



**JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERY
MILWAUKEE PRESBYTERY
WINNEBAGO PRESBYTERY
Joint Worship Service
Spring Presbytery Meetings**



"If you can look at the resources that you have, and you can partner that with the needs of your community, then you can together, through a Matthew 25 initiative, partake in changing the structures and systems of oppression and injustice" ~ Rev. Dr. Tracy Hughes



MATTHEW 25

~ *Gathering Around God's Word* ~

Prelude

WELCOME

Elder Bill Leonard, Moderator, Presbytery of Milwaukee

CALL TO WORSHIP *Matthew 5:3-12*

One: Jesus says: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

All: And blessed is the church that serves with the love of God to eradicate systemic poverty.

One: Jesus says: Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

All: And blessed is the church that trusts in the grace of Christ to build congregational vitality.

One: Jesus says: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

All: And blessed is the church that seeks by the power of the Spirit to dismantle structural racism.

One: Blessed are you, O holy, triune God,

All: and blessed is your holy realm forever.

GATHERING PRAYER

Holy God, by your Word and Spirit, come and transform your church to be a living sign of your love for the world – where the poor are filled with good things, the dividing walls are broken down, and the dead are raised to new life; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

HYMN

"Jesus Be With Us"

by D. Gambrell, arr. P Morgan

CALL TO CONFESSION *Matthew 3:3*

A voice is crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord. Trusting in God's grace, let us confess our sin silently and then together. (Silent Prayers)

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (together)

Merciful God, we confess that we have wandered from your way of truth and life.

You call us to share all that we have and work together for the common good, but we hoard up treasures for ourselves and deny others their daily bread.

You call us to set the captives free and seek justice for the oppressed, but we live in fear of our neighbors and hide ourselves from our own kin.

You call us to walk in newness of life and to be witnesses to the resurrection, but we dwell in the valley of dry bones and keep silent about your saving love.

Forgive us, God of grace. Set us free from sin, death and fear so that we may serve you with gladness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Hear the good news: God's love has been poured into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit. I declare to you in the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

~ Proclaiming God's Word ~

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

One: Speak to us, O God, with the voice of your Holy Spirit, that we may know the way of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING Matthew 25:31-46

SERMON

Rev. Hodari Williams, Pastor, New Life Presbyterian Church, Atlanta, GA
(from the PC(USA) Matthew 25 Summit, January 2024)

~ Responding to God's Word ~

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *A Brief Statement of Faith (excerpts)*

One: We trust in Jesus Christ, fully human, fully God.

All: **Jesus proclaimed the reign of God: preaching good news to the poor and release to the captives.**

One: We trust in God, whom Jesus called Abba, Father.

All: **In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image to live as one community.**

One: We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

All: **The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

One: With believers in every time and place,

All: **we rejoice that nothing in life or in death can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION *Matthew 7:7*

Jesus says: Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. Trusting in Christ's grace, let us offer our prayers for the church and the world, neighbors and loved ones, saying, "Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**"

We ask your provision for all people. Teach us compassion and generosity. Put an end to economic exploitation. Fill this world with your abundant life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We search for your beloved community. Break down systems of oppression. Dismantle patterns of privilege. Establish justice and equality for all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We knock at the door of your house. Gather us in as disciples of your way. Nourish us in faith and faithfulness. Send us out to share good news.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

(Silent Prayers)

Living God, we ask, we search, we knock — answer our prayers with the power of your Spirit, who transforms our lives to do your will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Hymn #749** “Come! Live in the Light!”

SERVICE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

Welcome
Great Prayer of Thanksgiving
Invitation
Prayer after Communion

THE OFFERING

Invitation
Offertory Anthem “This is My Song”
Presbyterian Peacemaking Project Virtual Choir
Prayer of Dedication

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, for you have filled us with your life and love. Now send us out to share these gifts with others; in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

BLESSING AND CHARGE *Matthew 1:23; 28:20*

May the God who was, who is and always shall be, be with you through the risen Christ Jesus our Lord. Let us go in peace to do the works of justice, to be peacemakers in loving our neighbor and being kind. Go now in peace in the name of the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier. Alleluia! Amen.

***Hymn #375** “Shall We Gather at the River”

Postlude

*Please stand if able

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**- WORSHIP LEADERS -**

Elder William Leonard, Moderator, Presbytery of Milwaukee  
Rev. Karla Johnson and Community Presbyterian Church, Postville, IA  
Mr. Simon Johnson, First Presbyterian Church, Neenah, WI  
Rev. David Ewing and Sun Valley Presbyterian Church, Beloit, WI  
Rev. Scott Anderson, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison, WI  
Rev. Ashley Abraham Hood and Frame Presbyterian Church, Stevens Point, WI  
Rev. Kim Trimboli and Forest Park Presbyterian Church, New Berlin, WI  
Rev. Dr. Christian Boyd, Stated Clerk, Presbytery of Milwaukee & Pastor of Southminster  
Presbyterian Church, Waukesha, WI  
Rev. Dr. Matt Sauer, First Presbyterian Church, Manitowoc, WI  
Rev. Loren Shellabarger, (Technology Editor)

# 749 Come! Live in the Light!

## We Are Called

1 Come! Live in the light! Shine with the  
 2 Come! O - pen your heart! Show your  
 3 Sing! Sing a new song! Sing of that

joy and the love of the Lord! We are called  
 mer - cy to all those in fear! We are called  
 great day when all will be one! God will reign,

to be light for the king - dom, to live in the  
 to be hope for the hope - less so ha - tred and  
 and we'll walk with each oth - er as sis - ters and

free - dom of the cit - y of God.  
 vio - lence will be no more.  
 broth - ers u - nit - ed in love.

*Refrain*

We are called to act with jus - tice; we are called to

love ten - der - ly; we are called to serve one an -

oth - er, to walk hum - bly with God.

The thematic and musical center of this hymn on the vocation of all believers is found in the refrain, which is based on the well-known challenge of Micah 6:8, "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

# 375 Shall We Gather at the River

1 Shall we gath-er at the riv-er, where bright an-gel feet have trod,  
 2 On the mar-gin of the riv-er, wash-ing up its sil-ver spray,  
 3 Ere we reach the shin-ing riv-er, lay we ev-ery bur-den down;  
 4 Soon we'll reach the shin-ing riv-er; soon our pil-grim-age will cease;

with its crys-tal tide for-ev-er flow-ing by the throne of God?  
 we will walk and wor-ship ev-er, all the hap-py gold-en day.  
 grace our spir-its will de-liv-er, and pro-vide a robe and crown.  
 soon our hap-py hearts will quiv-er with the mel-o-dy of peace.

*Refrain*

Yes, we'll gath-er at the riv-er, the beau-ti-ful, the beau-ti-ful riv-er;

gath-er with the saints at the riv-er that flows by the throne of God.

A Baptist pastor wrote this hymn while seated at his parlor organ. Created as an alternative to gloomy "river of death" hymns, it is a celebration of the "pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" (Revelation 22:1 KJV).