

When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, "Then God has given even to the gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

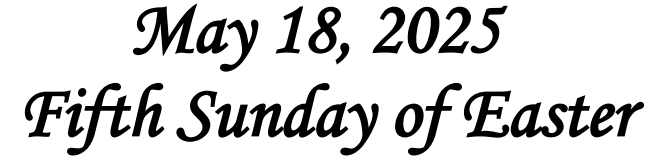
HYMN	“Spirit Song”	#347
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- Refrain*

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the dedicated staff who serve so faithfully in our church. We pray that they may be blessed in their work, their families, and their lives. Grant them strength, wisdom, and patience as they carry out their duties with love and compassion. May your spirit guide their decisions, and may they be a source of blessing to our congregation and to the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” Let us with gladness offer to God the gifts of our labor, life, and love.”

Loving God, we give you thanks for the ministry of reconciliation to which you call us in the name of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. Accept these gifts for your mission to heal all creation. May they be a testament to your love for us as we share them in love for you; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.



CALL TO WORSHIP (responsively)

Lay Reader: In the beginning was the Dream

People: And the Dream was with God and spoke for peace.

Lay Reader: In the beginning was the Dream

People: And the Dream was with God and spoke for justice.

Lay Reader: In the beginning was the Dream

People: And the Dream was with God and longed for love.

All: We come to worship the God of the Dream in a spirit of peace, justice, and love, longing to glimpse the promise of a holy dwelling place for all creation.

Written by Sally Johnson, United Methodist Creation Justice Movement

OPENING PRAYER (ALL)

Ever-dreaming God, come to us now, in this time, opening our imaginations to your promise for us, in us, and in all you have made. We pray in the name of your Dream made flesh, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Written by Sally Johnson, United Methodist Creation Justice Movement

HYMN “Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” #89

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore thee, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flowers before thee, opening to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; drive the dark of doubt away.
Giver of immortal gladness, fill us with the light of day.
2. All thy works with joy surround thee, earth and heaven reflect thy rays,
Stars and angels sing around thee, center of unbroken praise.
Field and forest, vale and mountain, flowery meadow, flashing sea,
Chanting bird and flowing fountain, call us to rejoice in thee.
3. Thou art giving and forgiving, ever blessing, ever blest,
Wellspring of the joy of living, ocean depth of happy rest!
Thou our Father, Christ our brother, all who live in love are thine;
Teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine.
4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus which the morning stars began;
Love divine is reigning o’er us, binding all within its span.
Ever singing, march we onward, victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward, in the triumph song of life.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Lay Reader: Trusting in the love of God to make all things new, let us confess our sin to God and our neighbor.

People: God of mercy, your command to love one another across all differences opens us to new horizons, yet we often respond with fear and judgment that hinders your goal for humanity. Forgive our sins, we pray, and give us a true repentance that leads to life for all creation. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Lay Reader: God’s promises are trustworthy and true; your sins are forgiven. Be at peace to serve the Lord, and may you always be known by your love.

Feasting on the Word Worship Companion: Liturgies for Year C, Volume 1 © 2012 Westminster John Knox Press

Together, may we pray the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples to pray:

THE LORD’S PRAYER

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, forever. Amen.

ANTHEM “Slow Me Down” CHANCEL CHOIR
SOLOIST MONICA WHITEHURST

GOSPEL Acts 11:1-8 [NRSV]

Now the apostles and the brothers and sisters who were in Judea heard that the gentiles had also accepted the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, saying, "Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?" Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance, I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners, and it came close to me. As I looked at it closely, I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.' “But I replied, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' But a second time the voice answered from heaven, 'What God has made clean, you must not call profane.' This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. “At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, 'Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved.'

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

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DANA MOODY

Resident Bishop, Richmond Area: Bishop Sue Hauptert-Johnson