

MUMC At-Home Worship: July 25, 2021

If available, place a candle in the center of your gathering space and light it with this prayer:

Opening Prayer

Holy God, our guide and guardian: you have led us away from the busy world into the quiet of your presence. Grant that our time in this space might comfort our souls as it renews our spirits, that we may worship you in word and deed all the days of our lives. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Hymn O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go United Methodist Hymnal #480

O Love that will not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee;
I give thee back the life I owe, that in thine ocean depths its flow
may richer, fuller be.

O Light that followest all my way, I yield my flickering torch to thee;
my heart restores its borrowed ray, that in thy sunshine's blaze its day
may brighter, fairer be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain, I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and feel the promise is not vain,
that morn shall tearless be.

O Cross that liftest up my head, I dare not ask to fly from thee;
I lay in dust, life's glory dead, and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

"O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go" Words by George Matheson, 1882; music by Albert L. Peace, 1884; and both are in the public domain.

Scripture Lesson

2 Samuel 18:5-9,15,31-33 (CEB)

The king gave orders to Joab, Abishai, and Ittai: "For my sake, protect my boy Absalom." All the troops heard what the king ordered regarding Absalom to all the commanders. So the troops marched into the field to meet the Israelites. The battle was fought in the Ephraim forest. The army of Israel was defeated there by David's soldiers. A great slaughter of twenty thousand men took place that day. The battle spread out over the entire countryside, and the forest devoured more soldiers than the sword that day.

Absalom came upon some of David's men. Absalom was riding on a mule, and the mule went under the tangled branches of a large oak tree. Absalom's head got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair while the mule under him kept on going.

Then ten young armor-bearers of Joab surrounded Absalom, struck him, and killed him.

Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My master the king: Listen to this good news! The Lord has vindicated you this day against the power of all who rose up against you." The king said to the Cushite, "Is my boy Absalom okay?" The Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my master the king and all who rise up against you to hurt you end up like that young man." The king trembled. He went up to the room over the gate and cried. As he went, he said, "Oh, my son Absalom! Oh, my son! My son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you! Oh, Absalom, my son! My son!"

The word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

Reflect:

1. This scripture provides the final chapter to the long and convoluted story between King David and his son Absalom, who is here fighting a war to defeat his father and replace him as king. Are you surprised that David still instructs his army not to kill ("deal gently") with Absalom? What insight does this give us into David's character?
2. The messenger bringing the news of Absalom to David does not speak directly of Absalom's death, instead joyfully wishing the same fate on all of King David's enemies. Does David's mournful response seem as counterintuitive as Jesus' command to love our enemies? What might we learn from this?
3. Hearing of his son's death, David's grief is profound. How does his expression of grief resonate with you? In times of mourning in your life, what ways have you found to express your feelings?

Hymn *Precious Lord, Take My Hand* United Methodist Hymnal #474

Precious Lord, take my hand lead me on, let me stand,
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn; through the storm, through the night,
lead me on to the light: take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
when my life is almost gone, hear my cry, hear my call,
hold my hand lest I fall: take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When the darkness appears and the night draws near,
and the day is past and gone, at the river I stand,
guide my feet, hold my hand: take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" words and music by Thomas A. Dorsey, 1932. © 1938 Hill & Range Songs, renewed Unichappell Music, Inc.

Prayer Requests: Share prayer requests and have a moment of silent prayer.

Lord's Prayer

Hymn *God Be with You till We Meet Again* United Methodist Hymnal #672

God be with you till we meet again; by his counsels guide, uphold you,
with his sheep securely fold you: God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

Till we meet, till we meet, till we meet at Jesus' feet;
till we meet, till we meet, God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again; neath his wings securely hide you,
daily manna still divide you; God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

God be with you till we meet again; when life's perils thick confound you,
put his arms unfailing round you; God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

God be with you till we meet again; keep love's banner floating o'er you,
smite death's threatening wave before you; God be with you till we meet again.
[Refrain]

"God Be with You till We Meet Again" words by Jeremiah E. Rankin, 1880; music by William G. Tomer, 1880; both are in the public domain.

Closing Prayer: Almighty God of our every moment, be with us in our grief as surely as you are in our joys. Soften our hearts toward our enemies as to our families, that we might love as you love and live accordingly. Amen.

(Blow out the candle)