

Straight from the "Hart"

Worship Service from May 30, 2021

Memorial Sunday



Memorial Day Tribute This is Memorial Sunday, the day we honor those who gave their lives to protect our nation's way of life. For those of you who are veterans, if you are comfortable standing, please do, if not, raise your hand in honor of your fellow fallen, and that we may honor you for being a part of those forces that are willing to sacrifice everything. Thank you for your service... Now let's all of us who are comfortable standing rise and join them in paying tribute through prayer.

Lord, we thank you for all those who have offered their lives to protect our freedoms in this nation. We remember their sacrifice and are grateful. We remember all who answered that call and now stand before you. The custom of Memorial Day is often expanded to remember not only those who have fallen in wars, but also all our loved ones and ancestors who have directly or indirectly blessed us on our journey by their examples, people we may not even know who did their part to make life in America what it is, teachers and preachers, friends and family, community members and church family; heroes whose lives have inspired and empowered us, and whose influence is a healing grace. Their love is ever with us. We rededicate our lives to follow the best of their examples and make our world a better place for all people around us and who follow us in the life of faith in America. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Please remain standing as we say three pledges, to American flag, to the Christian flag, to the Bible and the hymn that follows.

Pledges -- American, Christian, Bible

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America,
and to the Republic for which it stands:
one nation under God, indivisible,
with liberty and justice for all.

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag
and to the Savior for whose Kingdom it stands.
One Savior, crucified, risen, and coming again
with life and liberty to all who believe,
uniting all humanity in service and in love. *

* There is no singular "official" pledge to the Christian flag, this is a blend of a couple of the more popular pledges.

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word,
I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path
and will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

Music America

Call to Worship (L: Leader C: = Congregation)

Pastor: We sang “Author of liberty” and “freedom’s holy light”. The freedom of nation -- the freedom of faith for that matter -- is not intended to lead us to *license* -- but calls us to *responsible* freedom. Join me on the bold font as our lay reader leads us in our call to worship based on Paul’s words to the church at Corinth. This week, we get to start the reading together.

C: “Under grace... we’re free, we have the right to do anything we please.”

L: Your slogan, “Everything is permitted” may be true -- but not everything is helpful. “Everything is permitted” -- but not everything builds up and causes the spiritual advancement of others. So don’t always seek what is best for you at the expense of another.

C: No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

L: Do not cause anyone to stumble, offending Jews or Greeks or any part of God’s community over your personal preferences. I try to please everyone in every way, rather than putting my liberty first. For I am not seeking my own good but the benefit of many. I sincerely attempt to do anything I can so others may be saved.

C: Whatever we do, we will live our lives in a way that glorifies and honors God.
(1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 32-33,31 (NIV,TLV,TPT blended))

It is the prison of sin that causes us to look out only for ourselves -- it is God’s overcoming grace that frees us and empowers us to live for the betterment of the world, the betterment of others, as well as ourselves... Let’s sing...

Music (vv 1,2) Grace Greater Than our Sin

Act of Centering (..... = pause to allow the imagery to sink in)

They hymn points us to the cross as our refuge. In the Bible, the word cross is sometimes used to capture Jesus’ birth, life (his teaching and miracles), his death, resurrection, ascension and sending of the Holy Spirit. Our refuge is in all of what Jesus has done for us. A refuge is a place where you feel absolutely safe - sheltered from threats, a sanctuary in which to go in the midst of difficulties... [Underscoring music begins] I invite you to close your eyes and breathe deeply.

Think through your memories... think of times when you felt most secure.... maybe it is a place.... maybe it is an activity.... maybe it is a person.... maybe it is an event.... one that came to my mind was a sitting on a second story screened in patio on a warm summer night during a fierce rainstorm. Flashes of lightning briefly interrupting the black air -- piercing the eyes but gone too quickly to see.... the occasional roaring, rolling rumbling thunder interrupting the hypnotic drone of heavy rain bouncing off the roof and ground and sensing its coolness as it drops through the heat of the night -- Right up next to it -- but untouched by it all... now hear a few words and phrases lifted from David in Psalm 27 as he sought sanctuary in God when surrounded by conspirators.... hear the words applied in the example I gave, or in your secure place, The Lord is my light, my salvation, my stronghold.... I don't need to be afraid.... even if I am attacked from every direction.... I will not be shaken.... Only this one thing I crave -- to live with him every moment in his house -- to behold God's beauty... to feel him treasure me.... to hear him say "come and seek me" to feel his hands lift me out of reach of what surrounds me.... to tell me not to give up or be impatient.... to know his goodness will again be seen.... Meditate on these things in the next moment of silence... [Instrumental of Prayer Chorus begins] ending with these words as it ends: Be strong, take courage, never lose hope, wait for the Lord. Amen.

Theme

In today's context, the enemy that surrounds us, within and without, is temptation. One of the more common temptations that is easy to visual is coveting -- desiring something that doesn't belong to us, or being consumed with for greed for more than what we deserve, or get, or should have...

Aesop visualizes for us the danger of falling to these temptations.

A little boy one found a jar of nuts on the table. "I would like some of these nuts," he thought. "I'm not sure Mother would give them to me if she were here. I'll take a big handful." So he reached into the jar and grabbed as many as he could get hold of. But when he tried to pull his hand out, he found the neck of the jar was too small, and his hand was held fast -- [his fist, nut-filled hand - he couldn't get it back out of the jar]. But he did not want to drop any of those nuts. He tried again and again but couldn't get the whole handful out. At last, he began to cry. Just then his mother came into the room. "What's the matter?" she asked. "I can't take this handful of nuts out of the jar." sobbed the boy. "Well, don't be so greedy," his mother replied. "Just take two or three, and you'll have no trouble getting your hand out."

[And he did]. “How easy that was,” said the boy as he left the table. “I might have thought of that myself.” *

But that is what greed does. It blinds us to the simple solutions because we can't get our focus off of getting more and more of our desired prize is. I don't know if it is true, but I've heard that in some areas of the world, monkeys are captured by that very process. A gourd is hollowed out and somehow secured to a tree or the ground. Then they'd put some bright shiny marbles or treats in it. The curious monkey would reach in the narrow opening and grab the bait, and for the same reason as the child, they are unwilling to let go, and they can't get out of that narrow opening of the gourd and so they remain trapped until the trapper comes in to finalize the capture.

Closely related, Aesop writes about how, once drawn in, how permanent may be the trap, and the solution may not be as simple as learning to let go...

A jar of honey chanced to spill
its contents on the window sill
in many a vicious pool and rill.
[that's a small trickling stream]

The flies, attracted by the sweet,
began to greedily eat,
they smeared their
fragile wings and feet.

With many a twitch and pull in vain
they gasped to get away again,
and died in aromatic pain.

Moral

O foolish creatures that destroy
themselves for transitory joy.
[for not permanent joy]...*

* *The Boy and the Nuts, The Flies and the Honey* in: Bennett, William J., edited with commentary; *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

The real enticement of any temptation is to take our eyes off of God, our true source of security and refuge and our guide to live our best for him, with each other, for our world. as well as for ourselves -- and to distract us to -- *anything* else -- as our earlier reading said -- selfishly seeking what we imagine is best for ourselves even if it is at the expense of another. As we move to prayer, let's prepare our hearts -- to focus -- by singing...

Prayer Music (Sing 2 x) Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in his wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
in the light of his glory and grace.

Prayer Lord, we turn our eyes to you to find clarity in our own life. We turn our eyes on you because you are already watching us in love. You know all things. You know when we sit and rise, when we go out and when we rest. You are familiar with each of our ways. You have searched us. You know our thoughts, what we are tempted to say before we ever say it. There is no place we can run away from your Spirit. You surround us with your protection and love and gently lay your hand of encouragement on us. We cannot even begin to imagine the depths of your covenant commitments to us. (Inspired by Psalm 139:1-12)

You are our strength, and it is why we play instruments and shout and sing in worship to you. Time and again you have come to our rescue in our distress and offered to remove our burden.

And so, it is with gratitude for your power and presence that we lift our cares and concerns to you. Since last week, we have heard of * Bruce Harton's cousin Jill Dunn, who has been in hospice and received a quilt, but now lost her house and all her belongings to a fire. * For former parishioners Larry and Jill Scramlin as he is recovering from a stroke * For Micky Voigt's daughter-in-law Bre who received a kidney transplant from her sister this week; as well as those we have named in earlier weeks and some that are only deep in our hearts and known only by you -- but that doesn't stop you from working on our behalf. You fill our lives with good things, and that is why we worship no one other than you -- who saves us from sin and evil and strengthens us against temptation, and who teaches us to pray

Lord's Prayer

Bible Reading

Let's hear an abridged reading of when Jesus went into the wilderness and faced temptations to become a different kind of Messiah than he was sent to be...

After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Then the devil ... had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command

his angels... so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.” Jesus answered, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

[Then] ... the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. “All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus said, “Away from me, Satan, for It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” (From Matthew 4:2-10 (NIV))

One of the things we can learn from this narrative is that to defeat temptation, we must confess our need to place our reliance and trust in God.

Special Music

Lord, I Need You

Lord I come, I confess
 Bowing here, I find my rest
 Without You, I fall apart
 You're the one that guides my heart

Refrain

Lord, I need You, oh I need You
 Every hour, I need You
 My one defense, my righteousness
 Oh God, how I need You

Where sin runs deep, Your grace is more
 Where grace is found is where You are
 And where You are, Lord I am free
 Holiness is Christ in me

Refrain

So teach my song to rise to You
 When temptation comes my way
 And when I cannot stand, I'll fall on You
 Jesus, You're my hope and stay

Refrain

You're my one defense, my righteousness
 Oh God, how I need You

Repeat

Sermon The Joy of Resisting Temptation

Last week, we talked about the need to receive and offer forgiveness. Forgiveness, when it is done right, can be an uncomfortable process, a difficult process, with no guarantee that there will be “no lingering consequences. The more we can avoid the need for it, the better off we are. This is why Jesus taught us to pray, And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Say it with me,

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. The more times we are victorious over temptation, the less tangled and hindered our spiritual and relational lives will be, and the less

Temptation

*** is not from God**

*** He wants us to win over it.**

we will have to do the forgiving part which is so difficult. Martin Luther penned the saying, "We cannot keep birds from flying through the air, but we can keep them from nesting in our hair." (For those of you who are losing it, you are better off, right? 😊). Evil is always coming at us, flying at us. When one temptation seems to wane or cease, there is another one on the way -- with a fresh attack, trying to catch us off guard. The real issue, though, is not the temptations flying by, but whether one manages to land – what is critical is how we respond to them. Temptation is one thing. Consenting and yielding to that temptation is completely different.

God doesn't tempt us, and he wants us to win over it, and would expect we would naturally not want to be captured by sin. So why should we even have to ask God to not lead us into tempting situations?

A few weeks back when we asked for our daily bread, it is not because God doesn't know what we need that, or is unwilling to provide it; but we say it to remind us that hunger and poverty and need is all around us, and with us; and that ultimately, and thankfully (we will not take for granted his provision), that God is our source of daily provision; and that he calls on us to participate in being the answer to that prayer for others.

In the same way, this request for temptation deliverance reminds us that evil is a part of life on this earth and it is all around us; and that God is our ultimate source of victory over it, and we are to live together in such a way that we help each other succeed -- by

Temptation Deliverance

*** evil is present**

*** God is our source of victory**

*** We are called to be God's instruments to help each other win.**

not tempting others to do wrong, for one, but also by creating opportunities for people to find help to overcome their temptations such as support groups and accountability groups (such as AA or Emmaus 4th Day or Bible Studies and worship – the list could go on and on) describing group or individual teaching and counsel and encouragement.

The Bible has much advice, help and strength to give us when we are tempted. Many of those texts speak for themselves. They sometimes mention specific

temptations of which the original readers were especially susceptible (such as anxiety (we don't have that any more today, do we? ☹️)) and anger (we don't have that any more today either ☹️); but regardless, *whatever* our temptations may be, the principles can be applied to our life, and especially that principle that we rely on God as our source and strength and security against temptation. We are going to participate in these Bible selections by singing and reading responsively. Again, join me on the bold font and on the musical response, and our reader (L:) will lead us with the rest. We will start by singing the response twice...

Bible Reading Selections on Temptation with musical response

♪ *He's my rock, he's my fortress, he's my deliverer,
in him will I trust. Praise the name of Jesus.*

(Repeat)

L: Consider it pure joy whenever you face trials of many kinds, [for it] produces perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work -

C: - so that we may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

L: Then, having stood the test, you will receive the crown of life that God promises to those who love him.

C: When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me."

L: For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by their own evil desire, they are dragged away and enticed. After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is full-grown, it gives birth to death.

C: But he gives us more grace.

♪ *He's my rock, he's my fortress, he's my deliverer,
in him will I trust. Praise the name of Jesus.*

L: Submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

C: [We will] come near to God.

L: and he will come near to you... Wash your hands and purify your hearts. Grieve, mourn and wail – (Repent).

C: [We will] humble ourselves before the Lord.

L: Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, and he will lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you. Be alert and self-controlled. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.

C: [We will] resist him, standing firm in the faith.

L: The family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

C: To him be the power forever and ever.

*♫ He's my rock, he's my fortress, he's my deliverer,
in him will I trust. Praise the name of Jesus.*

L: If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humankind.

C: And God is faithful.

L: He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear but will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

C: Therefore [we will] flee from idolatry.

L: Flee from all this. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness.

C: [We will] fight the good fight of faith.

L: Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called... Put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

C: We will not give the devil a foothold.

*♫ He's my rock, he's my fortress, he's my deliverer,
in him will I trust. Praise the name of Jesus.*

Selections lifted from: James 1:2-4, 12-15, 4:4b-10; 1 Peter 5:6-11;
1 Corinthians 10:12-14, 1 Timothy 6:11-12a; Ephesians 4:25-27. (NIV)
Music from *Praise the Name of Jesus*

In some of those readings you heard the word "trials" and "tests" and not always the word "temptations", but they are associated and interwoven with temptation because when we endure struggles, when we are suffering; with that often comes

a temptation to doubt, to give up, to lose faith. So even though they have a different nature, they are often intertwined.

In the comic strip *Hagar the Horrible*, (the Vikings?) a church sign advertises the sermon title: "The World's Six Worst Sins". The church is packed out with Vikings wanting to find out how to get involved. Most of us recognize the obviously ugly evils and we are not tempted by them. But many temptations are, at least at first, innocent-looking, and appealing activities. They look and taste good, but the soul cannot stomach them. An old infomercial begins with a tearful lady talking about how she hated herself a little more each time she gave in because she could not control her temptation...

We experience the cycle: Enjoy a forbidden pleasure, feel guilty, determine to never do it again, take pride in brief moments of self-control, and then fail again. Each time we repeat the pattern, the ruts are cut a bit deeper, the chains pulled a little tighter.

Luther's Catechism says that there are three sources of temptation. One is from within ourselves. People might say, "I wasn't myself" or "I don't know what pos-

Sources of Temptation
1) within ourselves

sessed me." Well, what possessed us in the critical moment of failure, was that we replaced "Thy will be done" with "my will be done." Recognize what is truly evil, acknowledge that there is something twisted within us that resonates, responds, and desires wrong things at times. They may be different wrong things for each of us that we are tempted by – depending upon our different strengths and weaknesses, by our various tastes and personalities, tempted by various evil pleasures, or evil distortions of legitimate God-given gifts.

The infomercial leaps forward in time and that same person now says with joy, "Every time I resist, every time I turn down that temptation, every time I gain control over my desires, I love myself a little better".

And it is true -- every temptation resisted, every trial bravely borne, every obstacle overcome, each persecution successfully handled and forgiven, each hardship endured, each of these gives us more experience, strengthening and building our character and growing us to spiritual maturity. Succeeding through Spirit-led self-control leads to joy.

Some temptations are inspired from within our own flawed desires and weak disciplines. Other temptations are external pressures from our environment. Martin

Sources of Temptation
2) around us

Luther says our world is filled with "nothing but hatred and envy, and enmity, and

violence and wrong, and unfaithfulness, and vengeance, and cursing, and raillery (that's "humorous" ridicule), and slander, and [misplaced] pride... and honor, and fame, and power, and his list goes on and on and then he concludes, no one is willing to be the least, everyone desires to sit at the head and to be seen before all. (And you just thought it was a modern problem!).

Some external temptations are avoidable. But too often, we want to play with it. We get as close to it as possible without "crossing the line". The problem is, the closer you get to that line, the blurrier that line becomes,

Sources of Temptation
2) around us
 * avoidable

and it is harder and harder to tell when we have crossed it. Philip Keller recommends that, for examples, that "If you've got sticky fingers [do you know what that means, right? [yes tempted to steal], then don't handle other peoples' things or money. If you can't handle power, then don't ... accept places of position and power. (*A Layman's Look at the Lord's Prayer*).

Can we go to old haunts where old habits are so entrenched? Can we go to new dangerous places just to see how good we can do it? It'd be like the dieter saying, "I'll keep making or buying cakes and cookies and sweets and rolls, I just won't eat them". Or the angry person saying, "I'll keep doing the things that get me exhausted, and stressed, and churn my stomach and make my head ache, but I'll manage my temper just fine.

Be smart and alert. Recognize your weakness, your vulnerabilities, learn how to adjust your life to avoid such situations. Avoid the avoidable. *This is living out what it means to not be led into temptation.*

I'm going to have to tell you a story I wasn't planning on telling because it keeps popping into my head and I can't get it out, so I better get it out... When I was in college, I came home for the summer and rejoined all the friends I had grown up with in that church in a new young adult Sunday School class with a new teacher. In *that* Sunday School class, they had a large jar in the center of the room and the the chairs were formed in a wide circle around the room, and this is how they would collect their Sunday School offering. They would flip coins toward that jar to see how good they could get at making the shot! Unique ways of collecting! We should try that sometime... But one day we were talking about temptation, and he used that jar as an example. If that was the temptation, we want to get close to the jar... no -- just stay away from the jar as far as you can if that is what is tempting you. But we want to keep circling, and circling, and closer and closer -- until it ruins us.

We run from sin and evil. We are also instructed to pray, “deliver us from evil”. This part of the petition tells us that not all situations can we run from. For example, If you are tempted to have negative reactions to a mean boss, you still have to go to work, you can’t avoid that situation. We can’t run, so we have to be ready to resist -- so that evil will run.

Sources of Temptation
2) around us
 * unavoidable

True story. A woman is in her apartment going about her daily tasks. A neighbor phones, wanting to borrow three dollars of laundry money - quarters. So he comes over in immodest tight cutoff shorts, receives the money, hesitates; then leaves. Realizing her husband is working as is his wife; he returns, falsely implies she sent signals to him as a way of pressuring her to give in to his advances. Luckily, this man finally accepts her refusal and leaves.

Sometimes, out of the blue -- what we think is innocent throws us into an unavoidable test. You never know when evil pressures will come your way, metaphorically, or literally, knocking at your door. This is why we must always be ready, and alert, never letting down our guard. We must be prayed up and studied up, and able to claim God’s promises and resources – surrounding ourselves with every support we can so that we can resist the temptation that is always roaming about, looking for an opportunity to defeat us.

Alter destructive lifestyles, repair, if possible, or avoid destructive relationships. Over our lifetime, we have developed patterns of reaction which we instinctively apply to any given moment. We feel like we are just

Resources to Resist
1) abandon old habits
 * develop new ones

doing it in the moment, but over the years we have learned to react in certain ways to a situation, and even if it is a new situation, our brain will instinctively draw in from our past experiences what it thinks will work in that new moment. And if we have learned the wrong things, and we want to lead the life we want to live -- we will need to unlearn the unhealthy reactions we have formed in our lives, and develop and replace them with healthy, constructive reactions. As we manage to create successful responses, our lives are freed to find new ways of living and relating to each other in which our spirit will reflect God's Spirit – and our spirits will be restored. Successful living through Spirit-led self-control brings true joy. This is living out what it means to be delivered from evil.

Sometimes that phrase “deliver us from evil” is translated “deliver us from the evil one.” This is the third source of temptation. It is that direct attack on your

Sources of Temptation
3) evil powers

spirit. When you are running late, and you get every red signal on the way, it is that power that whispers in your ear that the lights were manipulated just to get you angry and even later. Anyone ever heard that tape in your head before? When the elevator gets stuck between floors, you sense it as the force that jammed the elevator “just to frustrate you” and to deter your life. It is the small voice in your heart that convinces you into thinking that loving relationships are all hot kisses and never a pile of dirty dishes. It is that distracting energy that makes you want to neglect loved ones who so desperately need your encouragement. It is that “random” inner voice that spews lies that you are not valued, not loved, and not important. That the Universe is against you, and you cannot win... that is a powerful voice. Sometimes we have learned them throughout our lifetime and sometimes they just come out of the blue.

Whether literal or metaphorical, we all know the reality of these kinds of attacks. It can come in many subtle or aggressive forms, wanting to cause conditions in which it is easy for us to fall into hatred, develop a spirit of doubt and unbelief, inappropriate attitudes of envy, and support structures of destruction rather than construction.

When it feels like evil is attacking from within and from without, surrounding us on all sides – chasing and hunting us down like a baby gazelle that has been separated from the herd -- pray. Pray. Pray that God will not allow us to be worn down. And even if we do experience a failure, to not give up; to get back up and keep moving. To keep returning to the strength of God and to the strength of the herd (the herd is each other, our fellow Christians). Allow him to warm our hearts and strengthen our resolve, to subdue our rebellious nature by his gracious love, so that by his power and strength we may resist -- and temptation loses its power -- and the grace of Christ transforms our character from one victory to the next.

Resources to Resist
2) accept God's help
*** humbly**

We already sang a song about how God's grace is available and can overcome our sinful failures. That is important, because we all fail now and then. I also grew up with a hymn by Annie Flint that sings of grace not as mercy for failures, but as God's gifted strength in those critical moments of trials and temptation that would want to wear us down -- and out -- of the faith. And this is what she lyric'd for us:

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater
 He sendeth more strength when the labors increase
 To added affliction He addeth His mercy
 To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.
 When we have exhausted our store of endurance
 When our strength has failed ere the day is half done
 When we reach the end of our hoarded resources
 Our Father's full giving is only begun.
 His love has no limit, His grace has no measure
 His pow'r has no boundary known unto men.
 For out of His infinite riches in Jesus
 He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!

Prayer Let's pray. Dear Lord, while we live on this earth, we will be confronted by temptations from within, from without, by evil [from the evil one]. None escape the allurements of temptation. When Jesus lived among us, he experienced temptation, yet he was victorious because he deeply depended upon you and your word, and by so doing became a light to the nations of what it means to be human as humanity is meant to be. We are amazed that as we turn to you, we find promised resources that you lavish upon us again and again; that we will have every opportunity to run, or to resist, by the power of your limitless love, ... through Jesus Christ, and it is in his name that we pray. Amen.

Such is his commitment to us -- let's now sing of our commitment to him, which is based on recognizing and leaning on his grace over failures and his limitless gift of grace which gives us an enduring strength of faith, as he journey's with us, enabling us to be victorious over trials and temptation as we follow him all the way to our heavenly home...

Music (vv 1,2,3a,4b) O Jesus I Have Promised

Blessing Now, Lord, we go in the name of the One who does not withhold his love, but faithfully listens to the prayers of those who reverently worship him. Amen.