

GATHERING

WELCOME AND NAMING OUR GRATITUDE

CENTERING OUR FOCUS UPON GOD

Meditation from Thais

Jules Massenet

CALL TO WORSHIP

Our loving God has made us to be One Body with many members. United and uniting.

This is our calling.

God calls us to share our diverse gifts activated by the one and same Spirit. United and uniting.

This is our redemption.

God longs for us to be united in love and to manifest the Spirit in our different ways. United and uniting.

This is our worship.

Let us gather in this hour to offer praise and worship to our Holy God, who challenges us and calls us to create *the Beloved Community*.

OPENING HYMN NO. 394 In Christ There Is No East or West African-American Melody

(1) In Christ is no East or West, in Christ no South or North; But one community of love throughout the whole wide earth.

(2) In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free; For men and women live in God, and all are kin to me.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S PRESENCE

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, we long to co-create with you the Beloved Community which looks to the common good; privileges all equally, and creates societal systems which celebrate the humanity and the gifts of all.

And yet we focus on our differences, envy each other's gifts, devalue manifestations of you, O God, that are not like our own.

Perhaps our sin is a slow wait for justice: We allow the voices of our fellow humans who do not look like us, love like us, or worship like us to be silenced. We have told them to wait for freedom, justice and equality. We foster in them *a denigrating sense of nobodiness*. Lord, have mercy.

Or perhaps we have kept silence ourselves in the face of their struggle for full human life.

For it is not solely hateful words and actions, but also appalling silence that follows the path of oppression. Christ, have mercy.

Perhaps our sin is to give in to weariness, discouragement, bitterness: You have called us to be *drum majors for justice, peace and righteousness*, Yet the work of peace and justice

overwhelms us at times, To build with God the Beloved Community seems impossible, and we grow weary. We cry, "Peace, peace," but there is no peace within us or around us. We find ourselves on the path of hatred and oppression, violence and war. Lord, have mercy.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God is at work in us and with us! God has promised:

"I will not keep silent and I will not rest until the vindication of my beloved people shines out like the dawn and their salvation like a burning torch.

My people shall no more be termed 'forsaken'

and their land shall no more be termed 'desolate.'"

We remember that you have given your Beloved people a new name:

"My delight is in them."

(silence)

Thank you, God for delighting in us even now, for forgiving us our slow action, our silence and our weariness, for empowering our work and inviting us once again to create with you the Beloved Community you long for.

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 12: 1-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says "Let Jesus be cursed!" and no one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

SERMON

The Beloved Community

HYMN NO. 570

We Shall Overcome

African-American spiritual

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,

We shall overcome some day.

Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,

We shall overcome some day.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

VENTURING OUT INTO THE WORLD

*RECESSIONAL HYMN W&R NO.547 We Are God's People Johannes Brahms arr. Fred Bock

We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord, Born of his Spirit, established by his Word;
Our cornerstone is Christ alone, And strong in him we stand:
O let us live transparently, And walk heart to heart and hand in hand.

*ANNOUNCEMENTS

*BENEDICTION

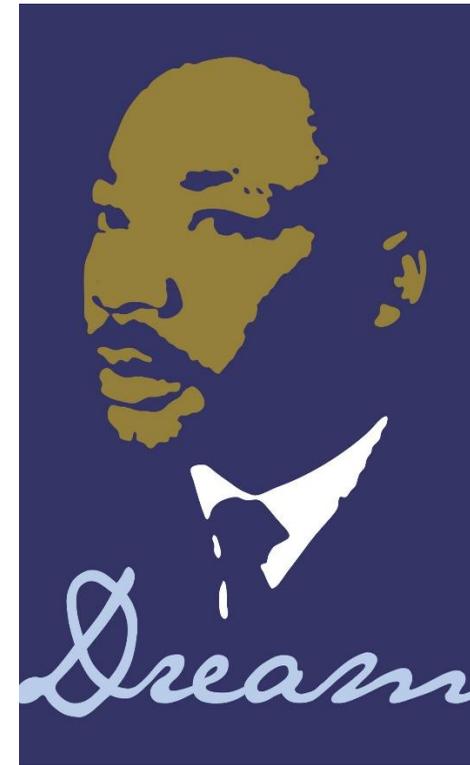
*FOLLOWING THE LIGHT INTO THE WORLD Go in Peace Kenneth E. White

**Go in peace, and the peace of God be with you this day.
Go in peace, and the peace of God be with you always.
Celebrate and share the joy! Celebrate new life!
Go in peace, and the peace of God be with you always.**

*POSTLUDE First Arabesque Claude Debussy

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Credits: Phrases from the speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr. have been woven into the prayer texts. They are identified by italics.
Creating the Beloved Community: Service Prayers for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, Martin Luther King, Jr., Weekend was written by the
Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, Founder and Director of the Center for Spiritual Light, New York City.



10 AM

January 16, 2022

First Parish of Westwood, UCC
Growing Faith, Sharing Love, Grounding Lives

Guest Worship Leader: Bob Deininger

Second Sunday After Epiphany

We Are an Open & Affirming Church

First Parish of Westwood affirms the dignity and worth of every person regardless of race, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, family structure, education level, economic circumstance and faith or religious tradition.