job 1:1-12; Psalm 26; Hebrews 1:1-4; Mark 10:17-25

“There was once a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.” So begins one of the strangest, most disconcerting, and best known stories of our scriptures—the story of a wealthy family man who would lose all of his possessions, his children, and his health and suffer unimaginably because he was made both the player and the prize in a contest between God and the satan. Because of the extraordinary nature of this tale, it is worth taking a good look at the frame story. The way that it is presented is as follows. YHWH, the LORD, is holding court of some sort among the heavenly beings, sometimes referred to by biblical scholars as the divine council. It is unclear who exactly is part of that council. Perhaps it is the persons of the Trinity. Perhaps it is the angels. Perhaps it is the other regional deities who would have been part of the context of the Near East at that time. In truth, we don’t know. It is one of those great mysteries of our scriptures. According to the story, into this council walks the satan—now I say “the satan” instead of capital S “Satan” as a name because it is actually a Hebrew word meaning “the accuser.” In short, it is a legal term for the courts referring to the prosecutor. Apparently in the narrative of this divine council, the satan is a well known character, and his role is to test the loyalty and devotion of YHWH, the LORD’s, followers.

Now, let me pause for a moment so that we can catch our breath and acknowledge that there is already a lot in this story that might not sit well with our usual way of understanding God. Other divine beings? The satan as a well known character who can just walk right in and talk with God? God actively putting people through trials and tests and extreme suffering to prove their loyalty and devotion? All of that might sound very, very weird to our ears and hearts. But I invite you to enter into the story as it is presented to us, for it is presented to us in our Bible for a reason. As you enter into the story, I also invite you to consider the truth that as we get to know Job over the next few weeks we will see that he, also, had great difficulty understanding the nature of God in all of this, and so perhaps it is a good thing for us also to wrestle a bit with the mysteries as we journey through this!

Let’s get back to it. When the satan appears in YHWH’s court, YHWH presents Job as the ideal subject to prove the loyalty and devotion of the people, saying, “There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.” The accuser rises to the challenge and begs the question, what would happen if instead of having everything in terms of worldly wealth, power, and security, Job had everything and everyone taken away from him. Would he still be a blameless and upright man loyal to God, or would he curse God? And so, YHWH the LORD said to the satan, “Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!” So the prosecutor went out from the presence of the Lord. The story continues:

One day when his sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in the eldest brother’s house, a messenger came to Job and said, “The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were feeding beside them, and the Sabeans fell on them and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another came and said, “The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and consumed them; I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another came and said, “The Chaldeans formed three columns, made a raid on the camels and carried them off, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; I alone have escaped to tell you.” While he was still speaking, another came and said, “Your sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother’s house, and suddenly a great wind came across the desert, struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; I alone have escaped to tell you.” Then Job arose, tore his robe, shaved his head, and fell on the ground and worshiped. He said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; the LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.” In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing.—Job 1:13-22

Remember the satan’s claim that Job would curse God if everything and everyone were taken away from him? Well he did the exact opposite. In the midst of what had to have been profound grief, he dug deep within himself and found perspective. He acknowledged that like all human beings he was born with nothing but his naked body, and like all human beings he would go out of the world with nothing but his naked body. Further,

what God gave, God had every right to take back. And then he did the most unexpected thing of all. He blessed the name of YHWH the LORD. Not only did he *not* curse God; he actively *blessed* God. Have you ever known somebody with that type of unimaginable grace and Wisdom even in the midst of incredible loss? That Wisdom that says that God is good all the time, even the worst of times? I have encountered that inspiring mindset most commonly among those who have the least in this world—the least power, the least money, the least reason to bless God according to the world’s perspective. And still they say, God is good! They still trust and believe and have faith because those things are not rooted in earthly prosperity. Now, *that* is integrity.

One day the divine council of heavenly beings gathered once again in the court of YHWH, the LORD. And once again the satan appeared. And once again YHWH, the LORD, said “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.” But this time there was more: “He still persists in his integrity, although you incited me against him, to destroy him for no reason.”

Then the accuser answered the LORD, “Skin for skin! All that people have they will give to save their lives. But stretch out your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face.” The LORD said to the satan, “Very well, he is in your power; only spare his life.” So the satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and inflicted loathsome sores on Job from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. Job took a potsherd with which to scrape himself, and sat among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, “Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God, and die.”

“Curse God, and die.” The words of the accuser now coming out of the mouth of Job’s wife, the one person in his family who is still alive and with him. Now, it would be easy to view Job’s wife here and to judge her harshly. Indeed, she is often viewed as a temptress using the same devastating patriarchal lens through which Eve is traditionally viewed. She is seen as tempting Job to take the easy way out, to simply give up and end it all. Let the satan win this contest with God so that it can all be over. Say the magic words. Curse God. Indeed Job himself judges his wife harshly, calling her a foolish woman. I wonder if we do a great disservice to her, though, as we so often do when it comes to the women of the Bible. After all, it wasn’t just Job who lost everything and everyone. Those would have been *her* children as well. She must have been grieving horribly. And on top of that she now had to sit there day after day and see her husband suffering in the worst of ways, with sores so painful and itchy that he was using a jagged piece of broken pottery to scrape his skin for relief. And, as is so often the case, I imagine that his wife was serving as his caregiver in the midst of all that suffering, essentially carrying the weight of the world upon her shoulders. Perhaps her words, so harshly judged, were a desperate cry for mercy. But I digress.

Job, of course, does not curse God. If you keep reading, you will find that he curses the day of his birth in the bitterest of terms:

*Let the day perish in which I was born,
and the night that said,
‘A man-child is conceived.’
Let that day be darkness!
May God above not seek it,
or light shine on it.
Let gloom and deep darkness claim it.
Let clouds settle upon it;
let the blackness of the day terrify it.
That night—let thick darkness seize it!
let it not rejoice among the days of the year;*

*let it not come into the number of the months.
Yes, let that night be barren;
let no joyful cry be heard in it.
Let those curse it who curse the Sea,
those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan.
Let the stars of its dawn be dark;
let it hope for light, but have none;
may it not see the eyelids of the morning—
because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb,
and hide trouble from my eyes.*

My goodness, now that is a desperate, powerful curse! Job certainly has the cursing muscle, and it is strong! But he refuses to curse God. And Job is no stranger to complaining about his misery. Indeed, he has some of the most stunningly executed complaints in all of the scriptures—complaints about his current suffering state and more existential complaints about the state of the world. I know we have talked before about the healing power of the lament, of speaking the truth of our suffering to God without holding back. Well, I recommend that you turn to Job if you can't find the right words. He says things like:

*I loathe my life;
I will give free utterance to my complaint;
I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.*

And

*God gives me up to the ungodly,
and casts me into the hands of the wicked.
I was at ease, and he broke me in two;
he seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces;
he set me up as his target;
his archers surround me.
He slashes open my kidneys, and shows no mercy;
he pours out my gall on the ground.
He bursts upon me again and again;
he rushes at me like a warrior.*

And yet, even with such exquisite complaining at his disposal, Job does not curse God in order to end his awful ordeal.

Now, Job's story is often interpreted as a morality tale teaching the importance of patience and endurance. To this day we say things like, "She must have the patience of Job!" when we see somebody who has to put with a lot but keeps going. And yes, Job certainly shows remarkable patience and endurance. I think the heart of the story is something else, though. I think, at heart, it is a story of integrity. When God describes him to the satan the second time, God points out that Job still persists in his integrity. When Job's wife begs him to end this awful suffering, she asks him, "Do you still persist in your integrity?" And much later on, as Job is in the midst of his bitter complaints, he says, "Until I die I will not put away my integrity from me!"

Integrity. Wholeness, soundness, internal consistency. Integrity. Moral uprightness and ethical constancy. Integrity. Living according to one's values when the rubber hits the road. Integrity. Authenticity to oneself. Integrity is perhaps the most admirable characteristic of being that there is. It is the goal for which we

should all strive. It means actually living out what we claim to believe. And this is the true wonder of Job. With the full fury of the *satan* thrown at him, with God's participation in this drama giving him good reason to question and complain and feel every type of anger and disappointment and betrayal and shock, with his spirit devastated by grief, with his body broken by painful sores, Job persisted in his *integrity*. He refused to curse God because of his integrity. He believed in God, and he believed that God is good. And so, he stayed true to himself. And so, he stayed true to his God. And so, he blessed his God. And so, he stood up to the adversary, the accuser, the *satan*, and did not blink. Oh he certainly suffered and he certainly cursed the day he was born and he certainly complained bitterly, but he persisted in his integrity. Yes, this is the lesson of the story of Job. We must strive for and persist in our integrity.

Our gospel reading today gives us a fitting contrast to Job, an example of what not to do. In the time of Jesus there was another man who, like Job, had all that the world could offer in terms of prosperity, privilege, and power. He wanted to inherit eternal life and so approached Jesus to find out how. In many ways he lived morally. He followed the ten commandments. But when he approached Jesus to find out what else he must do, Jesus told him that he must actually live so that his life embodied his values. He must put his money where his mouth is. He must have *integrity*. Quite concretely, he must sell all of his possessions and give the money to the poor and *then* follow Jesus. And the rich man walked away.

Friends, we are called to persist in our integrity, even when that means doing hard things. We are called to embody our faith in God by living according to the values of the Kingdom and by trusting in God's goodness even in the midst of great suffering. Of course we can acknowledge our pain. Of course we can curse the days of our births. Of course we can complain bitterly! But we must not ever give up on God. We must never curse God. In my many travels I have often found myself being welcomed into communities of people who are suffering in ways that most of us here could never imagine—with desperate resource poverty, desperate hunger, and desperate sickness. And every single time I find myself in one of these communities, I hear a consistent refrain. I'm sure you've heard it before as well! "God is good all the time! And all the time, God is good!" Now *that* is integrity. Amen.

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

438

DENNIS SM

Johann Georg Nägeli (1773-1836)
Arr. Lowell Mason, 1845

John Fawcett, 1782

1. Blest be the tie that binds Our hearts in Chris-tian love:
2. Be - fore our *Fa - ther's throne We pour our ar - dent prayers;
3. We share our mu - tual woes, Our mu - tual bur - dens bear,
4. From sor - row, toil, and pain, And sin we shall be free;

The fel - low - ship of kin - dred minds Is like to that a - bove.
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one, Our com-forts and our cares.
And of - ten for each oth - er flows The sym - pa - thiz-ing tear.
And per - fect love and friend-ship reign Through all e - ter - ni - ty.

*Or "Maker's."

O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee

357

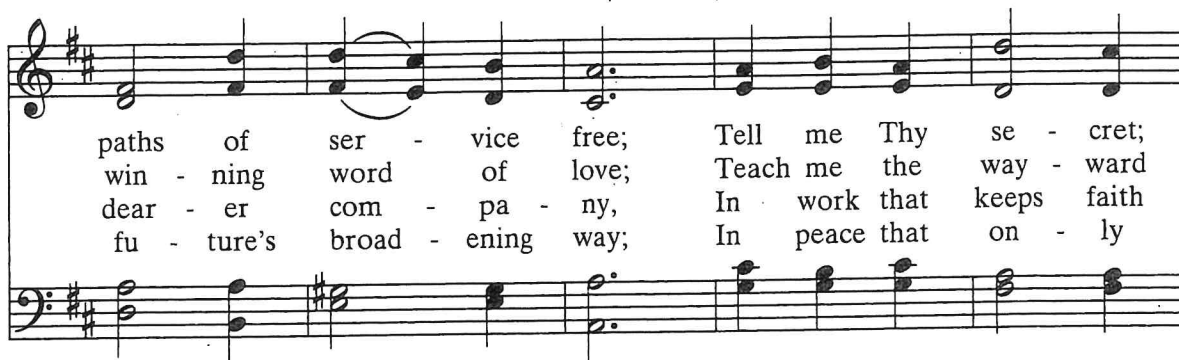
Washington Gladden, 1879

MARYTON LM

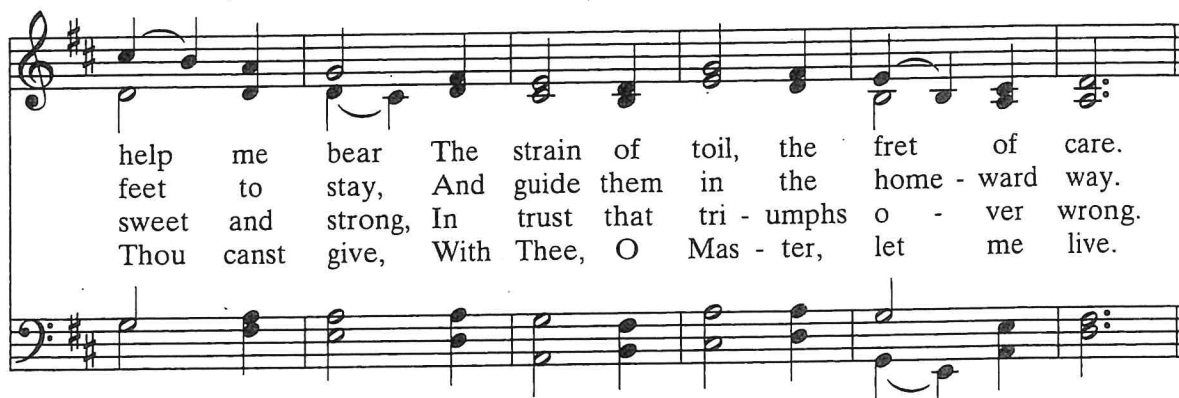
Henry Percy Smith, 1874



1. O Mas - ter, let me walk with Thee In low - ly
 2. Help me the slow of heart to move By some clear,
 3. Teach me Thy pa - tience; still with Thee In clos - er,
 4. In hope that sends a shin - ing ray Far down the



paths of ser - vice free; Tell me Thy 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.
 Thou canst give, With Thee, O Mas - ter, let me live.