

The Spirit Within: Make it Personal

The Spirit Within Me: It's Personal and It Is About Life

"Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me." This is the first phrase in the hymn, "Let There be Peace on Earth" that we sing in community when acknowledging turmoil and unrest. Do we really take the time to hear the words we sing? "Let it begin with Me" is an action phrase. What does it really mean in the context of the life I am living today? We also sing "Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love." What does that mean in my life today? As a follower of Jesus Christ (a disciple of Christ), it is important to know what that means, and who I am as a Christian.



We are taught some of the history of Jesus Christ birth, death and resurrection. We have learned that Jesus Christ is our Savior, but do we really know what we are saved from? On our faith journey we might verbally identify ourselves as a member of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Today, let's learn more about what that means:

Getting to Know the Denomination

The Mission, Vision and Confession of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Our Confession

*As members of the Christian Church,
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the living God,
and proclaim him Lord and Savior of the world.*

*From the Preamble to The Design of the
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

Our Mission

To be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth."

— Acts 1:8

Our Identity

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.

As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

Our Vision

To be a faithful, growing church, that demonstrates true community, deep Christian spirituality and a passion for justice.

— Micah 6:8

Preamble to the Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



*The confession is the opening paragraph in the Preamble to the **Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)**. It is used by many Disciples congregations in worship as an affirmation of the faith of the church throughout the ages – not as a “test of fellowship,” but as a statement of faith that identifies the Disciples’ commitment to and place within the universal and ecumenical church. The preamble continues...*

*As members of the Christian Church,
We confess that Jesus is the Christ,
the Son of the living God,
and proclaim him Lord and Savior
of the world.*

*In Christ’s name and by his grace
we accept our mission of witness
and service to all people.
We rejoice in God,
maker of heaven and earth,
and in God’s covenant of love
which binds us to God and to one
another.*

*Through baptism into Christ
we enter into newness of life
and are made one with the whole
people of God.*

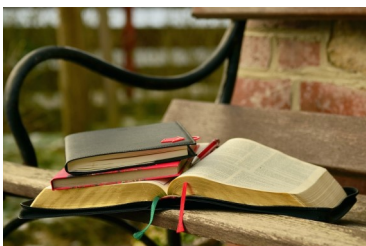
*In the communion of the Holy Spirit
we are joined together in discipleship
and in obedience to Christ.*

*At the Table of the Lord
we celebrate with thanksgiving
the saving acts and presence of Christ.
Within the universal church
we receive the gift of ministry
and the light of scripture.*

*In the bonds of Christian faith
we yield ourselves to God
that we may serve the One
whose kingdom has no end.
Blessing, glory, and honor
be to God forever. Amen.*

**** So, what does it all mean, and
what does it have to do with me?**

**“We confess that Jesus
is the Christ, the Son of
the Living God, and
proclaim him Lord and
Savior of the World.”**



Choosing “The Word” for Understanding

It is important to find at least one version of the Bible that helps you to understand the intended message of the passages you read. The reason I selected the New Century Version for this resource is because it informs us with the following:

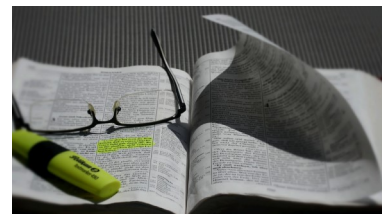
The two overarching principles that stand behind the NCV are that a Bible translation needs to be both accurate and clear. The translation team of 50 Bible scholars and translators included people with translation experience on such acclaimed versions as the New International Version, the New American Standard Bible, and the New King James Version. The best available Hebrew and Greek texts were used as well.

Find a Bible that works for you as you embark on this personal study and reflection. The Easy-to-Read version also helps with better understanding.

**** So, what does it all mean, and what does it have to do with me?**

Consider what message is given to us in **1 Corinthians 12:5-7** New Century Version (NCV)

There are different ways to serve but the same Lord to serve. And there are different ways that God works through people but the same God. God works in all of us in everything we do. Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, for the common good.



So often we think of our ministries as committee, group or church projects, but as you can see in this passage, each person is given gifts from the spirit according to the purpose God has for you, personally. Everyone does not have the same gift, however each gift is important. It is important, also to know that gifts that are absent in a body can impact the function of the body. So it is also in each congregation. Everyone cannot be the head. Christ is always the head.

Group or personal study: Read all of 1 Corinthians 12 and consider the gifts listed there. Consider what your gifts might be. Be careful... talents are different than gifts given by the spirit. List the gifts that are listed in this passage.

Discovering “The Body” ... “The Priesthood”

The word “laity” is another expression for “people of the congregation,” and it is generally understood that they are not the ordained clergy, or the pastor of the church. In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), laity are always involved in the functions of the church. As congregations identify the ministries of their church body, it is also important to consider the gifts of each individual, remembering that Christ is always the head of the body of believers, even over the pastor.

Laity Sunday is a time when the lay people of the church pause to consider their gifts and are intentional in offering these gifts in worship, and in other ways on this designated Sunday.

On occasion, you may hear the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) referred to as “The Priesthood of all Believers.” Though we often lean on our Pastor (Shepherd) to be our spiritual leader, as the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9-10), we too can take time to prepare and participate in the worship of God.

Group or personal study: Consider this passage from 1 Peter 2:1-12. Discuss what baby food and stones mean in this passage. How might it relate to your personal spiritual journey? Why are Christians also referred to as “priest?”

“Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, for the common Good.”



The Design of this Laity Sunday Resource:

The theme for Laity Sunday 2018, “The Spirit Within: Make it Personal,” is designed for personal reflection and understanding, and then collectively in worshipful communities and in our daily lives. The hope is to help each one better understand our commitment to follow the instructions given to us, through Christ’s examples.



This curriculum begins with a review of the design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), recognizing that we are one body and Christ is the head. What is sometimes the challenge, is to know what is our personal ministry within the body; and to know how we function on our own journey to make the whole body stronger. Because everyone does not have the same gift, but to know, as it is mentioned in 1 Corinthians: “Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, for the common good.”

When we are “new” Christians, it is said that the food (teachings from Christ and it’s understanding) we are first given, is like the food given to babies. This means small bites of food that is soft and lightly seasoned (which would be the children’s Sunday school stories) but there is so much more. As we grow physically, we should progress to a more hearty diet of food that is full of nutrients, fiber and textures to help us be stronger. It is the same when growing in Christ and making the body of Christ stronger (this means personal Bible study and dealing with some of the hard questions in life, and understanding the larger picture of the children’s Bible stories).

If we relinquish ourselves to “baby food,” we are not able to grow stronger and build-up the body during our spiritual journey. For this reason this resource is divided into two primary sections. The first section is studying, learning and growing personally. The study section offers scriptures as a resource for more understanding of building a relationship with God, in spite of the trials and challenges within our lives. Our love for God should increase everyday in the same way we love our parents or children, best friend or spouse. It should not remain static. You will also find hymns that are sometimes paired with the scriptures. The hymns reflect the prayers and struggles and offerings of its author. They are also reflective of challenges today, and can certainly be used for meditation. There is also an exercise to encourage a look in the mirror at what we truly believe and live-out in our lives daily. It is a hopeful platform from which to grow.

The second section of this resource includes instructions and a template for worship to use as a foundation for planning the worship service for Laity Sunday 2018.

Section 1: Study, Learn Grow

The Spirit Within: Make it Personal

This section is designed to help each person, group and committee to consider the spirit within themselves. Jesus promised that he would send to us, the Holy Spirit, sometimes called The Comforter. It is important to know what this means in our personal lives. It was even a challenge for those disciples called by Jesus, to have an understanding of this, until the day of Pentecost when they became indwelled with the Holy Spirit.

You will find scripture, hymns, questions and other resources that will encourage and even challenge each person to consider their own spiritual journey and commitment as followers of Jesus Christ.



Have We Trials and Temptations

When you are with friends today, are your conversations generally about the good or bad things that are happening in your lives? We have become a culture that seems to thrive on sharing our trials and bad news, while slowly excusing the traps that cause us temptation. Because of this, we often leave God out of the picture.

What does respect and admiration mean to you? The Kingdom of God is a mighty, mighty nation. Acknowledging a kingdom larger than anything we know today; one with perfect order is difficult to grasp when we see segments of disorder all around us. In groups, or individually, write down three things that would demonstrate order in a culture. Compare with others and make a consolidated list.

Regular and Personal Worship of God

“God, my heart is steady. I will sing and praise you with all my being.”

A Song. A Psalm of David

Psalm 108 (NCV)

God, my heart is steady. I will sing and praise you with all my being. Wake up, harp and lyre! I will wake up the dawn. LORD, I will praise you among the nations; I will sing songs of praise about you to all the nations. Your great love reaches to the skies, your truth to the heavens. God, you are supreme above the skies. Let your glory be over all the earth.

The One True God

Psalm 115 (NCV)

It does not belong to us, LORD. The glory belongs to you because of your love and loyalty.

A Psalm of Praise. Of David

Psalm 145 (NCV)

I praise your greatness, my God the King; I will praise you forever and ever. I will praise you every day; I will praise you forever and ever. The Lord is great and worthy of our praise; no one can understand how great he is.

Personal Prayer and Praise

Youtube Links for Personal Prayer and Praise

Power in Prayer and Praise – dmbarry777

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HMhdd2M7I0A>

Lord I Lift Your Name on High - by Maranatha! Praise Band

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COQ6cni_TG8

Scriptural Solid Food

My Reflective Thoughts

To what degree will you stand up for what you believe? What if you are challenged, or even punished for believing in the good news of Jesus Christ? Consider the following from the 5th chapter of Acts (for the full story, read the whole chapter):

Acts 5: 23-32

New Century Version

They said, "The jail was closed and locked, and the guards were standing at the doors. But when we opened the doors, the jail was empty!" Hearing this, the captain of the Temple guards and the leading priests were confused and wondered what was happening.

Then someone came and told them, "Listen! The men you put in jail are standing in the Temple teaching the people." Then the captain and his men went out and brought the apostles back. But the soldiers did not use force, because they were afraid the people would stone them to death.

The soldiers brought the apostles to the meeting and made them stand before the leaders. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in that name. But look, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are trying to make us responsible for this man's death."

Peter and the other apostles answered, "We must obey God, not human authority! You killed Jesus by hanging him on a cross. But God, the God of our ancestors, raised Jesus up from the dead! Jesus is the One whom God raised to be on his right side, as Leader and Savior. Through him, all people could change their hearts and lives and have their sins forgiven. We saw all these things happen. The Holy Spirit, whom God has given to all who obey him, also proves these things are true."

On this page and the next, you will find a column to capture your personal thoughts. First read Romans 12 and then the lyrics to "Just As I Am." Before you begin writing, consider the message in Romans and the lyrics. Can you see any parallels? As you consider your reflections, you can capture them separately (the hymn first, then the scripture) or you can reflect on them together, drawing similarities and differences. Most of all, consider how the messages might stand in your own life.

My Reflective Thoughts

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

Just As I Am

Chalice 339

*Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thy love unknown,
hast broken ev'ry barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

"Do not let evil defeat you, but defeat evil by doing good".

Romans 12:21

Scriptural Solid Food

Romans 12:1-12

New Century Version (NCV)

My Reflective Thoughts

Give Your Lives to God

So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship.

Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to everyone among you.

Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you. Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body.

Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us. The person who has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in agreement with the faith. Anyone who has the gift of serving should serve. Anyone who has the gift of teaching should teach. Whoever has the gift of encouraging others should encourage. Whoever has the gift of giving to others should give freely. Anyone who has the gift of being a leader should try hard when he leads. Whoever has the gift of showing mercy to others should do so with joy.

Your love must be real. Hate what is evil, and hold on to what is good. Love each other like brothers and sisters. Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves. Do not be lazy but work hard, serving the Lord with all your heart. Be joyful because you have hope. Be patient when trouble comes, and pray at all times.

"What a Friend We Have in Jesus" is one of the much loved hymns and is sung world-wide in many languages. Why might it hold significance for so many people? Read the lyrics on this page and the next. You will see some similarities. Follow the instructions in the parallel column and re-write, considering your own life.

Re-write one or two stanzas using words that apply to your life. Include the phrases that are written in bold text.

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

What A Friend We Have in Jesus

Chalice 585

*What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit,
oh, what needless pain we bear,
**all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer.***

*Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
**Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?**
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!*

*Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge,
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
**In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.***

"Find your quiet place and pray a song."

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

I Must Tell Jesus

African American Heritage Hymnal #375

*I must tell Jesus all of my trials;
I cannot bear these burdens alone;
In my distress He kindly will help me;
He ever loves and cares for His own.*

Refrain:

I must tell Jesus!

I must tell Jesus!

I cannot bear my burdens alone;

I must tell Jesus!

I must tell Jesus!

Jesus can help me, Jesus alone.

*I must tell Jesus all of my troubles;
He is a kind, compassionate friend;
If I but ask Him, He will deliver,
Make of my troubles quickly an end. [Refrain]*

*Tempted and tried, I need a great Savior,
One who can help my burdens to bear;
I must tell Jesus, I must tell Jesus;
He all my cares and sorrows will share. [Refrain]*

*O how the world to evil allures me!
O how my heart is tempted to sin!
I must tell Jesus, and He will help me
Over the world the victory to win. [Refrain]*

Re-write one or two stanzas using words that apply to your life. Include the phrases that are written in bold text.

The following scripture can be a bit challenging. Would you say the people to whom Paul was talking were hungry? What does it say about their faith? What does it say about baptism? What does it say about the Holy Spirit?

There are many questions. What were your reflections after reading this scripture. Do you have additional questions?

Scriptural Solid Food

Acts 19

(NCV)

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to Ephesus. There he found some followers and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

They said, "We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit."

So he asked, "What kind of baptism did you have?"

They said, "It was the baptism that John taught."

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of changed hearts and lives. He told people to believe in the one who would come after him, and that one is Jesus."

*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Then Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.** They began speaking different languages and prophesying. There were about twelve people in this group.*

Do we have to ask for the Holy Spirit? Often Jesus' followers had many questions. After a parable on responding to an insistent plea from a friend, Jesus included this:

*"Even though you are bad, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more your heavenly Father **will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**"* Luke 11:13

When we commit to be a follower of Jesus Christ it is a pure time of faith. As we are challenged from day-to-day, it is important to remember that God has a plan for us in His timeline of history. It is our responsibility to make every effort to listen for God's direction. We have to be soft enough to yield to God shaping us.

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

Chalice #588

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
 While I am waiting, yielded and still.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
 Search me and try me,
 Savior today!
 Wash me just now, Lord, wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
 Wounded and weary, help me I pray!
 Power, all power, surely is Thine!
 Touch me and heal me, Savior divine!*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
 Hold o'er my being absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!*

Consider your willingness to yield and to listen for God's voice. Make this song your own. Include the phrases that are written in bold text.



Finding a time and place to be still, quiet and pray may seem to be daunting in the “instant culture” we have come to accept as normal. We do however, find time to do the things we believe are important, such as time on Facebook, time to watch a football game, shop the online malls, go to the gym, etc.

We open up time to spend with friends, go to amusement parks, on vacations, spend time in beauty and nail salons. What a friend we have in Jesus? Can we find time to have a cup of tea with him.

Where is your garden? Can you meet the Lord there?

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

In The Garden

Chalice 227

I come to the garden alone,
While the dew is still on the roses;
And the voice I hear, falling on my ear,
The Son of God discloses.

Refrain:

And He walks with me, and He talks with me,
And He tells me I am His own,
And the joy we share as we tarry there,
None other has ever known.

He speaks, and the sound of His voice
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing;
And the melody that He gave to me
Within my heart is ringing. [Refrain]

I'd stay in the garden with Him
Tho' the night around me be falling;
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe,
His voice to me is calling. [Refrain]



Scriptural Solid Food

Come to the Garden Alone

Jesus found time to be alone while in prayer. Peter and other followers did the same.

There was a time, while Peter was in Joppa, he went to a place to be alone before a meal. While he was alone, he received a message from God. Concurrently, Cornelius, an Italian officer for the Romans, who lived in Caesarea also received a message from an angel. Each message alone, did not make sense to Peter or Cornelius; but together, the message was complete (*read Acts 10 for the whole story*). From that encounter and exchange, I offer below, Peters reflections of his experience and its importance to God's larger plan:

Acts 10: 34-48 (NCV)

Peter began to speak: "I really understand now that to God every person is the same. In every country God accepts anyone who worships him and does what is right. You know the message that God has sent to the people of Israel is the Good News that peace has come through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Lord of all people! You know what has happened all over Judea, beginning in Galilee after John preached to the people about baptism. You know about Jesus from Nazareth, that God gave him the Holy Spirit and power. You know how Jesus went everywhere doing good and healing those who were ruled by the devil, because God was with him. We saw what Jesus did in Judea and in Jerusalem, but the Jews in Jerusalem killed him by hanging him on a cross. Yet, on the third day, God raised Jesus to life and caused him to be seen, not by all the people, but only by the witnesses God had already chosen. And we are those witnesses who ate and drank with him after he was raised from the dead. He told us to preach to the people and to tell them that he is the one whom God chose to be the judge of the living and the dead. All the prophets say it is true that all who believe in Jesus will be forgiven of their sins through Jesus' name."

While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit came down on all those who were listening. The Jewish believers who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been given even to the nations. These believers heard them speaking in different languages and praising God. Then Peter said, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we did!" So Peter ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

My Reflective Thoughts

A Look Into The Mirror: From Your Perspective



The exercise on the following page offers a personal challenge to find your own truth. Ideally, you want to first find your quiet place. This can be done at home or even when you are working in a group. If this is to be a group exercise, allow space and time for the participants to find a separate space to reflect and to capture their thoughts. This can happen, simply by spreading out with larger spaces between each person while working at a table. An alternative would be to offer a snack bag, or brown-bag lunch in a setting where they can find a tree to sit under or a rock or park bench to sit on while they eat, reflect and write.

Many people view the Bible as history and as just a reminder that Jesus Christ was born and died. After a passage is read, we generally settle in for analysis and discussion. In many chapters of the Bible, there are clear life instructions that still apply to our life today. Not only are there instructions, there are also warnings.

The question is: Are we making an effort today, to follow the life instructions and heed the warnings given to us as followers of Jesus Christ. Review the phrases on the following pages. Take time to reflect on each one.

For the exercise you want to divide the phrases into four categories. In the upper left corner place a number from 1-4 based on the categories below. Make every effort to be authentic with your answers.



1. *I would say I am great at practicing this and would like to make this an area of focus in my life.*
2. *I still occasionally struggle in this area though I believe I am slow to anger and consider myself a good listener.*
3. *I still have quite a way to go here. I need to do better.*
4. *I have very little capacity in understanding how I can make a difference here. I really need to grow in this area.*

In the space at the bottom of the next page, write a paragraph describing what you learned about yourself by completing this exercise (You don't have to limit yourself to one paragraph. You can continue on a separate page if you would like to write more.) You can maintain your analysis as a personal reflection, or in a group session, give participants the option and opportunity to share with the larger group. Similar results can encourage healthy growth conversations.

Snippets from Romans 12

(Read the whole chapter for greater insight)

		Hold on to what is good.
Hate what is evil.	Give each other more honor than you want for yourselves.	Do not be lazy but work hard, serving the Lord with all your heart.
Pray at all times.	Be patient when trouble comes.	Be joyful because you have hope.
Share with God's people who need help.	Wish good for those who harm you; wish them well and do not curse them.	Be happy with those who are happy, and be sad with those who are sad.
Live in peace with each other.	Do not be proud, but make friends with those who seem unimportant.	Do not think how smart you are.
If someone does wrong to you, do not pay him back by doing wrong to him.	Try to do what everyone thinks is right.	Do your best to live in peace with everyone.
My friends, do not try to punish others when they wrong you, but wait for God to punish them with his anger. It is written: "I will punish those who do wrong; I will repay them," says the Lord.	Love each other like brothers and sisters	Bring strangers in need into your homes.



Take My Hands, My Will

I think of a Habitat build, or bagging groceries for those who have little to eat. I think of serving in a homeless kitchen or women's rescue center. In ministry we often want something that is "hands-on," something we can see and say is good. These are choices we can make to be involved in identifiable ministries.

What does it mean to you when you offer your will to the Lord? Look at the offerings in the words on the following page. Are we really willing to offer our will to God? What might that look like for you? Will it be a challenge?

In a year filled with so much national strife, many people found themselves in "I have no choice" and "I don't have the power to change it" situations. Is this when one's "will" is offered, or can it be at other times.

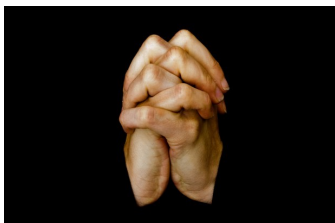
Take My Voice, My Life

***"Take my life and let it
be concentrated, Lord to
Thee."***

Lyrics... or scripture— God, my heart is steady. I will sing and praise you with all my being. Wake up, harp and lyre! I will wake up the dawn. LORD, I will praise you among the nations; I will sing songs of praise about you to all the nations. Your great love reaches to the skies, your truth to the heavens. God, you are supreme above the skies. Let your glory be over all the earth. I praise your greatness, my God the King; I will praise you forever and ever. I will praise you every day; I will praise you forever and ever. The Lord is great and worthy of our praise; no one can understand how great he is.

Optional Hymns for Personal Worship

- Lead Me, Guide Me
- It's Me, Standing in the Need of Prayer
- I Want Jesus to Walk With Me
- I Am Weak, But Thou Art Strong
- I Have Decided to Follow Jesus
- I Love to Tell the Story
- I Need Thee Every Hour
- I Serve a Risen Savior
- I'm Gonna Eat At the Welcome Table



Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

Take My Life and Let it Be

Chalice

*Take my life, and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to Thee.*

Take my moments and my days;
*let them flow in ceaseless praise,
let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

Take my hands, and let them move
at the impulse of Thy love.
*Take my feet, and let them be
swift and beautiful for Thee,
swift and beautiful for Thee.*

*Take my voice, and let me sing
always, only, for my King.*
Take my lips, and let them be
*filled with messages from Thee,
filled with messages from Thee.*

*Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.*
*Take my intellect, and use
every power as Thou shalt choose,
every power as Thou shalt choose.*

Take my will, and make it Thine;
it shall be no longer mine.
*Take my heart, it is Thine own;
it shall be Thy royal throne,
it shall be Thy royal throne.*

*Take my love, my Lord, I pour
at Thy feet its treasure-store.*
*take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for Thee,
ever, only, all for Thee.*

Consider the phrases that are written in bold text. Try to write two new stanzas that are personal to your life offerings.

Scriptural Solid Food

I encourage you to read the whole chapter of Acts 2. I have isolated certain segments from chapter two for this study.

Acts 2: 1-4 (NCV)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a noise like a strong, blowing wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw something like flames of fire that were separated and stood over each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak different languages by the power the Holy Spirit was giving them.

Acts 2: 12-24 (NCV)

They were all amazed and confused, asking each other, "What does this mean?"

But others were making fun of them, saying, "They have had too much wine."

But Peter stood up with the eleven apostles, and in a loud voice he spoke to the crowd: "My fellow Jews, and all of you who are in Jerusalem, listen to me. Pay attention to what I have to say. These people are not drunk, as you think; it is only nine o'clock in the morning! But Joel the prophet wrote about what is happening here today:

'God says: In the last days

I will pour out my Spirit on all kinds of people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions,
and your old men will dream dreams.

At that time I will pour out my Spirit
also on my male slaves and female slaves,
and they will prophesy.

I will show miracles
in the sky and on the earth:
blood, fire, and thick smoke.
The sun will become dark,
the moon red as blood,
before the overwhelming and glorious day
of the Lord will come.
Then anyone who calls on the Lord will be
saved.' (Joel 2:28-32)

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

Breathe On Me Breath of God

Chalice #254

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what Thou dost love,
And do what Thou wouldst do.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until my will is one with Thine,
To do and to endure.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly Thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with Thy fire divine.*

*Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with Thee the perfect life
Of Thine eternity.*

What is your story? What will be your song?

As you complete this study, remember that the Holy Spirit is present and we should always invite the Holy Spirit to be an active presence in all that we do. Meditate on the prayer, "Breathe on Me Breath of God." Be filled with life anew, everyday. Be filled with life anew, with God's assurance. Continue to love the Lord.

As you come to the conclusion of the Laity Sunday study, it is time for you and the other planners to prepare for worship. Use the space below to write your own prayer. Don't forget to ask for God's wisdom in order that all is pleasing in His sight.

Hymn of Heartfelt Prayer

Blessed Assurance

Chalice 543

*Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.*

[Refrain:]

*This is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
this is my story, this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.*

*Perfect submission, perfect delight,
visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
angels descending bring from above
echoes of mercy, whispers of love. [Refrain]*

*Perfect submission, all is at rest;
I in my Savior am happy and blest,
watching and waiting, looking above,
filled with his goodness, lost in his love. [Refrain]*

Participant's Ministry	Name/Phone	Commitment Yes /No	Will Attend rehearsal
Event Coordinator/Chair			
Study Coordinator			
Prayer/Spiritual Leader			
Youth Coordinator			
Worship			
Call to Worship			
Opening Litany			
Reader:			
Time for Children			
Scripture Reader			
Prayers of the People			
The Sermon/ Message Facilitator Reader #1 Reader #2 Reader #3 or group Reader #4 Reader #5 Reader #6—9 – depends on your final design of the service			
Offering			
Call to Discipleship			
Communion Meditation First Reader Second Reader (optional)			
Benediction			
Other:			

Section 2: Praise and Worship

The Spirit Within: Make it Personal

“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.”

Worship Preparation Instructions



Worship is a time to express our adoration and commitment to God and to let God know of our love. It is a time to give glory and honor to God and acknowledge God in our lives. Sometimes we can get involved in the “production” of worship and forget its purpose. We have to remember that Sunday service is not for our entertainment, but it is to be a time that we are “fed” the spiritual nourishment from the word of God.

In the previous pages of this Laity Sunday resource, there is designed time for study and personal reflection. As you prepare for Laity Sunday, encourage the committee to take time, each day to look for the blessings in their lives. We generally give more time to our problems and overlook our blessings. Once the blessings of the week are recognized, then it is easier to recognize the blessings that God has given to us. It is also a time to acknowledge that the Holy Spirit is present and active in our lives. As for our “sins,” it is just as important to own our errors and ask for guidance. These are the things that were forgiven through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. As you are able to grasp from the study in this document, and from the scriptures, there are many examples

of individuals who demonstrate a clear understanding of implications of not having someone to bear their burdens and pay for their sins. Their joy is great when they realize there is another way through Jesus Christ.

As you make preparations for Laity Sunday, and after you have identified individuals who are willing to participate in Laity Sunday activities, send to each person, an email or postal mailed letter confirming their commitment and the date of the first planning meeting. This should happen a few weeks prior to Laity Sunday. The letter can be simple and might begin this way:

“Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this year’s Laity Sunday activities. This congregation has long appreciated the efforts of its participants and worship leaders, bringing a variety of gifts and styles to our times of worship. May God bless you as you share your gifts with us, to create a true time of worship to God! The first meeting of the planning team will be on _____ at _____ o’clock.” We will have resources to help us prepare.

The chair of this committee or planning team, or the worship leader for this event has important tasks which are listed below:

1. *Create a timeline that includes meeting times (which will include group study and reflection as is designed in this resource).*
2. *Work with the committee to plan the Laity worship service, adjusting the worship template to meet the needs and personality of your congregation.*

3. *Be an encourager as you oversee all parts of the worship service.*

Take time before all activities to begin with prayer. If there is to be a leadership team, invite everyone to stop for a brief time to come together and pray, asking that God direct the activities of your time together. All participants are commissioned to encourage the congregation to praise and to honor God. Remember, the purpose of worship is not for the audience to be entertained, but it should be a time to praise and thank God, and ask for direction and guidance in our lives. It should be designed to please God.

Give the planning team plenty of time to study the theme, scriptures and resources. As you prepare for Laity Sunday, consider involving the young, the youth and the older members of your congregation. At the first meeting of the Laity Sunday committee, examine all of the suggested hymns and select the ones that speaks to the hearts of the group members. If you are able, you may also, as a group, be able to visit a few of the Youtube links to consider other options as you are planning a time to worship.

As you will find in these resources, a prepared service of worship, is designed as a beginning and option. You may extract segments to include in worship services you have prepared, or add to what is written, according to your needs. Remember, you are planning a worshipful time for your church community, and it is your time to express your love to God. Always encourage time for prayer and discernment that God will direct the design and content of the message.

Note: On Laity Sunday the message can be delivered in many ways. The message can be delivered by one person or can be broken into segments where two or more can participate.

On Laity Sunday, if there are visitors and if the worship service has unusual aspects that might confuse visitors, please be sensitive to the possibility of their misunderstanding and offer an explanation at the beginning of the service. You might begin by saying something similar to this:

“Today’s service is a bit different from our usual service, where you would normally hear more from our pastor. It is Laity Sunday, a time for the regular church members to be more active in providing worship....”

In an effort to separate the announcements from focused times of prayer and the sharing of the message, it is also encouraged that announcements are made at a pre-determined time that is separate from prayerful moments. This might be done very early in the service or just before prayers of the people. You will not find “announcements” in the Order of Worship so each congregation can determine where their announcements will fit best, based on the needs and traditions of the church. You will want to keep the announcements short.

The “Sermon/Message” that is offered in the worship template is intentionally incomplete near the end. This is designed to give all presenters an opportunity to share their perspective, include personal stories and prayerfully draw their own conclusions.

Consult with the pastor, elders or others “of good spirit” in the congregation if additional help is needed. Test your conclusions against the Bible, which is the foundation of our denominational design as Disciples of Christ.

Worship

Call to Worship

In this house of worship, we gather to praise, worship and glorify God! We acknowledge God's presence as the Holy Spirit fills this place. We gather in this community as followers of Jesus Christ, Your gift to us and our Savior. Please open our ears that we may receive the word and truth. Open our eyes that we may see you, in the eyes of those who love you; and open our mouths that we have no fear in sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. We come today to worship, sing and pray. Please, help each of us to have our own personal relationship with you.

Hymn

Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. <i>Praise to the Lord, the Almighty,
the King of creation!
O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy
health and salvation!
All ye who hear,
Now to His temple draw near;
Sing now in glad adoration!</i></p> <p>2. <i>Praise to the Lord, who o'er all
things so wondrously reigneth,
Who, as on wings of an eagle,
uplifteth, sustaineth.
Hast thou not seen
How thy desires all have been
Granted in what He ordaineth?</i></p> <p>3. <i>Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully,
wondrously, made thee!
Health hath vouchsafed and, when
heedlessly falling, hath stayed thee.</i></p> | <p><i>What need or grief
Ever hath failed of relief?
Wings of His mercy did shade thee.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper
thy work and defend thee,
Who from the heavens the streams of
His mercy doth send thee.
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
Who with His love doth befriend thee.</i></p> <p>5. <i>Praise to the Lord! Oh, let all that
is in me adore Him!
All that hath life and breath, come
now with praises before Him!
Let the Amen
Sound from His people again;
Gladly for aye we adore Him.</i></p> |
|---|---|

*Another option might be: **Lord I Lift Your Name on High**. (Also find other hymn choices if you would prefer.)*

Optional Youtube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COQ6cni TG8>

Litany

Leader: Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows the light of the world will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

People: I have decided to follow Jesus.

Leader: So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

People: I will stand-up, stand-up for Jesus.

Leader: And He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and redemption.

People: Lord, please show me the way.

Leader: If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given you.

People: It is for this wisdom that I ask.

Leader: We must each serve the Lord according to the gifts given to us 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.

All: The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.

Reader:

This Sunday is identified as Laity Sunday in our denomination.

Time for Children

(optional if this is normal for your church, or if this will be a teaching and participation opportunity for children not normally involved in the regular service).

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

Matthew 19:14 (NIV)

Invitation: *Would the children please come forward and join us during this time for children.*

You might prepare for this segment of the service by teaching the children (ahead of time), the song: **“Lord I want to be a Christian”**. This African-American spiritual is a basic prayer to God. It begins with “Lord I want...”. And continues with “to be a Christian; be more loving; be like Jesus”. The

words printed in the bulletin will allow the congregation to join in singing the prayer.

(Theme song for children's time.)

"Into My Heart"

Most people are familiar with the refrain (above) but the verses are also nice and optional. They could also be

Refrain:

**Into my heart, into my heart,
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus;
Come in today, come in to stay,
Come into my heart, Lord Jesus.**

1. Come into my heart, O Lord Jesus,
Come into my heart, I pray;
My soul is so troubled and weary,
Come into my heart, today. **(Refrain)**
2. Come into my heart, O Lord Jesus,
I need Thee through life's dreary way;
The burden of sin is so heavy,
Come into my heart to stay. **(Refrain)**
3. Come into my heart, O Lord Jesus,
Now cleanse and illumine my soul;
Fill me with Thy wonderful Spirit,
Come in and take full control. **(Refrain)**

used as a talking part for children. Consider explaining some of the old terms in the song and have the children suggest ways we might say the same thing today. Some words you might use are weary, dreary, burden, and illumine. This will work especially well if you have a musician in the congregation who can play the melodies.

Children's Time Starter Questions/Talking Points:

The following questions are conversation starters during the children's time. Use all of the questions, or select the ones that will speak to the children in your church community. You will also find the YouTube video resources that you can use before, during or after the children's time if your church has the appropriate media resources. Please preview and select those that will blend with your worship style.

- **Good morning children. Today we are talking about becoming closer to God. How do you think we can do that?**
(For each question you ask, wait for the children to give their answers. Encourage them by saying something like "Thank you for your answers. I see you were really thinking about this question.")
- **The children in the Bible wanted to know more about Jesus and hear what he had to say. What do you think about that?**
- **If you wanted to ask God one question, what would it be?**
(Give each child a copy of the words in the refrain.) Read the words to them and then ask:
- **What do you think of these words?**
- **I want you to take them home with you and think about them each day. Share them with your parents. You might pray them to God before you go to bed at night.**
- *End the children's time with a prayer (you may even ask if one of the children would like to offer*

the closing prayer) and sing again a verse from the song listed above (or as many verses as you would like). You might ask the congregation to join you. Excuse the children after the time is over.

Prayers of the People

Most gracious God, we praise Your name, and know that because you love us in ways we cannot understand, we gratefully receive your grace, for we know we are not worthy. Through your gift of love through Jesus Christ, we have hope, and a direct channel to your loving kindness. Jesus instructed us to use the power of His name in our petitions to you and for this, and so much more, we love you. Dear God, hear our prayers.

Help us to be mindful that Jesus came into an imperfect world to show us the way, and to help us find hope and to let us know of a most powerful love. Even then, as it is today, there were wars and troubles in the world and a continuous petition for peace.

In our petition this day, we ask that you hold us, and mend the many broken hearts around this nation and world. We engage the Holy Spirit, The Comforter, to be an intercessor on our behalf, when senseless acts of violence and injustice, leave us with no words to express our feelings.

We ask that the leaders of this nation and of all the nations know you and petition your guidance. We pray for suffering children and families; and for those who are ill and overwhelmed; and for those without employment and those who are homeless. Please hear our prayers.

We pray now, that you hear our voices as we release to you the names that are on our hearts, that you are present in each of their lives and mindful of their challenges and victories.

(pause and let the congregants offer names and concerns)

We know you hear our prayers and know our needs. May we now commend them to you. We know you are our refuge and helper, and that you gave to us, the greatest gift in our Savior, Jesus Christ in whose name we pray and who taught us to pray in this manner:

(Insert The Lord's Prayer in the translation that is most common in your congregation.)

Our Father in heaven, help us to honor your name. Come and set up your kingdom, so that everyone on earth will obey you, as you are obeyed in heaven. Give us our food for today. Forgive us for doing wrong, as we forgive others. Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.

Amen

Scripture

Romans 12:1-8 (NCV)

So brothers and sisters, since God has shown us great mercy, I beg you to offer your lives as a living sacrifice to him. Your offering must be only for God and pleasing to him, which is the spiritual way for you to worship. ² Do not be shaped by this world; instead be changed within by a new way of thinking. Then you will be able to decide what God wants for you; you will know what is good and pleasing to him and what is perfect. ³ Because God has given me a special gift, I have something to say to every-

one among you. Do not think you are better than you are. You must decide what you really are by the amount of faith God has given you. ⁴ Each one of us has a body with many parts, and these parts all have different uses. ⁵ In the same way, we are many, but in Christ we are all one body. Each one is a part of that body, and each part belongs to all the other parts. ⁶ We all have different gifts, each of which came because of the grace God gave us. The person who has the gift of prophecy should use that gift in agreement with the faith. ⁷ Anyone who has the gift of serving should serve. Anyone who has the gift of teaching should teach. ⁸ Whoever has the gift of encouraging others should encourage. Whoever has the gift of giving to others should give freely. Anyone who has the gift of being a leader should try hard when he leads. Whoever has the gift of showing mercy to others should do so with joy.

Hymn (optional choose from resources or select your own)

Just as I Am

Chalice Hymnal page 339

The Sermon/ Message (Speaker may also prefer to prepare their own sermon, or modify this one):

*Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bid'st me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
because thy promise I believe,
Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

*Just as I am, thy love unknown,
hast broken ev'ry barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!*

Note: On Laity Sunday the message can be delivered in many ways. If only one person is delivering the message, encourage time for prayer and discernment that God will direct the design and content of the message. With the theme “The Spirit Within: Make it Personal,” it is suggested that you review the study materials and hymns in this resource (see the study section in the previous pages). Select at least one hymn that speaks to the heart of the person(s) delivering the Laity Sunday message as it may encourage the presenter to develop their own story as they may share part of their own personal spiritual journey. This is an opportunity to inform others of how, through prayer, God has worked in their life.

Sermon Presenter:

May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Pause, look at the congregation, don't give the Biblical reference and then continue to read below).

Presenter: (Optional – a different Reader)

The word “laity” is another expression for “people of the congregation,” and it is generally understood that they are not the ordained clergy, or the pastor of the church. In the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), laity are always involved in the functions of the church. As congregations identify the ministries of their church body, it is also important to consider the gifts of each individual, remembering that Christ is always the head of the body of believers, even over the pastor. The gifts we have been given are not the same for each person. It is important to spend time in the word and in prayer, recognizing that the Holy Spirit is ever present to help us identify the gifts we have been given. Be careful though, there is a difference between “talents” and gifts.

For example: you may be a great storyteller and create intrigue and excitement in your stories; but those are often creations in your mind. In contrast, those whom have been given the gifts of prophecy or teaching must be careful that they are bringing God's unaltered truth to those receiving the message given, as they are first, accountable to God.

Laity Sunday is a time when the lay people of the church pause to consider the gifts they have been given and how they will be intentional in offering these gifts in worship, and in other ways on this designated Sunday, and always, to the glory of God.

On occasion, you may hear the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) referred to as "The Priesthood of all Believers." Though we often lean on our Pastor, who is our shepherd, to be our spiritual leader; as the priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9-10), we too are to take time to prepare and participate in our own worship of God as well as community times of worship.

The prayer that was offered to God in the hymn, "Just As I Am" that we just sang, is so familiar that we sing it with fondness (and often for the familiar melody). Just as are the words in this hymn, many of the familiar hymns we sing today, were written as self-examination, prose and prayers petitioning or praising God. Consider these words in the second stanza of this song:

***Just as I am, though tossed about
with many a conflict, many a doubt,
fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come!***

It appears that the author of these words had fears, conflicts and other challenges in their life. The words were written as a personal offering to God: "Oh Lamb of God, I come."

On this laity Sunday, I encourage that we each take time to look into the mirror, to better know who we are and who we look like. So often we look out of the window, identifying the errors we perceive on another's life and pass by the mirror when we leave the room. The theme of this Laity Sunday is: "The Spirit Within: Make it Personal." This theme challenges each of us separately to look into our own virtual mirrors to make sure we are daily, bringing with us, the examples and instructions that Jesus Christ left to His followers.

As we continue in worship, we will consider scriptures and the words of hymns that reflect the many facets of striving to live as followers of Jesus Christ. In our denomination as the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), though we do not have a creed; our confession is:

Our Confession — As members of the Christian Church, we confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and proclaim Him Lord and Savior of the world. This is found in the Preamble to The Design of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). It is the mission of the Christian church members to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." We take this instruction from Acts 1:8.

So, why is this important to each of us, personally? It is important to know what you value, and how much you are willing to invest in what you believe. Consider those who collect old cars or Elvis memorabilia. They will travel to auctions, compete against other bidders and pay a high price to own an item that is valuable to them. Also consider the parent who works three jobs to make sure a child will have funding to attend college. You might even consider the person who is willing to pay premium prices for a ticket to the superbowl. What is your passion, where are you willing to commit your efforts and dollars?

It is important to also consider your friends. Do you know, or have you seen a person who is always present or supportive through good times, and even through the toughest times. Have you ever been in a situation where the fault was yours, but grace was shown, or someone else paid the price for your error? On the other hand, have you ever known someone who professed to be a friend, but walked away when times were tough? To consistently have a friend who is always there, we should get to know Jesus Christ.

In our humanness, we all have sins. It is impossible to live life without trials, temptations, sorrows and discouragements. Sometimes it just feels like too much to bear. We also live in a culture where we try to figure things out without help, which is the pride we have within us. Well, there is a friend we can always call on. Just like other relationships we value, we also need to nurture this one. Jesus Christ sent to us the “Helper,” the Holy Spirit, but often we forget that this is a relationship that can help us with personal peace.

Please join me in the congregational response as we sing together: “What a Friend We have in Jesus.” Re-visit the words, today and throughout the week, remembering we have an ever-present friend.

Congregational Response

What a Friend We Have in Jesus

Chalice Hymnal page 585

Presenter: (Optional – a different Reader)

A real friend will tell us the truth because they will always want the best for us. Sometimes, the truth we hear may challenge us, or even be a bit painful, but it can also be very helpful. If a friend says to you, “You should read your Bible more often and study for greater understanding” it will evoke a response. Even though it may be a true statement, we will skirt the idea, or make excuses. This is generally because there is a level of accountability in committing to that action. When there is no passion, the response may be small, or an excuse offered.

I would like to share with you from the 19th chapter of Acts when Paul asked a similar question to those who professed to be followers of Jesus Christ. The following is Acts 19:1-7:

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul was visiting some places on the way to Ephesus. There he found some followers and asked them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

They said, “We have never even heard of a Holy Spirit.”

So he asked, “What kind of baptism did you have?”

They said, “It was the baptism that John taught.”

Paul said, “John’s baptism was a baptism of changed hearts and lives. He told people to believe in the one who would come after him, and that one is Jesus.”

*When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **Then Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them.** They began speaking different languages and prophesying. There were about twelve people in this group.*

So what is baptism? To put it in terms for understanding, it can be described as

the ceremony of initiation into Christianity. Paul made it clear that there is more than one type of baptism. When baptized into Christ, there comes with the passionate following of Christ, the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is most sacred, and very personal.

Do we have to ask for the Holy Spirit? Often Jesus' followers had many questions. After a parable on responding to an insistent plea from a friend, Jesus offered this:

*"Even though you are bad, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more your heavenly Father **will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**"*

Luke 11:13

When we have a passion to follow Jesus Christ, then going forward, we must do our part as true followers. It is indeed personal. Think of yourself as the clay and God is the master potter. Please join me now in singing "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," as we reflect on what we have heard.

Congregational Response

Have Thine Own Way, Lord

Chalice Hymnal page 588

As Lay Persons in the Christian Church, (Disciples of Christ), it is important to remember our mission as members, to be and to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our doorsteps "to the ends of the earth." I will read to you Acts 1:3-11:

After his death, he showed himself to them and proved in many ways that he was alive. The apostles saw Jesus during the forty days after he was raised from the dead, and he spoke to them about the kingdom of God. Once when he was eating with them, he told them not to leave Jerusalem. He said, "Wait here to receive the promise from the Father which I told you about. John baptized people with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

When the apostles were all together, they asked Jesus, "Lord, are you now going to give the kingdom back to Israel?"

Jesus said to them, "The Father is the only One who has the authority to decide dates and times. These things are not for you to know. But when the Holy Spirit comes to you, you will receive power. You will be my witnesses—in Jerusalem, in all of Judea, in Samaria, and in every part of the world."

After he said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud hid him from their sight. As he was going, they were looking into the sky. Suddenly, two men wearing white clothes stood beside them. They said, "Men of Galilee, why are you standing here looking into the sky? Jesus, whom you saw taken up from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you saw him go."

As we close this time of sharing on Laity Sunday, Please join me as we again stand by our commitment as followers of Jesus Christ, and the Priesthood of all Believers, as we read the Litany of Ministry,

found on page 451 in your Chalice Hymnal.

Congregational Response

Litany of Ministry

Chalice Hymnal page 451

Leader:

Oh God, who sent Jesus into the world
Not to be ministered unto, but to minister,
And to give his life to set others free,
Shape us for your ministry.

Laity:

Claim us O God, for your service, and direct us toward your will.

Leader:

You have graced all members of Christ's body, one by one,
with gifts of the Spirit to fulfill their vocation:
to lead lives worthy of your calling,
to be workers who have no reason to be ashamed,
to shine as lights to your glory.

Laity:

You have granted each of us the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Leader:

You give grace according to the measure of Christ's gift,
and some are called to be apostles,
some prophets,
some evangelist,
some pastors and teachers,
to equip the saints for the work of ministry,
for building up the body of Jesus Christ.

Laity:

**Grant that together we may all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge
of your Son to the full stature of Christ.**

Leader:

Through your grace, O God, may we lead a life
worthy of the vocation to which you call us.

All:

Claim us, O God, for your service, and direct us toward your will.

Hymn

Take My Life and Let it Be

Chalice Hymnal page 609

Speaker

May the peace of God forever be with each one of you. Amen

Offering / Offering Prayer

Each day, God gives from His bounty, let us present with joy our offerings of commitment and support for the work of Christ's church.

Offering Hymn

Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart

Chalice Hymnal Page 265

Doxology

Communion Meditation

First Reader – Communion

Everything we do in public assembly is a measure of our respect for God. Nothing we do should dishonor God – at church or in our daily lives. Because we do fall short of respecting God in everything we do or think, we are indeed blessed to have Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Second Reader - Communion

We are gathered here, in the name of Jesus Christ. In the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, there are similar accounts of the time when Jesus sat down with his disciples to share a most important meal. In Matthew, the 26th chapter, beginning with the 26th verse.

Third Reader - Communion

(or the Pastor or an Elder if that is the preference of your church)

Words of Institution

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

First Reader - Communion

And so, in the same manner, we will share the cup, and together we will sing a hymn. Please join in this feast, as again, we have heard the story of the gift of the covenant that has been poured out for the forgiveness of our sins.

Communion Hymn

Break Thou the Bread of Life

Chalice Hymnal Page 321

(Share here the method in which the communion will be distributed.)

Hymn of Invitation

Believe the good news of God's abounding love in Jesus Christ. Persons desiring to make their confession of faith in Christ and be baptized into his body, or to transfer membership to this congregation, or to renew their Christian commitment, may come forward as the congregation sings a hymn of dedication.

Water, River, Spirit, Grace

Chalice Hymnal 366

Benediction

The grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen

Closing Hymn

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

Chalice Hymnal 592

Appendix

Sheet Music Resource

In the collection of music that follows, an effort has been made to provide resources that offer support options for the musicians and worship planners of each congregation. Most hymns are also found in the Chalice or African American Heritage hymnals.

Also consider the links on the Youtube resource page near the end of this document. This may come in handy for small churches that use media resources to enhance their worship experience.

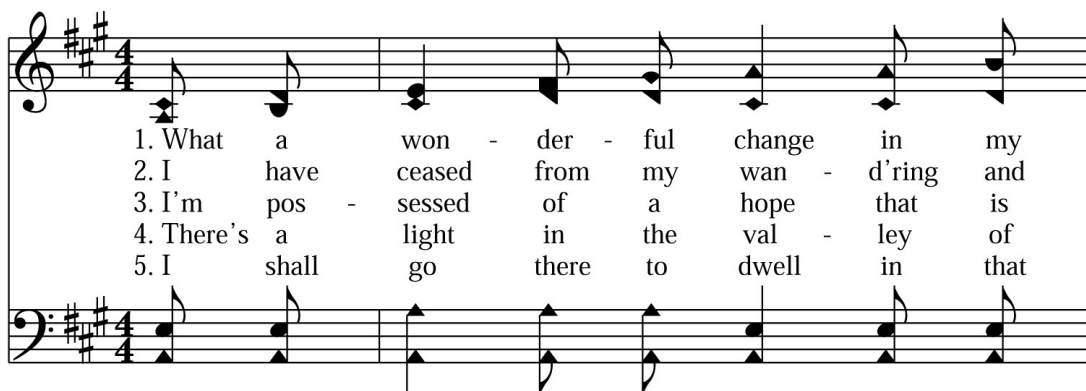
Since Jesus Came Into My Heart

*that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end
that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, - Eph. 3:17*

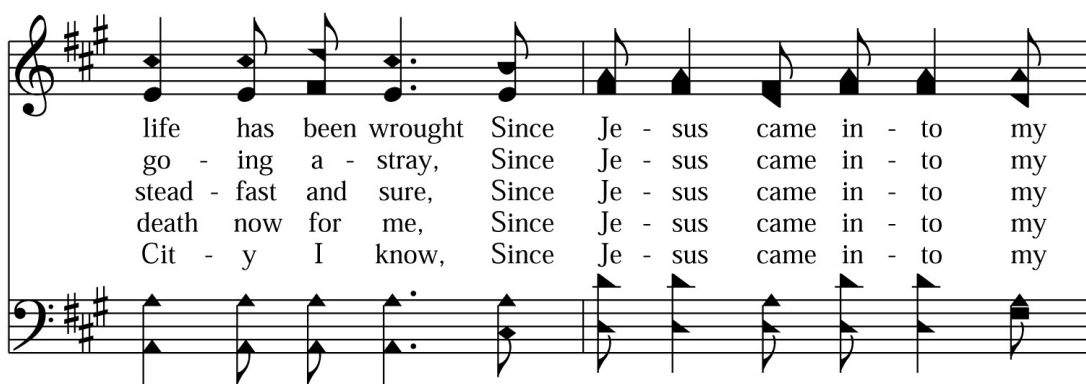
A - 4 - MI

Rufus H. McDaniel

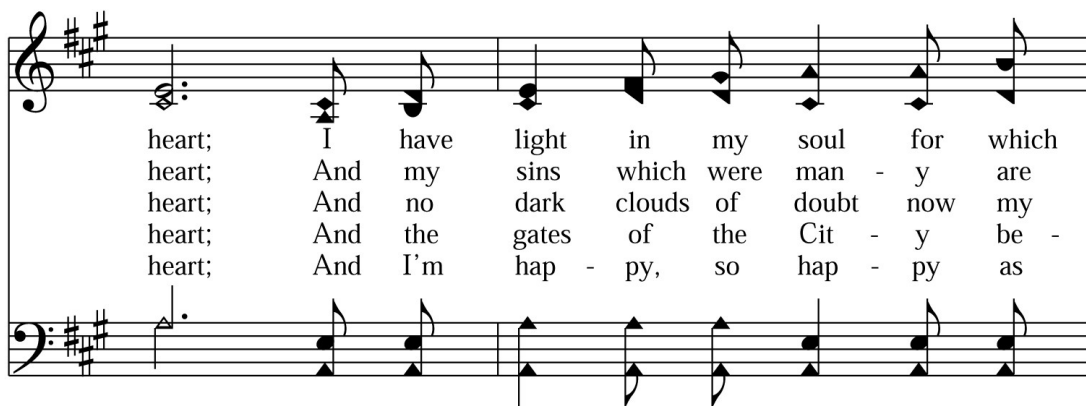
Chas. H. Gabriel, 1914



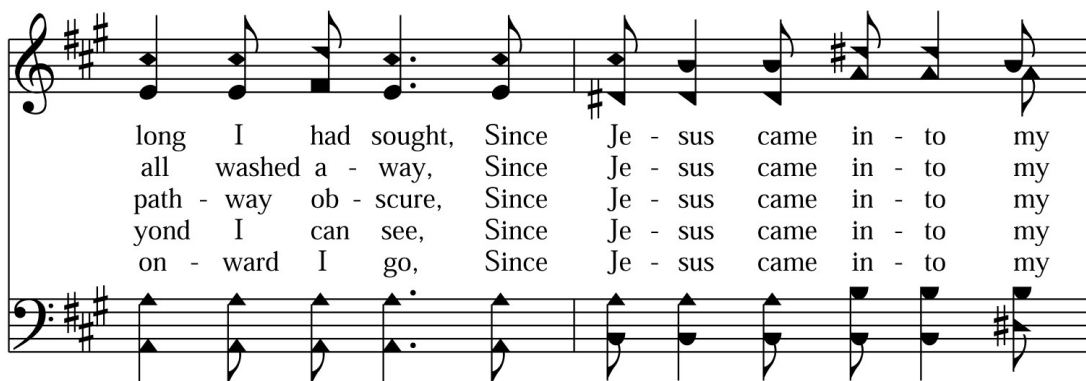
1. What a won - der - ful change in my
2. I have ceased from my wan - d'ring and
3. I'm pos - sessed of a hope that is
4. There's a light in the val - ley of
5. I shall go there to dwell in that



life has been wrought Since Je - sus came in - to my
go - ing a - stray, Since Je - sus came in - to my
stead - fast and sure, Since Je - sus came in - to my
death now for me, Since Je - sus came in - to my
Cit - y I know, Since Je - sus came in - to my



heart; I have light in my soul for which
heart; And my sins which were man - y are
heart; And no dark clouds of doubt now my
heart; And the gates of the Cit - y be -
heart; And I'm hap - py, so hap - py as



long I had sought, Since Je - sus came in - to my
all washed a - way, Since Je - sus came in - to my
path - way ob - scure, Since Je - sus came in - to my
yond I can see, Since Je - sus came in - to my
on - ward I go, Since Je - sus came in - to my

Just as I Am, without One Plea

Capo 1: E^b(D) B^b(A) E^b(D)

1 Just as I am, with - out one plea, but
 2 Just as I am, and wait - ing not to
 3 Just as I am, though tossed a - bout with
 4 Just as I am, thou wilt re - ceive, wilt

that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me
 rid my soul of one dark blot, to thee, whose blood can
 man - y a con - flict, man - y a doubt, fight - ings and fears with -
 wel - come, par - don, cleanse, re - lieve; be - cause thy prom - ise

come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 cleanse each spot, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 in, with - out, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.
 I be - lieve, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Text: Charlotte Elliott, 1836
 Tune: William B. Bradbury, 1849



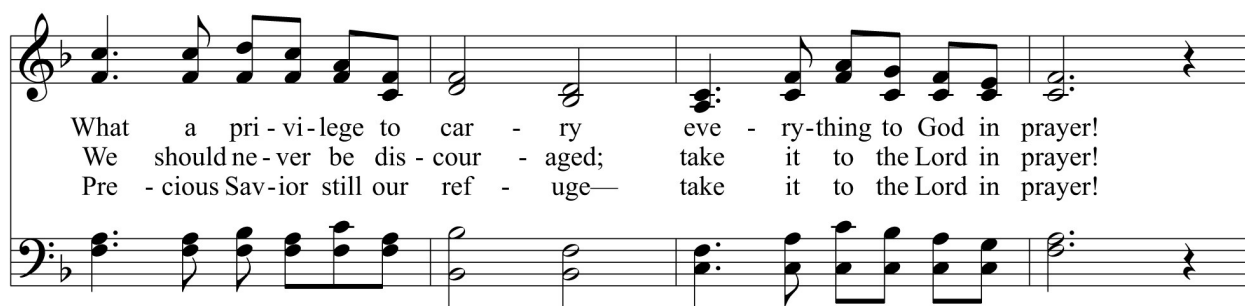
LM
 WOODWORTH
www.hymnary.org/text/just_as_i_am_without_one_plea

This hymn is in the public domain. You may freely use this score for personal and congregational worship. If you reproduce the score, please credit Hymnary.org as the source.

What a Friend We Have in Jesus



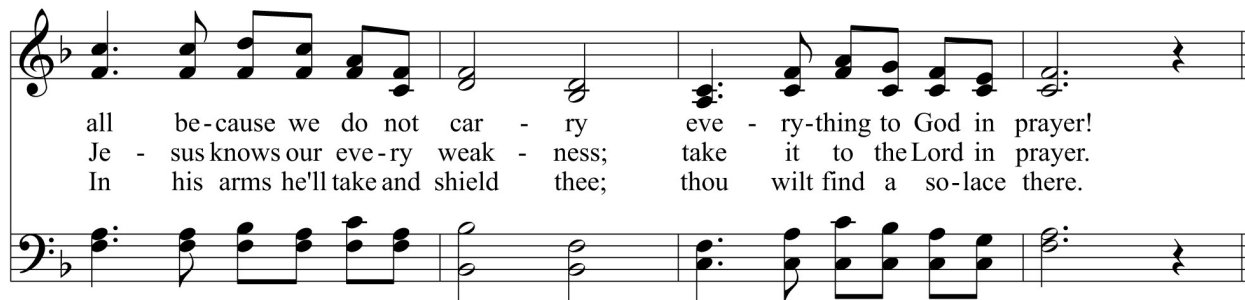
1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, all our sins and griefs to bear!
 2. Have we trials and temp-ta - tions? — Is there trou-ble a - ny- where?
 3. Are we weak and hea- vy la - den, cum - bered with a load of care?



What a pri - vi - lege to car - ry eve - ry-thing to God in prayer!
 We should ne - ver be dis - cour - aged; take it to the Lord in prayer!
 Pre - cious Sav - ior still our ref - uge — take it to the Lord in prayer!



Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit, oh, what need-less pain we bear,
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful who will all our sor-rows share?
 Do thy friends des - pise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer!



all be - cause we do not car - ry eve - ry-thing to God in prayer!
 Je - sus knows our eve - ry weak - ness; take it to the Lord in prayer.
 In his arms he'll take and shield thee; thou wilt find a so-lace there.

Text: Phil 4:6; Joseph M. Scriven, c1855.
 Tune: Charles C. Converse, 1868

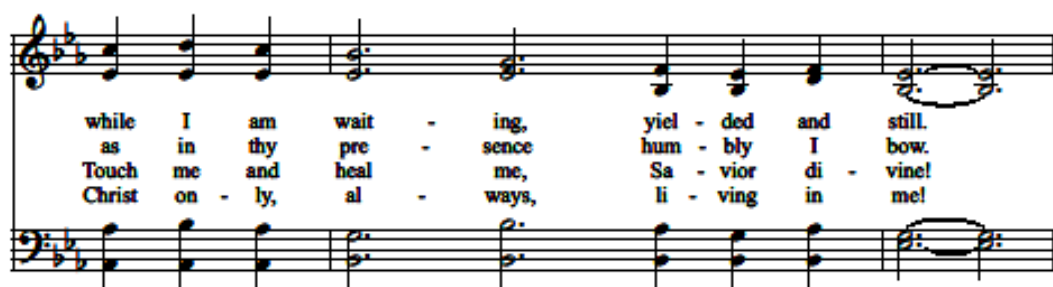
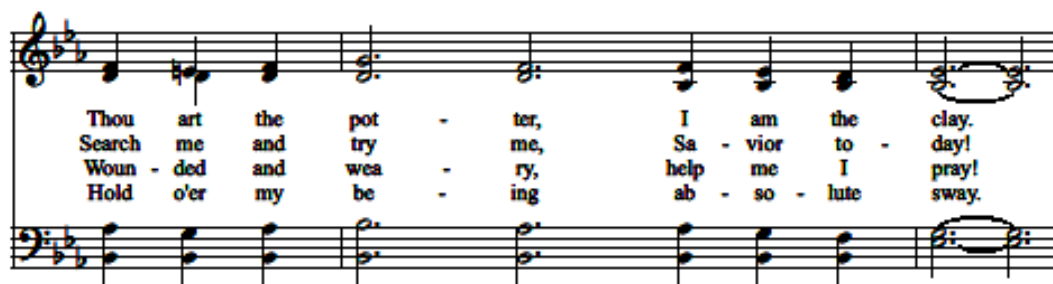


87 87D
 CONVERSE

www.hymnary.org/text/what_a_friend_we_have_in_jesus_all_our_s

This hymn is in the public domain. You may freely use this score for personal and congregational worship. If you reproduce the score, please credit *Hymnary.org* as the source.

Have Thine Own Way, Lord



Text: Adelaide A. Pollard, 1902
Tune: George C. Stebbins, 1907



54 54D
ADELAIDE
www.hymnary.org/text/have_thine_own_way_lord

This hymn is in the public domain. You may freely use this score for personal and congregational worship. If you reproduce the score, please credit Hymnary.org as the source.

Take My Life, And Let It Be

E - 4 - DO

...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. - Rom. 12:1

Frances R. Havergal, 1874

Georg Christoph Strattner, 1691

1. Take my voice, and let me sing Al - ways, On - ly
 2. Take my will, and make it Thine; It shall be no
 3. Take my life, and let it be Con - se - crat - ed,
 4. Take my love; my Lord, I pour At Thy feet, its

for my King; Take my lips, and let them be
 long - er mine; Take my heart, it is Thine own;
 Lord, to Thee; Take my mo - ments, and my days,
 treas - ure - store; Take my - self, and I will be

Filled with mes - - sag - es from Thee.
 It shall be Thy roy - al throne.
 Let them flow in cease - less praise.
 Ev - er, on - - ly, all for Thee.

Public Domain

www.HymnsUntoGod.org

Nearer, My God, To Thee

F - 4 - MI

*But it is good for me to draw near unto God: I have made the Lord
Jehovah my refuge, That I may tell of all thy works. - Ps. 73:28*

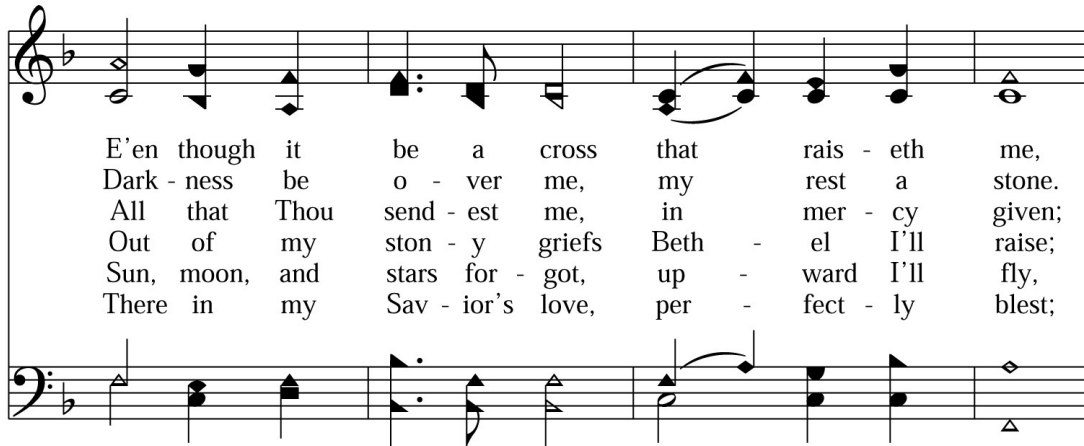
Sarah F. Adams, 1841

Lowell Mason, 1856

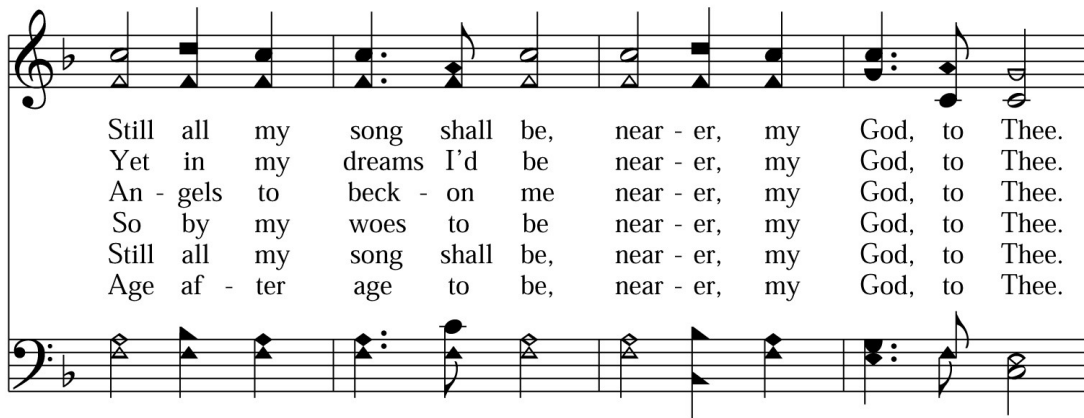
Vs. 6 Edward H. Bickersteth, Jr.



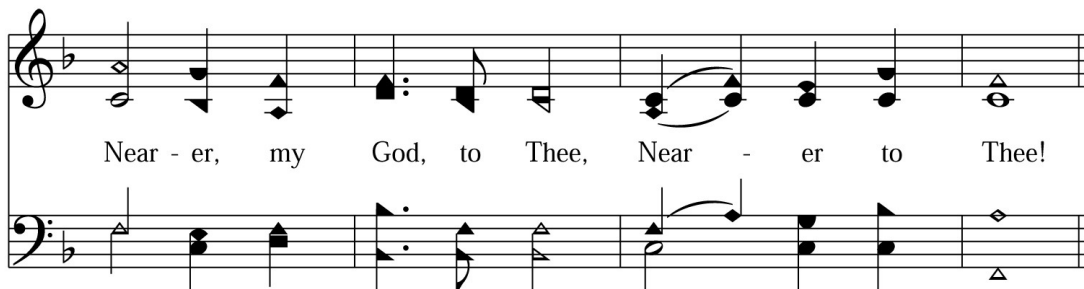
1. Near - er, my God, to Thee, near - er to Thee!
2. Though like the wan - der - er, the sun gone down.
3. There let the way ap - pear, steps un - to Heav'n;
4. Then, with my wak - ing thoughts bright with Thy praise,
5. Or, if on joy - ful wing cleav - ing the sky,
6. There in my Fa - ther's home, safe and at rest,



E'en though it be a cross that rais - eth me,
Dark - ness be o - ver me, my rest a stone.
All that Thou send - est me, in mer - cy given;
Out of my ston - y griefs Beth - el I'll raise;
Sun, moon, and stars for - got, up - ward I'll fly,
There in my Sav - ior's love, per - fect - ly blest;



Still all my song shall be, near - er, my God, to Thee.
Yet in my dreams I'd be near - er, my God, to Thee.
An - gels to beck - on me near - er, my God, to Thee.
So by my woes to be near - er, my God, to Thee.
Still all my song shall be, near - er, my God, to Thee.
Age af - ter age to be, near - er, my God, to Thee.



Near - er, my God, to Thee, Near - er to Thee!

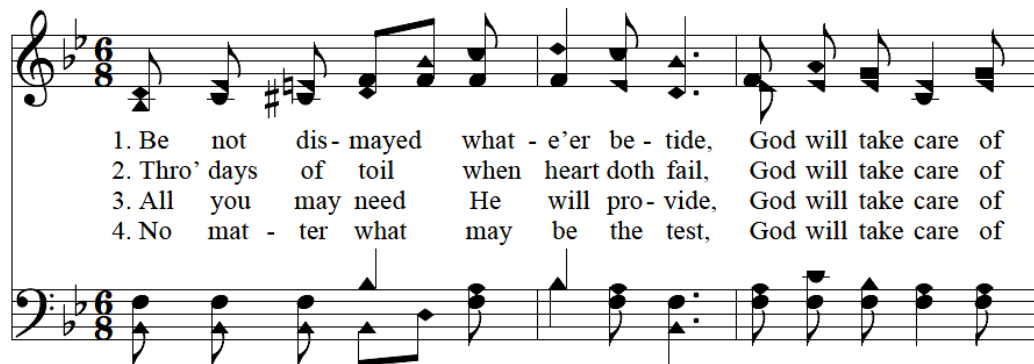
God Will Take Care of you

casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you. - 1 Pet. 5:7

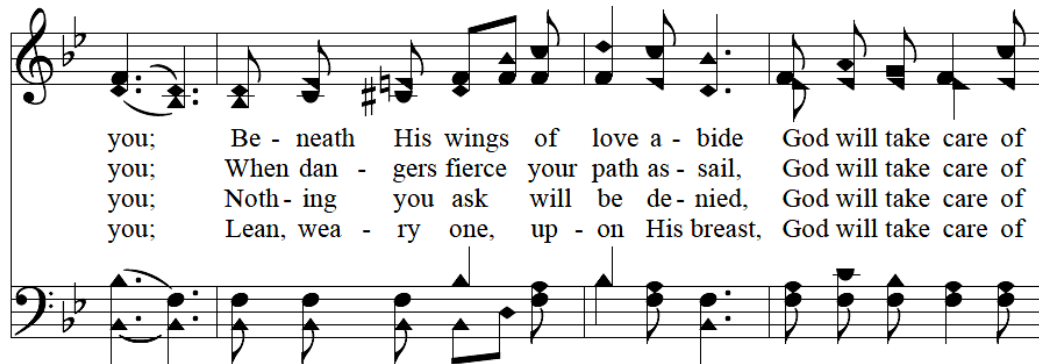
B♭ - 2 - MI

C. D. Martin

W. S. Martin, 1905

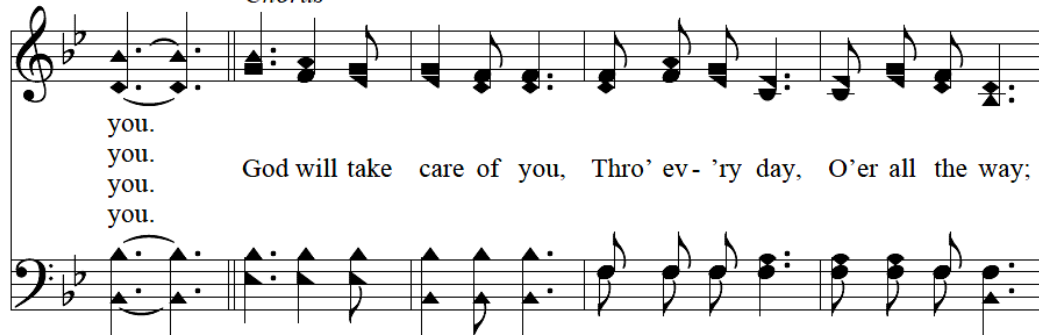


1. Be not dis-mayed what-e'er be-tide, God will take care of
 2. Thro' days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of
 3. All you may need He will pro-vide, God will take care of
 4. No mat-ter what may be the test, God will take care of

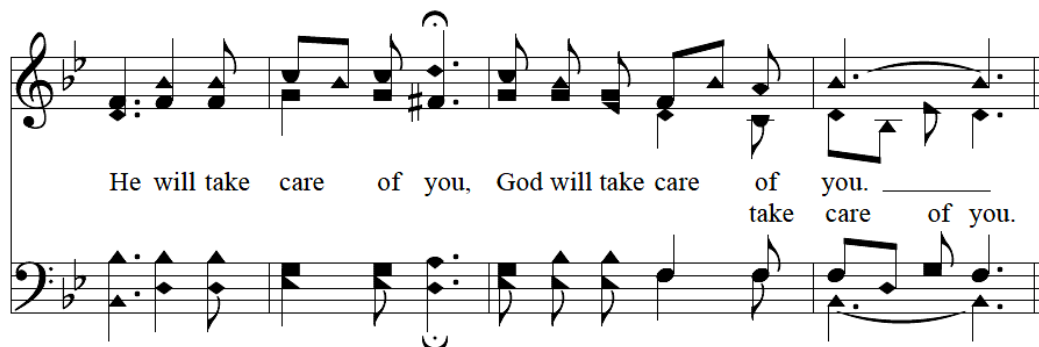


you; Be-neath His wings of love a-bide God will take care of
 you; When dan-gers fierce your path as-sail, God will take care of
 you; Noth-ing you ask will be de-nied, God will take care of
 you; Lean, wea-ry one, up-on His breast, God will take care of

Chorus



you.
 you.
 you.
 you.
 God will take care of you, Thro' ev-'ry day, O'er all the way;



He will take care of you, God will take care of you.
 take care of you.

Video Examples and Resources from YouTube

Music resources for use with: ***The Spirit Within: Make it Personal***

You can use these clips as part of your worship to lead into the message. You can also use them as examples for the planning team to study as you develop your own message. (To open the YouTube sites, you need to have access to the website from your computer. Hold down the control key and click on the website address (URL).

Just As I Am (Here I Am) - Rhema Marvanne

<http://www.youtube.com/user/RhemaMarvanne?v=vsVvkrSk18&feature=pyv&ad=7326733930&kw=christian%20music#p/c/7D03119F9BC9A61E/0/sewa1KkKOfc>

Here I am to Worship (Spanish)

Vengo a adorarte

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5LroBOHkT0>

Lord I Lift Your Name on High

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COQ6cni_TG8

You Are My All in All (Chinese)

祢是我的一切

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qc6vnPPM-JE&index=9&list=PLeyCcM2Tbyy_WS05U64PoTVikI_Xz9QTC

How Excellent is Thy Name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toctheu5qPo&list=PLAimbpQf8zH5Ofxn-SZeHO2HdjMw9LHJv&index=61>

Everybody Clap Your Hands

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb6YQ5U2BoM>

Let Everything that Has Breath Praise the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zooOjNu2X8>

People Need the Lord (Chinese)

人們需要主

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii39-4A1TsQ&index=50&list=PLeyCcM2Tbyy_WS05U64PoTVikI_Xz9QTC

Blessed Assurance

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MFyp880DEiA&feature=related>

On Christ the Solid Rock I Stand

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3n5w_2IXvuA

Open the Eyes of My Heart Lord (Spanish)

Abre mis ojos oh Cristo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAlyn2pEAU4>

About the Author

Lonnie Graves has provided communications, leadership and contextual learning opportunities for nearly two decades. She has worked with hundreds of participants, through college instruction, corporate training and through her own Art and Culture leadership and contextual training business.

Graves has been trainer, speaker, presenter and keynoter at many events across the United States. She has celebrated student learning as an adjunct college instructor of General Education. Prior to this, she served as a Director of Women's Ministries in the office of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada. Graves has directed national and local learning/travel experiences for groups within the United States, and outside of the United States to Haiti and the Dominican Republic. She has served on various boards, and on planning teams for national events. Graves continues as a trainer, communications consultant and curriculum developer in her own business, incorporating contextual learning experiences, while expanding perspectives through Art and Cultural awareness.

Graves is also a published writer and photographer. She is a graduate of California State University, Sacramento where she has degrees in both Journalism and Communication. She brings a diversified perspective of practical business experience and effective educational instruction.



Min. Sheila Spencer

Director of Christian Education and Faith Formation
Assistant to the President of Disciples Home Missions
Telephone: (317) 713-2634
E-mail: sspencer@dhm.disciples.org

Wilma Shuffitt

Ministry Associate
Telephone: (317) 713-2639
E-mail: wshuffitt@dhm.disciples.org



Disciples Home Missions is on Facebook!

Follow us at www.facebook.com/discipleshomemissions for resources and news that support your mission and ministries.

www.discipleshomemissions.org