

# Worship Service

BY ERIC L. MATHIS

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## GATHERING FOR THE WORSHIP OF GOD

### *Meditation*

Not only does God in Christ take people as they are: He takes them in order to transform them into what He wants them to be. Along with the indigenizing principle which makes his faith a place to feel at home, the Christian inherits the pilgrim principle, which whispers to him that he has no abiding city and warns him that to be faithful to Christ will put him out of step with his society; for that society never existed, in East or West, ancient time or modern, which could absorb the word of Christ painlessly into its system."

*Andrew F. Walls*<sup>1</sup>

### *Greeting*

#### *Call to Worship: Psalm 122 (A Song of Ascent)*

I was glad when they said unto me,  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!"

**Our feet are standing  
within your gates, O Jerusalem.  
Jerusalem - built as a city  
that is bound firmly together.**

To it the tribes go up,  
the tribes of the LORD,  
As was decreed for Israel,  
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.  
For there the thrones of judgment were set up,  
the thrones of the house of David.

**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:**  
"May they prosper who love you.  
Peace be within your walls,  
and security within your towers."

For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say,  
“Peace be within you.”  
**For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,  
I will seek your good.**

### *Prayer of Expectation*

O Lord, we long for the day  
when our feet will stand  
within the gates of the New Jerusalem.  
Until then, as we journey toward home,  
guide and protect your Church.  
Bind us in unity,  
clothe us in truth,  
and keep us in peace.  
We pray in the strong name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

### *Hymn of Praise*

“The God of Abraham Praise”  
The God of Abraham praise,  
who reigns enthroned above,  
the ancient of eternal days,  
the God of love!  
The Lord, the great I AM,  
by earth and heaven confessed —  
we bow before his holy name  
forever blest.

He by his name has sworn,  
on this we shall depend,  
and, as on eagles’ wings upborne,  
to heaven ascend.  
There we shall see his face;  
his power we shall adore,  
and sing the wonders of his grace  
forevermore.

The goodly land I see,  
with peace and plenty blest,  
a land of sacred liberty  
and endless rest.  
There milk and honey flow,  
and oil and wine abound;  
the tree of life forever grows  
with mercy crowned.

There rules the Lord our King,  
the Lord our Righteousness,  
victorious over death and sin,  
the Prince of Peace.  
On Zion's sacred height  
his kingdom he maintains,  
and glorious with his saints in light  
forever reigns.

Triumphant hosts on high  
give thanks to God and sing,  
and "Holy, holy, holy" cry,  
"Almighty King!"  
Hail, Abraham's God and ours!  
One mighty hymn we raise.  
All power and majesty be yours  
and endless praise!

*Thomas Olivers (c. 1770), alt.; based on a Hebrew doxology*  
Tune: LEONI



## CONFESSION

### *Prayer of Confession*

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which we ought not to have done; and there is nothing good in us. O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. Spare those, O God, who confess their faults. Restore those who are penitent; according to your promises declared unto all in Christ Jesus our Lord. Grant that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life; to the glory of your name. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

### *Assurance of Pardon*

We are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light and in him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true; but if we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 1:4-7

## *Silent Reflection*

In one sense we are always traveling, and traveling as if we did not know where we were going.

In another sense we have already arrived.

We cannot arrive at the perfect possession of God in this life, and that is why we are traveling and in darkness. But we already possess him by grace, and therefore, in that sense, we have arrived and are dwelling in the light.

But oh! How far have I to go to find You in Whom I have already arrived!

*Thomas Merton*<sup>3</sup>

## *Hymn of Rest*

"I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say"

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, O weary one, lay down  
your head upon my breast."  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
so weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in him a resting place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"Behold, I freely give  
the living water, thirsty one;  
stoop down and drink and live."  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
"I am this dark world's light:  
look unto me, your morn shall rise,  
and all your day be bright."  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till traveling days are done.

*Horatius Bonar* (1846), alt.

*Tune:* KINGSFOLD



## WORD

### *The First Reading: Genesis 12:1-9*

Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the possessions that they had gathered, and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran; and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. Then the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *The Second Reading: Luke 24:13-35*

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since

these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The Gospel of the Savior.

**Praise to You, Lord Christ.**

### *Hymn of Journey*

"While on the Long Emmaus Road"

While on the long Emmaus road,  
weighed down with grief and sorrow's load,  
in hopes their dreams would be restored  
the two disciples met the Lord.

Like them, we journey to refresh  
ourselves in spirit, heart, and flesh,  
to recreate ourselves, and find  
renewal of our soul and mind.

On pilgrimage we set apart—  
for worship, prayer, repose of heart—  
a holy place, and there pursue  
a faith restored, a love made new.

To distant lands our path may go  
to share with those who need to know  
the love of Jesus Christ, who came  
to pardon those who trust his name.

In all our travel, let us see  
the journey as a jubilee;  
our hopes refreshed, our dreams restored,  
for as we go, we take the Lord.

David W. Music (2016)  
*Suggested Tunes:* O WALY WALY or PUER NOBIS  
(See pp. 55-57 of this volume.)

### *The Third Reading: Hebrews 11:13-16*

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *Sermon*



## RESPONSE

### *Hymn of Guidance*

“Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but thou art mighty –  
hold me with thy powerful hand;  
Bread of heaven, Bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more,  
feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream doth flow;  
let the fire and cloudy pillar  
lead me all my journey through;  
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer,  
be thou still my strength and shield,  
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside;  
bear me through the swelling current,  
land me safe on Canaan's side;  
songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to thee,  
I will ever give to thee.

*William Williams (1745); trans. William Williams and Peter Williams (1771), alt.*  
Music: CWM RHONDDA

*Prayers of the People: based on Psalm 121 (A Song of Ascent)*

No matter where we are, where we are going, or what we are doing,  
we know that we find our help in you, our Lord.

**In our coming and going, draw near to us and stay.**

You are the creator and sustainer of all that has been made and will  
be made. And yet, the immensity of creation does not distract you  
from caring personally for every creature in it.

**In our coming and going, draw near to us and stay.**

You do not daydream or become weary in that care. We thank you  
that you not only watch over us with diligence but that you guide  
us so that we do not fall, so that we do not even stumble.

**In our coming and going, draw near to us and stay.**

Whether we are awake or asleep, you are there, sheltering and  
protecting us from all that would hurt us. We know that you  
watch over all our living; you have in the past, and we know  
that you are now.

**In our coming and going, draw near to us and stay.**

Your promise holds for the future and for eternity, and we praise  
and thank you for that.

**In our coming and going, draw near to us and stay. Amen.**

## *Offering*

*A musical setting of the Shaker song "Simple Gifts" is appropriate.*

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free,  
'tis the gift to come down where we ought to be;  
and when we find ourselves in the place just right,  
'twill be in the valley of love and delight.  
When true simplicity is gained,  
to bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed;  
to turn, turn will be our delight  
till by turning, turning we come 'round right.

*Joseph Bracket (1797-1882)*

*Tune: SIMPLE GIFTS*

## *Doxology*

### *Benediction*

As you journey, may the peace of God, which surpasses all  
understanding, guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.  
Amen.

Bless the Lord.

**The Lord's name be praised.**

## *Hymn of Travel*

*"Rejoice, Ye Pure in Heart"*

Rejoice, ye pure in heart,  
rejoice, give thanks and sing  
beneath the standard of your God,  
the cross of Christ your King.

*Rejoice, rejoice,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing.*

Bright youth and snow-crowned age,  
strong men and maidens fair,  
raise high your free, exultant song,  
God's wondrous praise declare.

*Rejoice, rejoice,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing.*

Yes, on through life's long path,  
still singing as ye go;  
from youth to age, by night and day,  
in gladness and in woe.

*Rejoice, rejoice,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing.*

At last the march shall end;  
the weary ones shall rest;  
the pilgrims find their heavenly home,  
Jerusalem the blest.

*Rejoice, rejoice,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing.*

Praise God, who reigns on high,  
the Lord whom we adore,  
the Father, Son, and Spirit blest,  
one God forevermore.

*Rejoice, rejoice,  
rejoice, give thanks, and sing.*

*Edward H. Plumptre (1865), alt.*

*Tune: MARION*

## NOTES

1 Andrew F. Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 7.

2 "The General Confession," *The Book of Common Prayer* (1552), alt.

3 Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain: An Autobiography of Grace* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1998 [1948]), 460.



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