

Sunday, February 16, 2025  
We Gather to Celebrate God's Presence

**Welcome**

Family Life and Work  
Family Celebrations

**Lighting of the Christ Candle:** We light this candle in the name of the One who guides us into deep waters, who implores us to wade a little farther in, where God is at play, bringing us into good trouble. We seek Christ's presence as we light this candle.

**Acknowledgement of the Land:**

**Introit: Waymaker**

**(originally by Sinach)**

CHORUS:

You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You, I worship You. (REPEAT)

VERSE:

You are...  
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper  
Light in the darkness, my God  
That is who You are. (REPEAT)

CHORUS:

You are here, touching every heart  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, healing every heart  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, turning lives around  
I worship You, I worship You  
You are here, mending every heart  
I worship You, I worship You.

**Call to Worship:**

**One:** Come, all who seek the presence of God. Come, all who long to be rooted in the deep waters of grace.

**All:** We come, like trees planted by streams of living water, trusting in the Lord who sustains us.

**One:** Blessed are those who trust in the Lord, whose hope is in God alone.

**All:** We place our faith in the One who knows our hearts, who nourishes our souls with love and mercy.

**One:** Christ calls us to a new way of living—blessing the poor, the hungry, and the sorrowful.

**All:** We gather to hear His words of promise, to be strengthened in faith, and to walk in His ways.

**One:** Rejoice and be glad! The kingdom of God is near.

**All:** With open hearts and lifted voices, we worship the Lord our God! Amen.

**Opening Hymn: Rejoice, the Lord Is King**

**VU 213 vs 1,2,3**

Rejoice the Lord is King!  
Your risen Lord adore!  
Rejoice, give thanks and sing  
and triumph evermore.

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:  
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

Jesus the Saviour reigns,  
the God of truth and love;  
when he had purged our sins,  
he took his seat above. R

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:  
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

God's kingdom cannot fail;  
Christ rules o'er earth and heaven;  
the keys of death and hell  
are to our Jesus given. R

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice:  
rejoice; again I say, rejoice!

## **Prayer of Approach:**

Loving and Gracious God,

You are the source of life, the living water that nourishes our souls. Like trees planted by your streams, we seek to grow in faith, drawing strength from your unfailing love. In a world that so often values power and wealth, you remind us that true blessing is found in trust, humility, and compassion.

As we gather in this sacred space, we open our hearts to your presence. Speak to us through your Word, challenge us through Christ's teaching, and renew us by your Spirit. May we hear your call to live in love, to stand with those who are hurting, and to place our hope in you alone.

Bless this time of worship, O God. Shape us, guide us, and send us forth as bearers of your grace. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

## **The Lord's Prayer (unison)**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil  
For thine is the kingdom  
and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen

**First Reading:** Jeremiah 17:5–10 - Those who trust in God are like trees planted by water.

**Children's Time:** Trusting in God Makes Us Strong

**Gospel Reading:** Luke 6:17–26 - The Beatitudes upon the plain.

## **Gradual Hymn: Sing A New Song**

Sing a new song unto the Lord  
let your song be sung from mountains high.

Sing a new song unto the Lord,  
singing alleluia.

Yahweh's people dance for joy.  
O come before the Lord.  
And play for him on glad tambourines,  
and let your trumpet sound.

Sing a new song unto the Lord  
let your song be sung from mountains high.  
Sing a new song unto the Lord,  
singing alleluia.

Rise, O children, from your sleep  
your Savior now has come.  
He has turned your sorrow to joy,  
and filled your soul with song.

Sing a new song unto the Lord  
let your song be sung from mountains high.  
Sing a new song unto the Lord,  
singing alleluia.

Glad my soul for I have seen  
the glory of the Lord.  
The trumpet sounds the dead shall be raised.  
I know my Savior lives.

Sing a new song unto the Lord  
let your song be sung from mountains high.  
Sing a new song unto the Lord,  
singing alleluia.

### **We Listen**

#### **Meditation** - Rooted in Blessing: Trusting in God's Sustaining Grace

There is something deeply reassuring about the image of a tree planted by water. Jeremiah gives us this image as a way of understanding what it means to trust in God. A tree with deep roots, reaching into the stream, is nourished and sustained, no matter what conditions arise around it. When the heat comes, when the drought arrives, the tree does not fear because it is connected to its source of life.

And then, Jeremiah contrasts this image with another—of a shrub in the desert, struggling to survive, cut off from the richness of the soil, withering in the harsh

conditions. This shrub represents those who place their trust in human strength alone, relying only on their own resources rather than the abundance of God.

As we hear these words, we are invited to ask ourselves: Where are my roots planted? Am I drawing from the deep well of God's presence, or am I struggling to sustain myself in dry, barren places?

Jesus offers us a vision of blessing that might at first seem surprising—even unsettling. He stands on a level plain, surrounded by crowds of people who have come from all over to hear him, to be healed, to find hope. And instead of affirming the world's usual measures of success, he blesses the poor, the hungry, the grieving, the rejected.

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.  
Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled.  
Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh."

Jesus' words remind us that God's kingdom is not built on wealth, status, or worldly power. Instead, it is built on trust, humility, and a heart that longs for something deeper. The blessed are not those who have everything figured out, but those who recognize their need for God.

And then, just as Jeremiah warned against trusting in human strength, Jesus gives a word of caution:

"Woe to you who are rich... woe to you who are full now... woe to you who laugh now... woe to you when all speak well of you."

At first, these words may seem harsh, but they are not a condemnation. Rather, they serve as a wake-up call. They remind us that when we are too comfortable, too self-sufficient, we can forget our dependence on God. The world tells us to seek wealth, comfort, and approval, but Jesus reminds us that these things are fleeting. True life, true joy, comes from something deeper.

So how do we live as people who are like trees planted by the water? How do we cultivate trust in God rather than in our own strength?

First, we root ourselves in prayer and scripture. Just as a tree draws from its source every day, we need to draw near to God daily. When we spend time with God—through prayer, through reflecting on His Word, through worship—we find the strength we need to endure life's challenges.

Second, we trust in God even when times are difficult. The tree planted by water does not fear the heat or the drought because its roots are deep. When difficulties arise in our own lives—loss, uncertainty, hardship—do we panic and try to fix everything on our own, or do we turn to God, trusting that He will sustain us?

Third, we seek the kind of blessing Jesus describes. The world tells us that success comes from wealth, recognition, and ease. But Jesus calls us to a different kind of blessing—one that comes from compassion, generosity, and dependence on God. Being planted by the water means that we are willing to be vulnerable, to acknowledge our need, to weep with those who weep, and to hunger for justice.

Each of us must ask ourselves: Where are my roots planted? Am I drawing from the living water of God's presence, or am I trying to rely on my own strength?

When we plant ourselves in God's love, we are not promised an easy life. But we are promised sustaining grace. Like a tree that remains steady through every season, we can stand firm in faith, knowing that God is our refuge and strength.

So today, let us turn to God in trust. Let us place our hope not in what the world values, but in the deep, abiding love of Christ. Let us seek to be people who, even in times of drought, continue to bear fruit—spreading love, compassion, and justice wherever we go.

And as we go forth, may we remember: We are not alone. We are rooted in blessing. We are sustained by grace.

Amen.

### **We Respond**

**Musical Offering:** Blest are They

**Offertory:** O Give Thanks

O give thanks, O give thanks,  
O give thanks unto the Lord  
for he is gracious  
and his mercy endureth,  
endureth forever more

**Offertory/Prayer of Dedication:**

Every good gift comes from you—our breath, our strength, our daily bread. You plant us like trees beside streams of living water, nurturing us with your love and grace. In gratitude, we bring these offerings, not as a duty, but as a joyful response to all you have given us.

Bless these gifts, that they may be used to share your love, to lift up the poor, to feed the hungry, and to bring hope where there is despair. Bless us also, that we may be faithful stewards of your blessings, walking in the way of Christ, whose love knows no bounds.

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession:**

God of grace and glory,

With hearts full of gratitude, we give thanks for your unending love. You are our refuge in times of trouble, our strength when we are weak, and our peace in the midst of chaos. You have planted us in your grace, nourishing us with your wisdom and surrounding us with the gift of community.

We thank you for the blessings that sustain us—for the love of family and friends, for the beauty of creation, for moments of kindness and glimpses of your kingdom among us. Help us to recognize your presence in the ordinary and to trust in your goodness even in difficult times.

Loving God, we also bring before you the needs of the world. We pray for those who feel uprooted—those facing loss, uncertainty, and pain. For the sick and suffering, bring healing. For the hungry and homeless, bring provision. For the anxious and weary, bring peace. For those weighed down by injustice, bring your justice and righteousness.

We lift up those who lead in our communities and across the world. May they be guided by wisdom, humility, and a heart for those in need. We pray for your church, that we may be a beacon of your love, a voice of compassion, and a source of hope for all.

O God, bless this congregation. Strengthen us to walk in the way of Jesus, to love as he loved, to serve as he served, and to live with hearts open to your call. Amen

### **Closing Hymn: We Are Pilgrims**

**VU 595**

We are pilgrims on a journey,  
fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

Sister, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

I will hold the Christ-light for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping,  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, let me be your servant,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

### **Benedictions and Commissioning**

Go now, rooted in God's love, like trees planted by streams of living water. Trust in the Lord, who strengthens and sustains you.

Go forth, living the blessings Christ proclaimed—lifting up the lowly, caring for the poor, comforting the sorrowful, and sharing God's abundant grace.

May you walk in faith, stand firm in hope, and be filled with the love of Christ. And may the blessing of God—Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit—be with you, now and always.

Amen.

### **Choral Benediction: Go Forth and Find a Stranger**

Go forth and find a stranger,  
Put food upon his plate.  
Go forth and find a stranger  
Put drink into his cup  
Go forth and find a stranger,  
Put love in his heart.  
Go forth and find a stranger  
Put love in his heart.