

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Seward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of Just As I Am, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

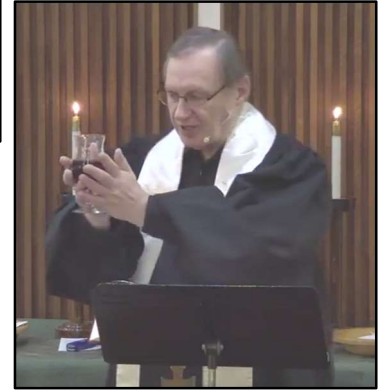
By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

CCLI # 2561297

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Seward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

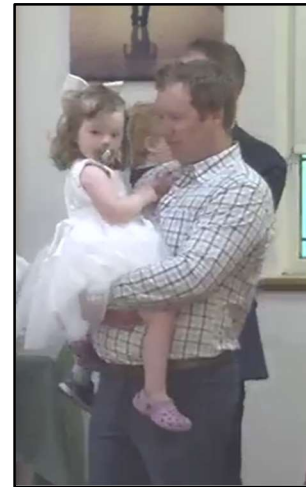
And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
 Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
 is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
 rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
 strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of Just As I Am, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

CCLI # 2561297

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Seward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.
Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

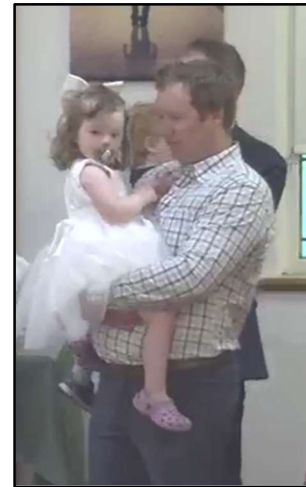
And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
 Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
 is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
 rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
 strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of *Just As I Am*, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

CCLI # 2561297

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Saward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
 Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
 is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
 rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
 strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of *Just As I Am*, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

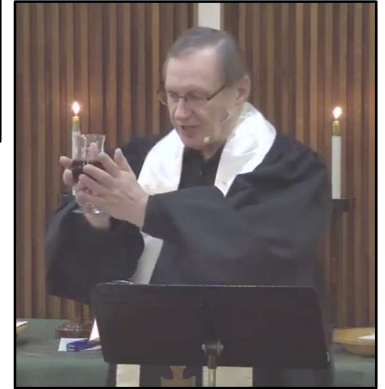
By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

CCLI # 2561297

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Seward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.

Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
 Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
 is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
 rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
 strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of *Just As I Am*, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

CCLI # 2561297

Straight from the "Hart"

August 6, 2023

Prepare: Preparing to Prepare



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are really glad you are here and participating in today's time of worship.

Opening Prayer Our heavenly Father, we faithfully give ourselves with gratitude as one way of praising you for what you have done and with a confident hope in who you are and what you will do for us. We remember how you faithfully fed your people in the wilderness in the days of Moses, and the crowds by the sea in the days of Jesus, bringing nourishment not only to their bodies, but also to their hearts, minds, and souls. As you worship, we ask that you, Lord, the Bread of Life and the source of Living Water, will refresh our spirits today. Amen.

(Adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship and © 2009 Lorrinda H M Hoover both in UM Worship & Song, Leader's Edition [W&S LE])

Call to Worship Come to join in worship of God, whose love, like rolling ocean waves, is never ceasing, yet ever refreshing. Come to be washed in the clear, calm waters of his mercy and grace so that we are made new, clean, bathed in the tides of his restoring forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

ad. from © 2009 Mark Parsons in W&S LE.

Baptism (P – Pastor, C – Reader with Congregation)

Music As the Lisieki family and those they have asked to stand with them come forward, let's sing **Baptized in Water**

Words: Michael Seward, © 1982 Jubilate Hymns, adm. by Hope Publishing Co.
Music: Traditional Gaelic Melody

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
cleansed by the blood of Christ our King;
heirs of salvation, trusting his promise,
faithfully now God's praises we sing.

Baptized in water, sealed by the Spirit,
marked with the sign of Christ our King;
born of one Father, we are his children;
joyfully now God's praises we sing.

Introduction to the Service

Brothers and sisters in Christ: Through the Sacrament of Baptism we are initiated into Christ's holy church. We are incorporated into (become the beloved recipients of and participants in) God's mighty acts of salvation, and given new birth through water and the Spirit. All this is God's gift, offered to us without price.

Presentation

Jared Kenneth Lisiecki and Gretchen Sunderland Lisiecki have brought their children forward to be baptized. Jared and Gretchen, who are you presenting for baptism?

Maisey Sharolynne.

And standing with you for Maisey is Jason and Ann Lisiecki. Who else are you presenting for baptism?

Maven Lee.

And standing with you for Maven is Garrison Sunderland and Krista Davies.

Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith

On behalf of the church, I ask you, parents and sponsors:

Do you renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of your sin? **I do.**

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves? **I do.**

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races? **I do.**

Will you nurture Maisey and Maven in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead Christian lives? **I will.**

And now the rest of you, who here and throughout this sacrament, will speak for the Church across the world, representing all the additional Christian influences that will interact with Maisey and Maven,

Do you, as Christ's body, the church, reaffirm both your rejection of sin and your commitment to Christ? **We do.**

Will you nurture one another in the Christian faith and life and now include Maisey and Maven in your spiritual care?

With God's help we will proclaim the good news and live according to the example of Christ. We will surround them with a community of love and forgiveness, that they may grow in their service to others. We will pray for them, that they may be true disciples who walk in the way that leads to life.

Then let all of us join together in professing the essence of the Christian faith as contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Do you believe in God?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Thanksgiving over the Water

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Eternal Father, when nothing existed but chaos, you swept across the dark waters and brought forth light. In the days of Noah you saved those on the ark through water and lit the sky with a rainbow. When you saw your people enslaved in Egypt, you led them to freedom through the sea. You brought their children through the water to the promised land. In the fullness of time you sent Jesus, nurtured in the water of a womb, then baptized by John and anointed by your Spirit. Jesus called his disciples to share in the baptism of his death and resurrection and to make disciples of all nations. So pour out your Holy Spirit, bless this gift of water and the ones who receive it, to wash away their sin and clothe

them in righteousness throughout their life, that, dying and being raised with Christ, they may share in Christ's final victory. **Amen.**

Baptism with the Laying on of Hands

Maisey Sharolynne, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Maven Lee, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit work within you, that being born through water and the Spirit you may be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Commendation and Welcome

Through baptism, Maven and Maisey are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome them as members of the family of Christ.

Now it is our joy to welcome our sisters in Christ.

Through baptism, you are now incorporated by the Holy Spirit into God's new creation and made to share in Christ's line of royal representatives. We are all one in Christ Jesus. And so with joy and thanksgiving we welcome you as baptized members of the family of Christ.

Members of the household of God, I commend these persons to your love and care. Do all in your power to increase their faith, confirm their hope, and perfect them in love [and remember what we do for each other as baptized members of God's family].

We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love. As members together with you in the body of Christ and in this congregation of The United Methodist Church, we renew our covenant faithfully to participate in the ministries of the Church by our prayers, our presence, our gifts, our service and our witness, that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Pastoral Baptism Prayer

Let's pray... God of grace, You invite us to be your faithful people even before we are aware of your grace. You knit us together in the womb and you never stop loving us. Thank you for claiming Maisey Sharolynne and Maven Lee as your beloved, sealing them with Your Spirit by the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ.

We are confident that as they grow concurrently in this physical world and in your heavenly kingdom, that your Presence will always be close beside them, endearing them to yourself and to a noble life. Direct their paths, nurture their lives. Be their constant companion in times of blessing and in struggles with doubt. May they always sense your compassionate provision. Lead them away from evil and strengthen them against temptation. May your glory shine through them all their days.

We also pray you bless their parents, those who stand with them, their extended families, and the Christian communities that they may experience throughout their days. Enable them to effectively model lives lived in the Spirit, that Maisey and Maven may learn of love and forgiveness, of grace and acceptance, of spiritual gifts and empowering maturity. May they model before them the joy of your salvation, insight into your purposes, and meaningfulness in your service.

May they keep you ever before these children. In the busy-ness of life, prompt

them to prioritize time for teaching about you, as they sit together, as they walk together, when they relax and when they work, and even in how they choose to create the environments that will surround them.

So that as they mature, they may constantly learn to love you more with all their heart, soul, and strength, and that like your Son, they may grow in wisdom and stature, and in favor with you and with humanity all of their days. We pray this through the grace of your Son, our Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Music As they return to their seats, let's sing

Child of Blessing, Child of Promise

Words: Ronald S. Cole-Turner, 1981

© 1981 Ronald S. Cole-Turner

Music: Attr. to C.F. Witt 1715 ; ad. by Henry J. Gauntlett, 1861

1. Child of blessing, child of promise,
baptized with the Spirit's sign;
with this water God has sealed you
unto love and grace divine.
2. Child of love, our love's expression,
love's creation, loved indeed!
Fresh from God, refresh our spirits,
into joy and laughter lead.
3. Child of joy, our dearest treasure,
God's you are, from God you came.
Back to God we humbly give you;
live as one who bears Christ's name.
4. Child of God, your loving Parent,
learn to know whose child you are.
Grow and laugh and sing and worship,
Trust and love God more than all.

Closing Baptismal Blessing

Now may the God of all grace, who has called us to eternal glory in Christ, establish you and strengthen you by the power of the Holy Spirit, that you may live in grace and peace. **Amen.**

Theme (Intro to the Series)

This series that we are starting today is called "Prepare". It is a reminder that we are to live as people who are prepared to stand before our Lord at any given time -- by recognizing the need to make the most of the time that our Lord grants us --

by allowing him to change us and shape us from the inside out, so that we may live in the way that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has taught us to live. Preparing is successfully accomplished by reflecting, taking stock of our spiritual condition, realigning and seeking restoration for our lives where it may be getting out of kilter. Even the spiritually mature among us have room to move closer to where we are called, to reach new levels of spiritual health, to develop our spiritual commitment and gifts to carry out our callings more effectively... This serves, you might say, as a test of our emergency response systems as disciples of Jesus Christ, to make sure everything, that we -- are ready.

In the days of Joel, among other things, the powerful enriched by creating practices that allowed them to oppress and impoverish others who had no recourse. Joel warned them that they were on the verge of serious consequences. When the nation was in danger of collapse -- an army of locusts, some see it as literal, some as a foreign power, the likes of the world had never seen, would swarm down on them and leave nothing but death and destruction in their wake. Joel sounded the emergency alarm. God would not intervene if they didn't get their act together and treat each other correctly. They heard the warning much like most people today hear the siren of a tornado warning. We think it is just a test, or that it will just hop over us anyway, that it won't touch us, we won't be effected. God's people presumed on the privilege of being his people. They merely had to wait for the mighty day of the Lord, is what they were saying. As the composer wrote:

Wake, awake, for night is flying; the watchmen on the heights are crying:
 Awake, at last! People, hear the watchmen singing, with all your heart, joy
 is springing. Midnight hears the welcome voices -- and at the thrilling cry
 rejoices. Rise from your gloom, for the Lord comes down -- all glorious --
 strong in grace, and in truth victorious. (Philipp Nicolai)

Maybe we should check our systems too. Maybe we've grown complacent, or worse, in some areas. They believed that because they were God's people, they were fine. He would never let them be destroyed. He would miraculously sweep away every danger and their lives would remain favored as they exercised their abusive power against the least among them. There would be no consequences for living how they lived, or so they thought. Therefore, they would simply continue in their evil ways.

Intro to, Bible and Responsive Reading 1

The prophet warns these non-listening ears that God's people or not, if they were going to find grace – they needed to change their lives. If destruction is to be averted, they could not wait, they had to prepare now. When the day of the Lord comes, it would not be their ancestry that would save them, they needed to be caught in the act of being faithful.



“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity. Who knows? He may turn and relent and leave behind a blessing— Blow the trumpet, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people from young to old and [in every situation of life].” [Weep and pray]: “Spare your people, Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, “Where is their God?”

Joel's urgency recognized that it was too late for faithful but empty acts driven by obligation, tradition, or as a visible presentation for God, others, or even ourselves. In a different time and circumstance, Jesus makes the same point -- that in the day of the Lord, being faithful is not a presentation of specific actions for the sake of others, but a sincere heart-felt expression of our love for God and others because God loves us. Jesus said:

(R - Reader, **C – Congregation**)

R: Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we give to the needy, we do not let our left hand know what our right hand is doing, so that our giving may be in secret.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray

standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we pray, we go into our room, close the door and pray to our Father, who is unseen.

R: Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.... And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him... When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.

C: But when we fast, we put oil on our head and wash our face, so that it will not be obvious to others that we are fasting,

R: but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

C: For where our treasure is, there our heart will be also.

Selections from Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Matthew 6:1-8,16-19 (NIV)

Music So let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Change My Heart, O God

Words & Music: Eddie Espinosa, © 1982 Mercy / Vineyard Publishing

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, oh God, may I be like you.

You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mold me and make me, this is what I pray.

Change my heart, O God, make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.

Repeat

Prayers Dear Lord, as we turn to you to light our way, and transform our hearts, fear somehow dissipates. When we seek your joy, you become our strength. When we are tempted to live only for ourselves and evil advances against us, if we seek

you, you will faithfully hold us and keep us from falling. We seek your beauty today. We recognize in you that you are abundantly more than we need. Therefore, we lift up our needs and the needs of those surrounding us, in the community, the nation, and the world. **Petitions** Specifically, we offer our prayers for * Jan Martin's brother Reese and his son Calvin, the court date is now set for August 21, pray Calvin will be able to remain at home. * for Earl and Jo Campbell, prayers of thanksgiving as they celebrate their 54th wedding anniversary this week, * Cheri Holt requests prayers for her cousin Kevin Cohee who has cancer, * A friend of Jan who is having tests, * and a close friend of Margaret Melville, Jan Caloia, diagnosed with ovarian cancer and we pray as a treatment plan is being made. **We continue to pray for** * several families and friends among us that are mourning the losses of loved ones * for Noah Campbell – personal issues, * for Laura Walker who broke her leg, * for those traveling/camping or away for other reasons * for Pat Schleh's two friends who are about to begin chemo. * for Pat Schleh's daughter-in-law Joan who damaged her knee in a fall. * For Donna Webber who is doing well, * and for Ben Williams with ongoing undiagnosed issues... * There are other things going on in our congregation among us that have not been named out loud but we know who they are, or at least you do, Lord, and we lift up all that are experiencing difficulties, going for tests, that you would guide those who are treating, and those receiving the treatments – let your will be done and healing will come. Now, Lord, according to your patient timing, we ask you to intervene and bring your kingdom values to us and to your earth — as they are in heaven, just as you taught us to pray **Lord's Prayer**

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Paul encourages us to find restoration and reconciling peace with God our Father. We do this as we allow our faith in God and Christ to shape our lives, to treat others as God would have us treat them (which was demonstrated by how Christ lay down his life for us while we were still sinners).

Many of the listeners in Joel's and Jesus' day as well as the norm of most societies of any age, refuse to live this life. They continue the tactics of achieving self-serving power, enriching themselves by blocking and putting down the potential progress of others. But like Joel, Jesus, and others in every generation, Paul encourages us to live the example of Christ's love for all no matter how they respond (or not) to our best representation of his love for everyone. Paul put it this way:

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path... Rather, in every way, we show ourselves to be God's [servants]: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

2 Corinthians 6:3a (NIV), 4-10 (EHV)

Music If we are going to be prepared to face like that, or even be in the ball park of facing things like that, then we will need to ask Jesus work on our hearts, always. Let's sing...

Sanctuary

Words & Music John Thompson and Randy Scruggs
© 1982 Whole Armor/ Full Armor, adm. by Kruger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

It is you, Lord who came to save
the heart and soul of ev'ry man.
It is you Lord, who knows my weakness
who gives me strength with your own hand.

Lead me on, Lord from temptation
purify me from within.
Fill my heart with your Holy Spirit
take away all my sin.

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary,
pure and holy, tried and true.
With thanksgiving,
I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Sermon Preparing to Prepare

Joel proclaimed the urgency of preparation for the Lord's presence. John the Baptist did the same, as did Paul when he said – and mind you, he said it to the church --

We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God... we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation. From 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2 (NIV)

This is a sobering wake up call. Paul asks if we understand just how serious is this life changing commitment, and he uses adult baptism as the symbol of what it all means when he writes...

Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life... For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. If we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him... The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Romans 6:3-4 (NIV)

We dare not, like the people of Joel's day – not heed the warnings and think we are safe because we have been born into a tradition or experienced a ritual or sacrament, be it baptism or communion or something else. Don't get me wrong, these are very, very important. They are critical to our faith and vital to the building of our faith. They are important requisite steps. But they are only the beginnings and the steppingstones of an inner walk – outward symbols of what will become inner works of the Spirit in our spirits. We heard what Jesus thought as he warned us to not be like people who relied on outward actions for all the wrong reasons, while ignoring the *heart* -- of the matter.

A contemporary of John Wesley, Archbishop Thomas Secker, said: God has three sorts of servants. Some are slaves and serve him out of fear, others are hirelings and serve him for [personal gain], and the last are children, who serve out of love.

As his children, then – consider what it means to be a part of his family – it is signified in the baptismal vows – (so it is so great that we had that today for it reminded us of all of them). We are adopted into his family. We renounce evil in our life by repentance, (turning away from that evil and beginning to do good in its place); by confessing Christ as our Lord, our life's leader, trusting wholly in his grace, and promising to serve him in the church he birthed to minister to all people,

and remain with his church as faithful representatives of Christ in the world, through our prayers, presence, gifts, service, our witness, and our resources – so that God may be glorified.

Dr. Smith, a seminary professor had his class draw pictures of someone with whom they were angry. One drew a picture of someone who had stolen their boyfriend. Another drew a picture of a sibling. Another drew a picture of an ex-friend. Then the professor allowed them to throw darts at those pictures that they had drawn. Then the class lined up and one after another, the students took turns throwing at the picture they had drawn, sometime with so much force that the papers were ripping apart. Some students were disappointed because time ran out and they didn't get their turn to throw their darts. Then Dr. Smith removed the target from the wall, revealing a picture of Jesus behind, his face mangled with holes and jagged marks covering his face, his eyes pierced right out of the picture. Then Dr. Smith read these words of Jesus, "Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me." (Matthew 25:40b CEV)

Brian Lund wrote that when things go bad, [when we suddenly wake up to realizing we aren't representing Christ like we should want to] it's a wonderful opportunity to [seek the Lord to] initiate and work for change and move toward new levels of Christ-likeness in our life. We do this so that we can become who we are truly meant to be. Jim is going to put the words of Jesus up for us to read together. Words that when taken seriously, help us to become who we are. Read them with me:

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?”

Luke 9:23-25 (NIV)

You've were given a piece of paper. In a few minutes we are going to take it and ponder our own personal life, Maybe as you heard the words "wake up" and "warning" – it has triggered something in your life that you may want God to help you work on. Maybe there is something in your life that has nothing to do with what I have been saying, but is weighing heavy on your heart. Maybe you can't think of anything right now –that's okay too – in my history, I've often heard stories about just signing our name to the bottom of a blank page as a sign that we are just giving it all to Jesus to do with our lives as he sees fit. If you want you can jot it on the

paper, or you can abbreviate it in code, or you can just imagine whatever that problem is, that issue is, or that blanket everything -- is on that piece of paper... Be thinking about what that might be as we move forward in the service.

Communion

Invitation The communion covenant commitment is open to all who believe in Christ, or wants to believe. Christ invites all who desire to follow him. For God's glory is always to have mercy. He is gracious to all who are on track, as well as all who have gone astray from his ways, and he reaches out to bring all people back to himself. Let's prepare our hearts in confession.

Confession and Meditation

Let's pray. We confess to you, all knowing God, what we are. We are not the people we want to be. We deceive even ourselves. But we cannot hide our true selves from you. We cannot hide from you what lies in the depths of our souls. You know us as we are, and you love us. Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge. Give us courage to put our trust in your guiding power. Accept and receive us as we are by the grace of Jesus Christ who died for us.

Lord, without your work in Christ, there is no reconciliation, and we are powerless to overcome sin and please you. So, have mercy on us, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion, wash away our sins. We can't forget the sins we have committed. They haunt us, because we have failed you, and others, and ourselves. We have done evil in your eyes. You'd be right to find us guilty, and that nature has been with us from birth.

But don't look at our sinfulness but heal us by washing away our sins so that we can be whiter than snow. Let the pain of our guilt turn to joy and gladness. Create in us pure hearts and steady spirits. Stay with us and keep us with you. You do not want empty forms, but hearts that are broken and craving wholeness. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant that we are willing to follow you, and by your gracious love, make our offerings of ourselves acceptable and pleasing to you.

portions based on selections from Psalm 51

Invitation to the Water

God is referred to as living water. Living water is moving water – water that doesn't sit and stagnate and turn sour. But it moves, constantly cleansing itself and everything it touches. At a festival in which



water was a particularly strong image, Jesus stood and invited anyone who is thirsty to come to him and drink, for, as he told a woman at the well – if you ask, I could give you living water... It was in the line of the prophet Isaiah who said the thirsty should come and drink for free, one of the final invitations in the Bible is the same – the gift of the water of life... And Jesus said at another time that all who are weary and burdened, to come to him. And then we have the man by the pool, burdened by disease. The tradition was that if the waters stirred presumably, it meant it was touched by an angel's wings or a spirit, and the first one in is healed. But the man couldn't seem to ever get in first. Jesus looked at him and asked an important question. "Do you want to be healed?" Sometimes we are so familiar with our vices, some of them we like, or they are so normal to us in our life that we don't want to change, not really. We prefer the familiar, even if it is an unhappy one, than to experience something that is new and unknown to us... even if it seems it might be better, we don't trust it... Or sometimes we feel we have to make all the changes first before we can come to Christ and answer his invitation to come to him... But know that he wants to take us as we are and let him make the changes with us, or even just encourage us because we are already on the right track.

So now, with paper in hand, jot, or code, or imagine writing what it is that is coming to your mind, or leave it blank if it is blank. If you can't think of anything, that is fine too. While we play through the first verse of *Just As I Am*, and while they do take a moment to jot on the provided piece of paper, then when they begin the song again, we will begin singing the first verse, and as we do, we can process to the bowl of "living waters" and place our slips of paper in the bowl... I will stand nearby to keep the waters stirred to make sure the water is "living" and ensure everything dissolves properly. If you have trouble moving, feel free to hand your paper to another to bring it for you...

Just as I Am

Words: Charlotte Elliott, 1835 Music: William B. Bradbury, 1849

1. Instrumental

1. Just as I am, without one plea,
but that thy blood was shed for me,
and that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

3. 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.

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

6. Just as I am, thy love unknown
hath broken every barrier down;
now, to be thine, yea thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.



Assurance and Thanksgiving

Hear the good news: For those who come to the living water, who will believe, Jesus promises you will not thirst again, you will have living water (the Holy Spirit) welling up from within, and that you will find rest for your souls because his burden is light and his yoke is easy, and knowing that because he died for us while we were yet sinners – his love is proven and our sins are forgiven. Therefore, we can say,

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You brought all things into being and called them good. From the dust of the earth, you formed us into your image and breathed into us the breath of life.

When we turned away, and our love failed, your love remained steadfast. When rain fell upon the earth for forty days and forty nights, you bore up the ark on the waters, saved Noah and his family, and made covenant with every living creature on earth. When you led your people to Mount Sinai for forty days and forty nights, you gave us your commandments and made us your covenant people.

When your people forsook your covenant, your prophet Elijah fasted for forty days and forty nights; and on your holy mountain, he heard your still small voice. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. When you gave him to save us from our sin, your Spirit led him into the wilderness, where he fasted forty days and forty nights to prepare for his ministry. When he suffered and died on a cross for our sin, you raised him to life, presented him alive to the apostles during forty days, and exalted him at your right hand. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. So as we your people prepare for the day of the Lord, you lead us to repentance for sin and the cleansing of our hearts, that we may be gifted and graced to reaffirm the covenant you made with us through Christ.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving, as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, and he broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."



Music Now as we have begun our preparation to be strong against evil and *for* love and mercy; as we have prepared to accept Jesus invitation to the water and to take up our cross and follow him, let's stand if you are comfortable and sing Lead On, O King Eternal **But before we sing**, I want to introduce our new way of closing for this series... I won't give this introduction every week, but the normal pattern for this series will be – On the heels of the final song, which we are about to sing, I will give a spoken blessing called "The Rule of Life" attributed to John Wesley, then we will all sing a verse of Go to the World (it is to the tune of "For All the Saints"), then I will say "Amen." and you can reply "Amen" if that is your norm to do after the blessing is said, and then the post worship music will begin as we prepare to leave. Now let's sing

Lead On, O King Eternal

Words: Ernest W. Shurtleff, 1887 Music: Henry T. Smart, 1835

1. Lead on, O King eternal, the day of march has come;
henceforth in fields of conquest thy tents shall be our home.
Through days of preparation thy grace has made us strong;
and now, O King eternal, we lift our battle song.
2. Lead on, O King eternal, till sin's fierce war shall cease,
and holiness shall whisper the sweet amen of peace.
For not with swords loud clashing, nor roll of stirring drums;
with deeds of love and mercy the heavenly kingdom comes.

3. Lead on, O King eternal, we follow, not with fears,
for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears.

Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light;
the crown awaits the conquest; lead on, O God of might.

Series Blessing Do all the good you can, but all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

Go to the World

Words: Sylvia G Dunstan © 1991 GIA Publications, Inc.

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams

Go to the world! Go into every place.

God live the Word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space.

Alleluia, Alleluia.

Amen. **Amen.**

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