

**Fifth Sunday After Advent
February 5, 2023 Worship Bulletin**

Gathering for God's Word

Prelude

*Welcome & Passing the Peace of Christ

*Song of Praise
"Forever"

Announcements

Time of Silence & Ringing of the Bell

Preparing for God's Word

*Call to Worship

[based on Psalm 27; John 4: 23]

Leader: Let us worship God, our light and our salvation. The Lord is the stronghold of our lives.

People: We desire to live in God's house and to seek God in his holy temple.

Leader: We have come with shouts of joy,

People: To sing and to make music to the Lord.

Leader: Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

People: Lord, teach us your ways and make straight our paths in this hour of worship and always.

*Hymn of Adoration

#645, "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above," vs. 1, 2, 3

Sing praise to God who reigns above,
the God of all creation,
the God of power, the God of love,
the God of our salvation.
With healing balm my soul is filled
and every faithless murmur stilled:
To God all praise and glory.

What God's almighty power has made
God's gracious mercy keepeth

By morning glow or evening shade
God's watchful eye ne'er sleepeth
Within the kingdom of God's might
Lo! All is just and all is right
To God all praise and glory.

The Lord is never far away,
but through all grief distressing,
an ever present help and stay,
our peace and joy and blessing.
As with a mother's tender hand,
God gently leads the chosen band:
To God all praise and glory.

Text: Johann Jacob Schutz, 1675, trans. Frances Elizabeth Cox, 1864, alt.
Music: Bohemian Brethren's Kirchengesang, 1566; harm, Maurice F. Bell, 1906, alt.
CCLI#1963157

Prayer of Confession

[time of silent confession]

All: Gracious and loving God, we ask that you would save us from our hard hearts that keep your word from taking root. Lord, save us from allowing our lives to become too shallow, enabling your word to wither away. Save us from the all the distractions of this world, that can choke out your word as we just focus on everyday cares. Heavenly Father, help our hearts become fertile soil, so that your word might flourish and yield a great harvest, bringing us salvation and allowing us to become faithful witnesses of you in this world. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

[based on 1 Peter 2: 24]

Leader: Hear the Good News. Jesus himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness;

People: By his wounds we have been forgiven and healed. Praise God.

Hearing God's Word

Children's Message

Ages 12 and under gather up front as congregation sings, #188, "Jesus Loves Me."
After the Children's Message, the children may return to sit with their families.

*Hymn of Preparation

"Wonderful Words of Life," from "Songs Gideon's Sing" (see insert)

Sing them over again to me, wonderful words of life,
Let me more of their beauty see, wonderful words of life;
Words of life and beauty teach me faith and duty.

Refrain;

Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life,
Beautiful words, wonderful words, wonderful words of life.

Christ, the blessèd One, gives to all wonderful words of life;
Sinner, list to the loving call, wonderful words of life;
All so freely given, wooing us to heaven.

Sweetly echo the Gospel call, wonderful words of life;
Offer pardon and peace to all, wonderful words of life;
Jesus, only Savior, sanctify us forever.

Words & Music: Philip P. Bliss
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Prayer of Illumination

New Testament Reading: Luke 8: 1-11

8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3 Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5 "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some fell on rock, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10 He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand. '

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God."

Sermon

"Growing in Grace... The Joy of Burying God's Word in Our Hearts "

Responding to God's Word

Special Music

"Lord Let My Heart Be Good Soil/ Open the Eyes of My Heart"

Lord, let my heart be good soil,
open to the seed of your Word.
Lord, let my heart be good soil,
where love can grow and peace is
understood.

When my heart is hard,
break the stone away.
When my heart is cold,
warm it with the day.

When my heart is lost,
lead me to your way.
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Open the eyes of my heart Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

Open the eyes of my heart Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You, I want to see You

To see You high and lifted up
Shining in the light of your glory
Pour out your power and love
As we sing holy holy holy

When my heart is hard,
break the stone away.
When my heart is cold,
warm it with the day.

When my heart is lost,
lead me to your way.
Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart,
Lord, let my heart be good soil.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper

Thanksgiving for the Work of Christ

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

Word's of Institution

Leader: Through this meal we proclaim our faith. It is signed and sealed in this sacrament. Together we are proclaiming:

People: Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.

Leader: Come, then, for all is ready.

People: Christ was raised to life, death has been swallowed up, victory is won. Alleluia! Therefore let us keep the feast.

Sharing of the Elements

Prayer of Praise

Offering

Offertory

Offertory Hymn

#743, "Step by Step"

O God, You are my God
And I will ever praise You
O God, You are my God
And I will ever praise You

I will seek You in the morning
And I will learn to walk in Your ways
And step by step You'll lead me
And I will follow You all of my days

Text & Music: David Strasser (Beaker), 1991

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*Response

#606, The Doxology, "Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow"

*Prayer of Dedication

*Benediction

*Benediction Response

#2066, "Praise the Name of Jesus," Sing the Faith Hymnal

Praise the name of Jesus,
Praise the name of Jesus.
He's my Rock, He's my Fortress,
He's my Deliverer.
In Him shall I trust.
Praise the name of Jesus.

Words & Music: Roy Hicks, Jr.
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*Postlude

*Please Stand if Able

PRAYERS FOR THIS WEEK

This Week Consider Praying For How God is Planting Seeds:

- Through the work of Union's Strengthening of the Church Committee
- For Union's Children and Adult Sunday school Programs and it's teachers; and our Sunday Afternoon Youth Programs and leaders
- For Union's Tuesday Morning Bible Study and our Women Circles' studies
- For the curriculum our church uses in classes & those who publish it
- For more of our loved ones to become activity engaged in personal Bible Study
- For hearts to be changed through the reading of God's Word
- For Parents/Grandparents/Caregivers trying to raise up children in Christ