

# Worship Service

BY ERIC MATHIS

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## *Prelude*

### *Call to Worship* (based on Psalm 99)

The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble!

**Let us sing to God who has done great things.**

The LORD is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

**Let us sing to God who has done great things.**

Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity;  
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

**Let us sing to God who has done great things.**

Extol the Lord our God; worship at his footstool;

extol the Lord our God, and worship at his holy mountain.

**Let us sing to God who has done great things.**

## *Hymn of Praise*

“Alleluia! Sing to Jesus” (verses 1, 2, and 3)

Alleluia, sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne,

Alleluia! his the triumph, his the victory alone.

Hark the songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood:

“Jesus out of every nation has redeemed us by his blood.”

Alleluia! Not as orphans are we left in sorrow now,

Alleluia! he is near us: faith believes nor questions how.

Though the cloud from sight received him when the forty days were o’er,  
shall our hearts forget his promise: “I am with you ever-more”?

Alleluia! Heavenly High Priest, here on earth our help, our stay,

Alleluia! hear the sinful cry to you from day to day.

Intercessor, Friend of sinners, earth’s Redeemer, hear our plea,  
where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia, sing to Jesus! His the scepter, his the throne,

Alleluia! his the triumph, his the victory alone.

Hark the songs of peaceful Zion thunder like a mighty flood:

“Jesus out of every nation has redeemed us by his blood.”

William C. Dix (1867)

*Tune:* ODE TO JOY

### *Prayer of Praise*<sup>1</sup>

God, you have created us and redeemed us. You established the world and continue to rule over it with your mighty arm and powerful hand, and you consistently conquer the darkness in the world and in our lives.

You, God, have given us the gift of community with you and with others, and no matter how many times our fallen nature fails in these relationships, you still manage to sweep in and save us with your unfailing love.

Alleluia, sing to Jesus! Alleluia, worship Jesus! We praise you, O God, for you have done great things.

### *Hymn of Assurance*<sup>2</sup>

“What a Friend We Have in Jesus” (verses 1, 2, and 3)

What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,

all because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Savior, still our refuge—take it to the Lord in prayer!

Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield you, you will find a solace there.

Joseph M. Scriven, 1855

*Tune:* ERIE

### *Silent Reflection*<sup>3</sup>

When we honestly ask ourselves which person in our lives means the most to us, we often find that it is those who, instead of giving much advice, solutions, or cures, have chosen rather to share our pain and touch our wounds with a gentle and tender hand. The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing and face with us the reality of our powerlessness, that is a friend who cares.

*Henri Nouwen*

### *Prayer of Confession*

Lord, we call you our friend, but most of the time we are incapable of understanding what that really means. It is too complex to fathom that you – our creator and the one who governs the world – might also want to have an intimate relationship with us. It is too absurd to believe that you – the one whom we cannot see – might be our most loyal and faithful companion.

As a result, we forget (or claim to forget) that friendship with you is not always easy and requires much from us. It demands that we act on behalf of other people, and it is difficult for us to speak in defense of those people you would protect. Friendship with you requires that we expose our secrets, and it is easier for us to pretend that they are in the dark. If we call you friend, we should take risks for your Kingdom, but most of the time we settle into a lifestyle that is safe and comfortable.

All too often we want the benefits of friendship with you but not the work. We want you to be present when we need you without the commitment that we will answer when you call. We want you to answer our prayers and cries for help with no guarantee that we will acknowledge you when life is good.

In spite of our shortcomings, you were, are, and will be faithful to us. You became human to identify with the life we live, knowing that we will never fully understand you. You gave your life for us even though you knew we would not want to risk ours for your sake, and you continue to walk alongside us even though we often succumb to pressures calling us to walk the opposite direction.

Continue to be with us, Lord. Continue calling us to a more faithful relationship with you and the world you created. Grant us forgiveness and freedom from guilt. Amen.

### *Old Testament Reading: 1 Samuel 20:1-17*

David fled from Naioth in Ramah. He came before Jonathan and said, "What have I done? What is my guilt? And what is my sin against your father that he is trying to take my life?" He said to him, "Far from it! You shall not die. My father does nothing either great or small without disclosing it to me; and why should my father hide this from me? Never!" But David also swore, "Your father knows well that you like me; and he thinks, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, or he will be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, there is but a step between me and death." Then Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you say, I will do for you." David said to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at the meal; but let me

go, so that I may hide in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked leave of me to run to Bethlehem his city; for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' If he says, 'Good!' it will be well with your servant; but if he is angry, then know that evil has been determined by him. Therefore deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a sacred covenant with you. But if there is guilt in me, kill me yourself; why should you bring me to your father?" Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! If I knew that it was decided by my father that evil should come upon you, would I not tell you?" Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?" Jonathan replied to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So they both went out into the field.

Jonathan said to David, "By the LORD, the God of Israel! When I have sounded out my father, about this time tomorrow, or on the third day, if he is well disposed toward David, shall I not then send and disclose it to you? But if my father intends to do you harm, the LORD do so to Jonathan, and more also, if I do not disclose it to you, and send you away, so that you may go in safety. May the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father. If I am still alive, show me the faithful love of the LORD; but if I die, never cut off your faithful love from my house, even if the LORD were to cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." Thus Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD seek out the enemies of David." Jonathan made David swear again by his love for him; for he loved him as he loved his own life.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *Hymn of Compassion*

"Their Shoulders Bend as Low as Mine"

Terry W. York, ASCAP (2007)

*Tune:* ROXIE, C. David Bolin (2007)

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(pp. 37-39 of this volume)

### *Children's Message*

*Prepare two teenagers in the congregation to portray David and Jonathan as guests visiting the children. Remind the children of the story in 1 Samuel 20:1-17, and ask the guests questions like these: "David, how did you feel knowing that Jonathan was willing to make his dad angry by protecting you?" "Jonathan, were you scared to talk with your dad about David?" "Jonathan,*

*what does it feel like to love someone else as much as you love your own life?"  
"David, what does it mean to you that Jonathan loved you so much?" Thank  
David and Jonathan for coming and then close with a simple prayer:*

God, thank you for what we can learn about friends through the Bible.

Thank you that David and Jonathan had a good friendship, and that Jonathan wanted to protect David from harm. Help us to love and protect our friends like Jonathan loved and protected David. Amen.

### *Song of Service (a cappella)*

"I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me"

I'm gonna live so God can use me any time and anywhere.

I'm gonna live so God can use me any time and anywhere.

I'm gonna work so God can use me any time and anywhere.

I'm gonna work so God can use me any time and anywhere.

I'm gonna pray so God can use me any time and anywhere.

I'm gonna pray so God can use me any time and anywhere.

*African-American Spiritual*

*Tune: I'M GONNA LIVE*

### *New Testament Reading: John 15:12-17*

Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### *Song of Love*

"How Deep the Father's Love for Us" <sup>4</sup>

How deep the Father's love for us,  
how vast beyond all measure,  
that he should give his only Son  
to make a wretch his treasure.

How great the pain of searing loss —  
the Father turns his face away,  
as wounds which mar the chosen One,  
bring many sons to glory.

Behold the man upon a cross,  
my sin upon his shoulders;  
ashamed, I hear my mocking voice,  
call out among the scoffers.  
It was my sin that held him there  
until it was accomplished;  
his dying breath has brought me life —  
I know that it is finished.

I will not boast in anything,  
no gifts, no power, no wisdom;  
but I will boast in Jesus Christ,  
his death and resurrection.  
Why should I gain from his reward?  
I cannot give an answer;  
but this I know with all my heart —  
his wounds have paid my ransom.

*Stuart Townend*

### *Sermon*

### *Hymn of Response*

“Jesus, What a Friend for Sinners”

Jesus! what a Friend for sinners!  
Jesus! Lover of my soul;  
friends may fail me, foes assail me,  
he, my Savior, makes me whole.

*Hallelujah! what a Savior!*

*Hallelujah! what a Friend!*

*Saving, helping, keeping, loving,  
he is with me to the end.*

Jesus! what a Strength in weakness!  
Let me hide myself in him.  
tempted, tried, and sometimes failing,  
he, my Strength, my victory wins.

*Refrain*

Jesus! what a Help in sorrow!  
While the billows over me roll,  
even when my heart is breaking,  
he, my Comfort, helps my soul.

*Refrain*

Jesus! what a Guide and Keeper!  
While the tempest still is high,  
storms about me, night overtakes me,  
he, my Pilot, hears my cry.

*Refrain*

Jesus! I do now receive him,  
more than all in him I find.  
He hath granted me forgiveness,  
I am his, and he is mine.

*Refrain*

*J. Wilbur Chapman (1910)*

*Tune: HYFRYDOL*

### *The Giving of Tithes and Offerings*

#### *The Doxology*

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. Amen.

*Thomas Ken (1674)*

*Tune: OLD 100th*

#### *Benediction*

May the Father, the one who gives every good and perfect gift,  
Jesus Christ, the one who calls us all to serve,  
and the Holy Spirit, the one who breathes love,  
be with us all now and forevermore. Amen.

#### *Hymn of Commitment*

*"We Are God's People" <sup>5</sup>*

We are God's people, the chosen of the Lord,  
born of his Spirit, established by his Word;  
our cornerstone is Christ alone, and strong in him we stand:  
O let us live transparently, and walk heart to heart and hand in hand.

We are God's loved ones, the Bride of Christ our Lord,  
 for we have known it, the love of God outpoured;  
 now let us learn how to return the gift of love once given:  
 O let us share each joy and care, and live with a zeal that pleases Heaven.

We are the Body of which the Lord is Head,  
 called to obey him, now risen from the dead;  
 he wills us be a family, diverse yet truly one:  
 O let us give our gifts to God, and so shall his work on earth be done.

We are a temple, the Spirit's dwelling place,  
 formed in great weakness, a cup to hold God's grace;  
 we die alone, for on its own each ember loses fire:  
 yet joined in one the flame burns on to give warmth and light,  
 and to inspire.

*Bryan Jeffery Leech (1976)*  
*Tune: SYMPHONY*

## Postlude

### NOTES

1 The prayers intentionally have an informal sound and feeling to them, for we are addressing God whose love for us in Jesus Christ is the ultimate act of friendship. Admittedly, there is a great danger in naming God "friend." While hymns like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" call us to an intimate relationship with God, the prayer of confession acknowledges our tendency to abuse that relationship. To highlight the diversity of friends who gather for worship, invite members who differ in age, gender, or ethnicity to lead these prayers. Two or more close friends within the congregation may share the praying or reading responsibilities.

2 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" and "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" will benefit from a folk treatment with acoustic guitar, violin, cello, and djembe. Begin with a violin and cello ostinato on the hymn tune and gradually add other instruments (piano, guitar, djembe, and organ).

3 Henri Nouwen, *Out of Solitude* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 34.

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