

Sung Introit:

God of Creation, Maker of all things.  
We gather in this place to pray.  
We do invite you come now among us;  
come and build your church today.  
Come build a church with soul and spirit,  
come build a church of flesh and bone.  
We need no tower rising skyward;  
no house of wood, or glass, or stone.  
Come build a church with human frailty,  
come build a church of flesh and blood.  
Jesus shall be its sure foundation.  
It shall be built by the hand of God.

Call to worship:

God who crafted the universe  
scattered stars, painted worlds  
filled them to overflowing with plants and creatures  
Made us in God's image  
Calls us to be God's people  
Names you God's masterpiece, beloved  
As we worship may God  
open our eyes to see the glory of God  
open our ears to hear God's story in scripture and in the  
stories of those we meet  
open our voices to sing God's praises  
and tell of God's goodness  
Open our hands and hearts to receive God in the  
stranger,  
and to serve the lost, the lonely,  
and bring healing to a hurting world

**God is Love: let heaven adore him;  
God is Love: let earth rejoice;  
let creation sing before him,  
and exalt him with one voice.  
He who laid the earth's foundation,  
he who spread the heavens above,  
he who breathes through all creation,  
he is Love, eternal Love.**

**God is Love: and he, enfolding  
all the world in one embrace,  
with unfailing grasp is holding  
every child of every race.  
And when human hearts are breaking  
under sorrow's iron rod,  
then they find that selfsame aching  
deep within the heart of God.**

**God is Love: and though with blindness  
sin afflicts each human soul,  
God's eternal loving-kindness  
holds and guides and keeps them whole.  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
o'er us final triumph gain;  
God is Love, so Love for ever  
o'er the universe must reign.**

*Timothy Rees (1874–1939) (alt.) Words: © Continuum International  
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Ancient & Modern Ltd.*

Prayers led by Ray Garnett

1 Peter 2:4-10 read by Rita from Kingsdown

Introduction to the Gospel Reading  
John 14:1-14 read by Ray Garnett

Sermon

Hymn: Let us build

**Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.**

**Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:  
All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.**

*Marty Haugen (b. 1950)  
Methodist Church. Singing the Faith (Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd.*

At home in grief and love

*Dr. Erin Rafferty, -a pastor and a parent to a child with multiple disabilities and a terminal illness.*

"I've never been able to save my daughter, Lucia. It's a truth I've had to come to grips with. When you live at the edge of your limits as a mother and a person, you get kind of comfortable there, you make a home and a peace among those unanswerable whys. You realize to ask them is futile, faithless, distracting, daunting. The control that you don't have was never an idol to be worshiped, but rather a tyrannical robber of joy.

There is truth and wisdom in many of these positions. We can't save ourselves. We can't prevent this virus. If we could, we would have done it by now. Instead, our lives are shot through with daily reminders of our vulnerability. Our naivete is gone.

Grief and love are the twin conditions in which we've had to make our home in these coronavirus days. To acknowledge the former, in light of isolation, suspended gatherings, especially funerals interrupted, doesn't always seem to help. In other words, it doesn't seem to help to know what you're going through is grief these days, when it just seems like it's all grief on top of grief. Grief all the way down.

Human beings have always clung to a logic around life and death that privileges health and ability, because it makes most of us feel better than facing the unknowns of death that will never be controlled.

But even that logic won't really save us. And it definitely won't save us from pain or from grief. The paradoxical antidote, though, is to be like my mother's friend, Sharman—in the face of life's cruelty, to be ridiculously committed to loving people. The grief is that love never rescues anyone from death, of course, but it covers them, it nurtures them, it consumes them in a way that always and does matter completely.

I don't want to live with a false security that my child will always be there. Instead, with the full knowledge of life's impermanency, we can choose to love even more fiercely, generously, lavishly.

For many people, and importantly, the living and loving to be done in these days includes showing up as scientists, doctors, nurses, and emergency responders to those who are suffering and dying. But for the rest of us, there will be the equally hard and important work of loving fiercely, praying, honouring, and naming the dead, and not shying away from grief and fear but embracing them and their pain, in patience and hope that love will survive. Our naivete may be gone, grief and death may be more and more evident these days, but perhaps there is salvation to be found. While we can't save ourselves, may we be reminded that the God who saves has been unleashed in the world as love incarnate.

Love will conquer death. Love will find a way.

Prayers of IntercessionThe Lord's Prayer

O Jesus I have promised

**O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
Lord, be for ever near me,  
my master and my friend;  
I shall not fear the battle  
if you are by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if you will be my guide.**

**O let me feel you near me;  
the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle,  
the tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me,  
around me, and within;  
but, Jesus, now draw nearer,  
and shield my soul from sin.**

**O let me hear you speaking  
in accents clear and still,  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
Lord, speak, and make me listen,  
O guardian of my soul.**

**O Jesus, you have promised  
to all who follow you,  
that where you are in glory  
your servant shall be too;  
and, Jesus, I have promised  
to serve you to the end;  
O give me grace to follow  
my master and my friend.**

*John Ernest Bode (1816–1874)*

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Prayer of DedicationThe Blessing