

Thursday Morning

Opening song: All Kinds of Roses

The World belongs to God,
The earth and all its people

How good it is, how wonderful
To live together in unity

Love and faith come together
Justice and peace join hands

If Christ's disciples keep silent
These stones would shout aloud

Open our lips, O God
And our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

Let us confess our sins to God and our neighbor

In this worship and work we do today and after, we pray for more than conviction. We pray, O Lord, for change. Change the easy peace we make with ourselves into discontent because of the oppression of others. Change our tendency to defend ourselves into the freedom that comes from being forgiven and empowered through your love. Change our need for disguises, excuses and images into the ability to be honest with ourselves and open with one another. Change our inclination to judge others into a desire to serve and uplift others. And most of all, Lord, change our routine worship and work into a genuine encounter with you and our better self so that our lives will be changed for the good of all. Amen.

Take heart: God's Spirit empowers us to move from the ways of death to the ways of new life. Our sins are forgiven. Let us forgive one another and give ourselves to one another in the joyful community of justice and peace.

**We believe in Jesus Christ
Our Savior and liberator,
The expression of God's redeeming and restoring love,
The mark of humanness,
Source of courage, power, and love,
God of God,
Light of light
Ground of our humanity**

We believe that God resides in slums,

**Lives in homes and hearts that are hurting,
Suffers with us in our loneliness,
rejection and powerlessness.**

**But through death and resurrection
God gives life, pride, and dignity,
Provides the content of our vision,
Offers the context of our struggle
Promises liberation
to the oppressor and the oppressed
Hope to those in despair,
Vision to the blind.**

**We believe in the activity of the Holy Spirit
Who revives our decaying souls,
Resurrects our defeated spirits,
Renews our hope of wholeness and reminds us of our responsibility
To usher in God's new order here and now. Amen.**

God of all humanity, you call us to bring about healing and wholeness for the whole world – for people of all races and cultures and creeds. Help us to respond to a world that is groaning under the weight of injustice and broken relationships. Remind us that differences are a gift, and interdependence a strength from the same creative God. Strengthen us to resist the forces that encourage polarization and competition rather than understanding and cooperation. We know that your reign is not built on injustice and oppression, but on the transformation of hearts – new life, not just reordered life. Teach us forgiveness, O God. Bring us reconciliation. Give us hope for the future. We pray in Jesus' love. **Amen.**

O God of radiance, fascinating is your kaleidoscopic diversity, help us to love ourselves as we mirror your image to the world. As we grow tired of this struggle, Lord, and we feel alone in our weariness, strengthen us when we grow faint of heart. Give us a memory for the victories of our ancestors: help us to remember a time when our forebears faced immeasurable pain with the sure knowledge that you were with them. Remind us that we are truly never alone. When we grow faint, gird us with your strength; when we doubt, fill us with confidence that the beauty of our skin, ebony, mahogany, lemon, ivory and taupe is but a mere reflection of the richness of your glory. Help us to understand the gifts we bring into this broken world: the love of color and variety. This we ask in the name of Jesus, who touched all and loved all. **Amen.**

O Lord Christ, who became poor that we might be rich,
Deliver us from a comfortable conscience if we believe
or intend that others should be poor that we might be rich;
for in God's economy, no one is expendable;
Grant us instead that we may be rich in love.
In the name of the trinity of love, we pray. **Amen.**