



Note: these scripts were created for the Gather at the River conference. Permission is given to utilize the liturgical elements with the citation: "www.worshipdesignstudio.com - Dr. Marcia McFee. Citations for all services can be found at the end of this document. Please obtain permissions for music via the appropriate copyright holders.

“Time to Come and See”

Thursday Opening Worship
Leader Script

As we gather at the river to feel the energy and celebration of a people on the move, we embody prophetic words, seeing the life-giving water that feeds the tree of life. Like a river that changes its banks over time, the river of justice has moved the boundaries, changed the banks of this world and this church.

Gathering Music & Welcome to Conference

“Welcome” (W&S)

[welcome to conference by leadership and story of Gene Leggett]

“As I Went Down to the River to Pray/Let the River Run”

Bible Study
Grace Imathiu

Invitation
“Gather At the River, Children” (new theme song)

[synopsis of the day]

Gather at the river, children,
time to come and see
justice and community growing,
all God's people free.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

[open ourselves in these days to the touch of Jesus through the living water of our stories]

Listen to the stories, children,
of God's love and light,
as the touch of Jesus offers
blessing and new sight.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

*[by the time we leave, we'll be refreshed by these waters and ready to go and share,
can we hear the call of God to this task?]*

Go and share the good news, children,
love is meant for all.
Reconciliation is coming –
can you hear the call?
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

Litany

[music continues under]

Look around you, people!
A body gathered for good!
What can we say at such a moment?!
What we say is "Blessed!"
Look inside you, people!
Lives that are transformed again and again by God's grace.
What can we say at such a gift?
What we say is "Blessed!"

Look outward beyond these walls, people!
A world that cries for hope and healing.
What can we say at such a task?
What we say is “Blessed to be a blessing!”

Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Alleluia!
Amen!
Amen!

Gather at the river, children,
time to come and see
justice and community growing,
all God’s people free.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

Prayer
[extemporaneous]

Scripture
Revelation 22: 1-5

[two dramatists - John (a woman) and a very flamboyant Angel. They act this out.]

John: Then the Angel showed me the Water-of-Life River, crystal bright. It flowed from the Throne of God and the Lamb, right down the middle of the street.

[Angel comes swooping in with blue cloth down the center aisle]

The Tree of Life was planted on each side of the River, producing twelve kinds of fruit, a ripe fruit each month. *[12 people come to stand by the River and make two trees]*

The leaves of the Tree are for healing the nations. Never again will anything be cursed. *[The 12 go to people on ends of pews in center aisle and lay hands on in blessing gesture]*

The Throne of God and of the Lamb is at the center. The servants will offer God service—worshiping, they’ll look on God’s face, their foreheads mirroring God. *[The 12 go to the altar]*

[Candle comes in] Never again will there be any night. No one will need lamplight or sunlight. The shining of God, the Sovereign, is all the light anyone needs. And they will rule with God age after age after age.

*[soloist] Shall we gather, at the river
at the river of God's grace.
On the shoreline, at the river
Can you hear the voice of God?*

The Angel said to me,

Angel: “These are dependable and accurate words, every one. The God and Sovereign of the spirits of the prophets sent an Angel [me!] to show the servants what must take place, and soon. And tell them, ‘Yes, I’m on my way!’ Blessed be the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

John: I, John, saw all these things with my own eyes, heard them with my ears. Immediately when I heard and saw, I fell on my face to worship at the feet of the Angel who laid it all out before me. *[Does this...]*

The Angel objected,

Angel: “No you don’t! I’m a servant just like you and your companions, the prophets, *[indicates the congregation]* and all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!”

[congregation]
*Shall we gather, at the river
at the river of God's grace.
On the shoreline, at the river
Can you hear the voice of God?*

John: The Angel continued,

Angel: “Don’t seal the words of the prophecy of this book; don’t put it away on the shelf. Time is just about up. Let evildoers do their worst and the dirty-minded go all out in pollution, but let the righteous maintain a straight.... ahem... *forward* course and the holy continue on in holiness.”

“Yes, I’m on my way! I’ll be there soon! I’m bringing my payroll with me. I’ll pay all people in full for their life’s work. I’m A to Z, the First and the Final, Beginning and Conclusion!

*[soloist] Calling “come and see, come and see,
follow me to the heart of eternity
where the reign of God is unending.”*

Angel: “I, Jesus, sent my Angel to testify to these things for the churches. I’m the Root and Branch of David, the Bright Morning Star.”

John: “Come!” say the Spirit and the Betrothed.

Whoever hears, echo me, "Come!" **Come!**
Is anyone thirsty? echo me, "Come!" **Come!**
All who will, come and drink, echo me, "Come! **Come!**
Drink freely of the Water of Life!

*[congregation] Calling "come and see, come and see,
follow me to the heart of eternity
where the reign of God is unending."*

The Word Proclaimed
Peter Storey

We Sing and Pray Our Response
"Mambo Sawa"
("Things already better when God is on our side")

continue with Prayers of the People, weaving "Mambo Sawa"

Invitation to the Table

Grace - All are invited to Christ's table
who desire to know the freedom that is truly ours in God
and who earnestly desire to be the Tree of Life for the healing of all,
seeking to live in peace with one another.

Confession and Assurance

Sometimes it is hard to trust the love and abundance of God's grace.
And so we hold back, hanging on tightly to the things we think will save us.

In this moment, I invite you to clench your fists
and then slowly open them as I speak these words:

Holy, forgiving God, we let go of all that keeps us afraid.
We let go of all that keeps us separated from each other.
We let go of all that holds us back from the waters of life you have already given us
for a future in which all things are possible.

Open us, O God.

We know that in this opening is your forgiveness.

We know that in this opening is our freedom.

Amen.

[sung by soloist]
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God

The Peace

As those who have said, "yes" to the invitation to "come to the waters,"
offer one another signs of God's peace!

[sung by congregation and vocalists in 4-parts]
**I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God**
[repeat]

Presider (*Matthew Berryman*): Friends, God is ever present with you!

Liturgist (*Marcia McFee*): And the people say, "And also with you!"

People: "And also with you!"

Liturgist: Listen! (*pause*) The body breathes in together... and out. As close as breath, the Holy is present with us. (*pause*) So we lift up our hearts. And the family says, "We lift them up to God."

People: "We lift them up to God!"

Presider: Let us give thanks to the Holy Living One because it is the right thing to do, not only now, but always, for "always" is when God is with us.

Liturgist: I invite you to open both palms upward in the sign language for "give."

Presider: (*as the motion is done*) ... We thank you, Creator God, that you formed us in your image.

Liturgist: Now place your hands together in the sign meaning "to be with."

Presider: (*as the motion is done*)... We thank you, Sustainer God, that you are here with us.

Liturgist: Bring your hands close to your face, in the sign for "prayer." Become aware of your breath on your hands... (*pause*)

Presider: (*as the motion is done*)... We thank you God for breathing into us the breath of life. Even when we have turned away, you have remained with us, close as breath. When we have been frightened, hesitant, still you are patient. You have time and again reached out your hand to free us, for your promise is steadfast.

Liturgist:

And so, we open our eyes, our hands and our hearts to your will for us as told to us through your prophets. We join our voices together praising you along with all who do, have ever done so and ever will do so, repeating:

Holy, Holy, Holy God! (the people repeat)
Everywhere we see your Glory! (repeat)
Hosanna in the highest! (repeat)
... and the widest... (repeat)
... and the deepest... (repeat)
... core of our being. (repeat, pause)

Presider:

[piano begins to underscore softly, slowly]

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of our God. Blessed is your Son who came to preach the good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people!

Liturgist:

Listen people! *(pause)*

The Lord is with you.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry...

and sat down at the table and ate with especially those others considered "unworthy" *(pause)*.

Let us remind ourselves by saying "The Lord is present with all."

People: "The Lord is present with all."

[sung]

**I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God**

[verse 1 sung by Presider/Liturgist in harmony]

This is the bread given of the earth,
receive of the fields, it will set you free,
this bread of life, I will take up and I will call on the name of God!

**I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God**

[verse 1 sung by Presider/Liturgist in harmony]

This is the cup given of the earth,
receive of the vine, it will set you free,
this cup of freedom, I will take up and I will call on the name of God!

**I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God**

Liturgist:

Let us be a community of messengers, proclaiming and reminding each other and creation that: "**Christ has died (repeat), Christ is risen (repeat), Christ will come again (repeat).**" I invite you to raise your hands in the ancient Christian posture of prayer.

Presider:

[piano underscores]

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine. Let them be for us the body and blood of Christ so that we may be for the world the body of Christ, liberated by his witness, passion and life. Be with us, Holy Spirit, fill us so you can move through us.

Liturgist:

I invite you to make a point of connection with those around you by laying a hand on a shoulder, holding hands, whatever is most comfortable for you.

[piano builds, getting ready for last verse...]

Presider:

By your spirit we are one with Christ, the host of this table, and one with each other. Let this joy be seen in us outside of this place. It is with great thanks that all God's people say, "**Amen!**"

[sung as servers come and get the elements]

**I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God
I will take the cup of freedom
and call on the name of God**

Prayer of Jesus

Fraction

[in silence - all bread and cup are lifted by servers]

Communion

“Open the Eyes of My Heart”

“Gather Us In”

“God Has Work for Us To Do/Trading My Sorrows”

Prayer After Receiving

Matthew Berryman

Benediction

Peter Storey

Reprise *“Trading My Sorrows”*



“Now and Ever”

Friday Morning Worship
Leader Script

Standing in the midst of the waters, we ponder God’s presence and God’s power in the journey. What does it mean that we are crossing over into the promised land? Will we claim our identity as the priesthood-of-all-believers who carry the covenant of God into new possibilities?

Gathering Music

Ha-la-la-la la la la lelujah! *(no lyrics on screen)*
Down by the Riverside
Shall We Gather at the River

Invitation

[drum/sound effects... synopsis]

Gathered here in the mystery of this hour
Gathered here in one strong body
Gathered here in the struggle and the power
Spirit draw near.

Litany

Leader: Your response is “Spirit draw near.”
For the deepening of our faith...
Spirit draw near.
For the healing of our wounds...
Spirit draw near.

For the movement of our journeys...

Spirit draw near.

For the opening of our eyes...

Spirit draw near.

For the transformation of our shortcomings...

Spirit draw near.

For the blessing of our day...

Spirit draw near.

(all 6 readers, randomly) Now and ever...

Spirit draw near.

Scripture

Joshua 3

Marcia: Our scripture this morning joins the Israelites crossing over the Jordan river into the promised land. There are those among us who know deeply and personally about crossing over. They are Joshua for us. They are living testaments and can help us all know what it means to cross over into deeper authenticity and life.

Kristian: [soft drums under scripture readings]: Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. At the end of three days the officers went through the camp and commanded the people, "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it." Then Joshua said to the people, "Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." *[drums fade]*

Story of Crossing Over - Colin

Discovering my authentic self was not synonymous with becoming my authentic self. Even the beginning of my journey was attached to a gender I don't identify with. It was interesting, to be standing so close to the truth, and yet to be walking behind. The beginning of my transition was stagnant even though it included lots of starts - a haircut, new pronouns, different clothes. And I was waiting there on the precipice when I remembered transitioning from a lie to a lie isn't authentic at all. And so I prepared to truly begin my journey, shedding the gender roles, assumptions, and binds I'd been restricting myself with. And so prepare yourselves, sanctify yourselves, because g'd continues to do wonders among us.

[sung]
**Come out come out of your comfortable spaces...
come meet the world in the difficult places...**
[repeat]

Kristian: To the priests Joshua said, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people. The Lord said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, 'When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.'"

Story of Crossing Over - Jordan

Take up the truth. There came a time where I had to bear the truth of who I was—not just in my mind and soul—but in my body as well. There came a point when the pain of staying who I was on the outside became greater than the pain of losing everything to live authentically. I remember that I used to say "My name is [insert birth name here]." But authenticity brought me to I began to say "I AM Jordan." There were many revelations like that along the way, holy moments of standing still in the waters of authenticity. I invite you to think about having the "audacity of authenticity"—whatever that is for you. And when you come to the edge of crossing over, stand still in the waters and know by Divine Grace you are not alone.

[sung]
**Have you not heard? Every valley's exalted...
Mountains made low but the lowly are lifted...**
[repeat]

Kristian: Joshua then said to the Israelites, "Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God." Joshua said, "By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the [opposition]: the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. So now select twelve from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap."

Story of Crossing Over - Marcia

So many transgender persons are cut off. From the love of family, from jobs, from safety. In this story, the waters are cut off so that the people can pass through safely... But even in this story, the crossing over implies loss. Loss of familiarity, loss of what they knew. Even though you know the promised land is going to be good stuff, the crossing over is hard. As the spouse of a transitioning person, besides joy at witnessing new life, it is also a death. We as family and friends have a different journey to take, one that includes grief, unknowing, deep and profound uncertainty. There was nothing in me that didn't want him to walk into that promised land of true authenticity. But there was some letting go that had to happen. So be prepared. Crossing over means also letting go. But in the end I can tell you that letting go, painful as it can be, is nothing compared to the jubilee of deep truth and love without boundaries.

[sung]

**Come out, the kin-dom of God is upon us...
come out the wilderness, follow Jesus...**

[repeat]

Kristian: When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

Story of Crossing Over - Grace

e.g. I had already started my transition journey when I arrived at GC 2008 in Ft. Worth. My feet were wet and I was standing in the River wading around. In a quiet room hunkered down on my phone with my counselor in the midst of a church at battle I chose authenticity. The realization of loss was gradual and sometimes overwhelming but this group and a few progressive Christians all over the globe have made that loss less painful and have opened doors so I could cross on dry land. We carry the Covenant of Truth and the precious quality of that

truth must be honored, lifted up, exalted AND held close. It is a peace that flows...

Invitation to the Journey

Marcia:

Transitions take many forms. High profile gender transitions of late have perhaps given the impression that the only transition is from one extreme expression of gender to another. But we all know that the complexity of humanity is a much more beautifully-arrayed story. The transitions we honor this morning are diverse.

Crossing over doesn't need to mean from one polarity to another. It most powerfully means overcoming a kind of colonization of the authentic self by beliefs and/or appearances, often stereotyped, that are not truly OF us. I invite any here who are willing to publicly be thanked for being willing to stand in the river of authenticity, identifying as transgender, including but not limited to, gender-fluid, gender-free, gender-queer or pan-gender, transitioned or not, to come to the center aisle, our symbol of this river. *[pause as people come]*. And know that if you are not comfortable being recognized at this moment or are struggling to understand where you are on the journey, the Spirit knows... the Spirit blesses. I invite everyone to extend their hands in blessing towards these persons.

Holy and Living God,
you of no name and many names,
we praise you for we were all formed in your womb!
Indeed, we know we are complex and intricate beings
awesomely and wonderfully made!

Today, we celebrate, acknowledge and embrace our transgender siblings!
And we remember our transgender siblings who have lost their lives living as the
Creator intended for them to live!*

For the transphobia of the church, and indeed our own,
in this silence, we confess. *[pause]*
Turn us toward greater understanding, fervant advocacy
and heartfelt joy at the full spectrum of our diversity.

Amen!

My friends, your response to this next question is the word "blessed!"
"What name is given to these children of God?"

Blessed!

*a portion of the prayer adapted from a litany by Rev. Wanda Y. Floyd,
MCC Resources*

Kristian: The invitation to journey in the river comes back to the whole body because in addition to the complexity of gender-related transitions, the people in this room represent other transitions as well. Some of us came out at various times in our lives, coming to terms with the authentic expression of our fullness even later in life. Crossing over can also include transitions of ideology and theology—commonly known as a change of heart. Many in this room experienced that at some time in their lives—or are perhaps still in that process.

What needs to be left behind in your life so that you might cross over into fuller authenticity of love, of life, of relationship?

Who are you REALLY? Are you ready to leave fear and a wide variety of phobias and ism's behind? I invite you to stand in body and/or spirit. And as you stand there, begin to feel the current, the flow, of the living water around you. If it helps to close your eyes, I invite you to do that. What is being washed away? What is being replenished?

As the next song begins, stand as long as you need to in that image, and sit when you are ready.

Song: "May Peace Flow Through Me"

The Word Proclaimed

Nikilas Mawanda

The Final Exclamation

"All My Days"



“All God’s People Free”

Saturday Morning Worship

Leader Script

Broken dreams abound for the exiles and yet the vision from Ezekiel is one of freedom and overflowing abundance—a river too deep to cross. It nourishes the trees and all that come in contact with it. That which is stagnant is made fresh for the healing of all.

Gathering Music

Love Divine
I Am Free
Everlasting God

Welcome and Synopsis

Invitation

choir comes up to sing

“Child of God”

[choir piece]

Scripture

Ezekiel 47

*[Marcia does this as a dramatic monologue...
will need several people to help with blue fabric and leading the congregation in
enacting the trees, fish and fishers]*

When he brought me back to the temple's entrance, I noticed that water was flowing toward the east from under the temple's threshold (the temple faced east). The water was going out from under the temple's facade toward the south, south of the altar. He led me out through the north gate and around the outside to the outer east gate, where the water flowed out under the facade on the south side. With the line in his hand, the man went out toward the east. When he measured off fifteen hundred feet, he made me cross the water; it was ankle-deep. He measured off another fifteen hundred feet and made me cross the water; it was knee-deep. He measured off another fifteen hundred feet and made me cross the water, and it was waist-high. When he measured off another fifteen hundred feet, it had become a river that I couldn't cross. The water was high, deep enough for swimming but too high to cross. He said to me, "Human one, do you see?" Then he led me back to the edge of the river. When I went back, I saw very many trees on both banks of the river. He said to me, "These waters go out to the eastern region, flow down the steep slopes, and go into the Dead Sea. When the flowing waters enter the sea, its water becomes fresh. Wherever the river flows, every living thing that moves will thrive. There will be great schools of fish, because when these waters enter the sea, it will be fresh. Wherever the river flows, everything will live. People will stand fishing beside it, from En-ge-di to En-eg-lay-im, and it will become a place for spreading nets. It will be like the Mediterranean Sea, having all kinds of fish in it. Its marshes and swamps won't be made fresh (they are left for salt), but on both banks of the river will grow up all kinds of fruit-bearing trees. Their leaves won't wither, and their fruitfulness won't wane. They will produce fruit in every month, because their water comes from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for eating, their leaves for healing."

Preparation for the Word Proclaimed

"The Journey Isn't Over"

photos of the movement for screens

The Word Proclaimed

Sara Thompson Tweedy

Litany of Thanksgiving

"Gracias Amigo"

see this song at: <http://m.ustream.tv/recorded/63689331>

Woven in quiet parts of song:

people share thanksgivings

*Response: **Gracias, Amigo!***

extemporaneous prayer as song builds

Benediction



Sung Testimony
“Canticle of the Turning”

“Love and Healing Will Abound”

Sunday Closing Worship
Leader Script

The prophet calls for a sign that hearts and lives are changed—baptism in the river. All obstacles are lifted, all difficult roads are open. Nothing remains to prevent the people of God from offering the healing they have known to all who suffer. As we prepare to be the Gospel in the world, we are known by the fruits of our love!

Gathering Music

*So Glad I'm Here in Jesus' Name
O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing
Grace Alone*

Bible Study
Grace Imathiu

Break

[Beginning of Worship with Travis Park UMC congregants]

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

Rev. Monte Marshall

Invitation

Gather at the river, children,
time to come and see
justice and community growing,
all God's people free.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

[did you open yourself in these days to the touch of Jesus through the living water of our stories]

Listen to the stories, children,
of God's love and light,
as the touch of Jesus offers
blessing and new sight.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

*[have you been refreshed by these waters and are you ready to go and share,
can we hear the call of God to this task?]*

Go and share the good news, children,
love is meant for all.
Reconciliation is coming –
can you hear the call?
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

*[words are not just words - they are imbued with experience...
we spoke these words in our opening worship...
let us speak them again with the experience of our time together filling them anew
and the additional voices of our sisters and brothers from Travis Park]*

Look around you, people!
A body gathered for good!
What can we say at such a moment?!
What we say is "Blessed!"

Look inside you, people!
Lives that are transformed again and again by God's grace.
What can we say at such a gift?

What we say is "Blessed!"

Look outward beyond these walls, people!
A world that cries for hope and healing.
What can we say at such a task?

What we say is "Blessed to be a blessing!"

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Amen!

Amen!

Gather at the river, children,
time to come and see
justice and community growing,
all God's people free.
*When, in faith, with grateful hearts,
we open wide the doors,
love and healing will abound,
now and ever, now and ever
now and evermore.*

Prayer

[extemporaneous]

Scripture

Luke 3: 1-14

Reader: We hear this morning from the Gospel according to Luke, who quotes the prophet Isaiah. You will help me when we get to Isaiah's words.

In the fifteenth year of the rule of the emperor Tiberius—when Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea and Herod was ruler over Galilee, his brother Philip was ruler over Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was ruler over Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas—God's word came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. John went throughout the region of the Jordan River, calling for people to be baptized to show that they were changing their hearts and lives and wanted God to forgive their sins. This is just as it was written in the scroll of the words of Isaiah the prophet,
[on screens for people to say together:]

A voice crying out in the wilderness:

***"Prepare the way for the Lord;
make the paths direct.***

Every valley will be filled,

and every mountain and hill will be leveled.

The crooked will be made aligned

and the rough places made smooth.

All humanity will see God's salvation."

Then John said to the crowds who came to be baptized by him, "You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don't even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham's children from these stones. The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire."

The crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

He answered, "Whoever has two shirts must share with the one who has none, and whoever has food must do the same."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. They said to him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He replied, "Collect no more than you are authorized to collect."

Soldiers asked, "What about us? What should we do?"

He answered, "Don't cheat or harass anyone, and be satisfied with your pay."

This is a word of God.

Thanks be to God.

All creation is a word of God.

All creation speaks volumes of God.

Sung Response

"I Dream of a Church"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbeHO-cR7IQ>

The Word Proclaimed

Theon Johnson III

[possible sung response]

Invitation to Offering

Offertory

Doxology

The Word Revealed—Sacramentum!

[Remembrance of Baptism and Communion liturgy woven with "Wade in the Water/I Want Jesus to Walk with Me"]

The people sing:

Lower voices:

Wade in the water, wade in the water, [repeated]

Middle voices:

**Wade in the water, wade in the water children,
wade in the water, God's a gonna trouble the water...**

Litany begins:

Leader: Your response is "God's love flows through the water"

*Voice 1: In the beginning water cradled us in the womb
Holding us in suspension until we burst forth in the waters of birth*

People: God's love flows through the water

*Voice 2: In the desert a small drop of water causes life to bloom
A tiny drop of water can quench our burning thirst for justice*

People: God's love flows through the water

*Voice 3: In the roots of our being water provides sustenance
Without water our lives would shrivel and wither*

People: God's love flows through the water

*Voice 4: In the times when we feel sullied and broken
We long to be reawakened by soaking in forgiving, transforming love*

People: God's love flows through the water

Voice 1: All water is holy.

Voice 2: A sign that we have passed through troubles,

Voice 3: that we have been refreshed by a gift of life

Voice 4: sustained by a love poured over us.

People: God's love flows through the water

Voice 1: All water is holy.

Voice 2: A sign that we are called as Trees of Life,

Voice 3: having been fed by the River of Grace,

Voice 4: to bear the Fruits of Love.

Voice 1: And in the aftermath of water ...

*All Voices randomly as a cacophany: flowing, pouring, falling, dropping, gushing,
spilling, surging, tumbling, showering...*

*Voice 1: ... is the rainbow sign of God's continuing love at work
within us and through us.*

People: God's love flows through the water

Lower voices:

Wade in the water, wade in the water, [repeated]

Middle voices:

**Wade in the water, wade in the water children,
wade in the water, God's a gonna trouble the water...**

Higher voices:

**I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

The music jams as the people are sprinkled (those who sprinkle proclaim, "Remember your baptism and be changed by it!")

[singing ends... instrumental suspends]

Invitation to the Table

Turn to your neighbors and ask them,
"Do you want Jesus to walk with you?" *[the people do so]*
Turn to your neighbors and tell them,
"Come to the table, for he is here!" *[the people do so]*

[All sing a capella as communion elements are processed forward to the table:]

**I want Jesus to walk with me
I want Jesus to walk with me
All along my pilgrim journey,
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

Confession

There are times when we build dams against the tide of God's future,
out of fear, out of loathing, out of spite, out of ignorance.
Instead of opening the floodgates,
we eek out measured eyedroppers of grace as if we are the keepers of it.
In this moment of silence, let us be honest before God...

Silence

[out of the silence, slow...the people sing]

**When I'm in trouble, Lord walk with me
When I'm in trouble, Lord walk with me
When my poor heart's almost breaking
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

Assurance

[the music builds under]

In Christ the drought is done.
In Christ the wells are full.
In Christ you are forgiven!

In Christ you are forgiven! Alleluia! Amen!

Peace

As a forgiven and well-watered people, pass the peace of Christ among you!

[singing, with accompaniment, upbeat, to come back from the Peace]

**When I'm singin', Lord walk with me
When I'm singin', Lord walk with me
When I'm praisin' all of God's goodness
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

Great Thanksgiving

The Holy Living God 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.

God of Grace,

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,

always and everywhere to give thanks to you.

Your delight filled the skies and land

with colors beyond the spectrum of our knowing.

Your playful creating offered up humankind

with such diversity that we cannot comprehend it.

Your breath left waters frothy and lungs exploding

with the power of life and prophetic utterances.

And yet we back away from such promise,

unable to claim your love as ours.

But here you are to meet us—speak to us—once again,

always faithful, always present

in this Body *[the table]*...

in this Body *[the people]*.

And so,
together we proclaim the praise-filled truth of your glory
along with all the saints:

[to the tune of "I Want Jesus"]
Holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts!
Blest are they who come in your name!
Heav'n and earth are full of your glory!
Hosanna in the highest!

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
He proclaimed freedom for the bound,
justice for the oppressed,
grace for the lost,
love for the prodigal.

By the power of this message
and the surprise of resurrection in the face of death,
the world is immersed again in the baptism of love and redemption.
Through the life and ministry of Jesus,
we can imagine and live into a community of love.
[piano out]

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"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, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me."

And so,
We remember... *[pause, piano enters]*
We offer ourselves ... *[pause]*
We claim a new freedom in this truth...

[to the tune of "I Want Jesus"]

**Christ has died, yet Christ is risen;
Christ has died, yet Christ is risen;
Christ will come a-gain in glory
Hosanna in the highest!**

Liturgist: I invite you to raise your hands...

[piano underscoring continues, crescendo in energy from both piano and presider]

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Make them be for us the vision of your Reign realized,
so that we may be for the world your dream come true.

Liturgist: I invite you to place your arms around each other...

By your Spirit open us to each other and to the world,
making us one in You,
through Christ,
in the power of Your redeeming Grace!

**When I'm lovin', Lord walk with me
When I'm lovin', Lord walk with me
When I'm caring for all God's children
Lord, I want Jesus to walk with me.**

Communion

*"Love Has Broken Down the Wall"
"For Everyone Born"
"Draw the Circle Wide"*

Words for Our Going Out

I heard a voice thunder from the Throne: "Look! Look! God has moved into the neighborhood, making a home with men and women! They're God's people, and God is their Holy One and Only! God will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death is gone for good—tears gone, crying gone, pain gone—all the first order of things gone." The Enthroned continued, "Look! I'm making everything new. Write it all down—each word dependable and accurate."

Then God said, "It's happened. I'm A to Z. I'm the Beginning, I'm the Conclusion. From the Water-of-Life River I give freely to the thirsty."

(Rev. 21: 3-6 - translation: Eugene Peterson, adapted)

Benediction

One More Song!

Hakuna Wakaita sa Jesu (I'm running...)

[see next page for Worship Notes and Citations]

Worship Notes and Citations

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SUNDAY CLOSING WORSHIP NOTES

"So Glad I'm Here in Jesus' Name", traditional African American

"O, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" (W&S)

"Grace Alone" (W&S)

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