



Abide In Christ

The Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference
of The United Methodist Church

Opening Worship

June 19, 2023 | Renasant Convention Center | Memphis, TN

ORDER OF WORSHIP

+ You're invited to stand in body or in spirit. | **Bold** words are spoken responsively.

OPENING MUSIC Improvisation on "We Shall Overcome" arr. Mr. Carl Haywood

THE GATHERING Ms. Frances Williams

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

We are one in the spirit, one in the Lord.

We are one body, strengthened by many members.

Let us worship together as one, abiding in God as God abides in us.

+ PROCESSIONAL HYMNS "How Firm A Foundation"

"O God, Our Help in Ages Past"

"A Mighty Fortress Is Our God"

JUNETEENTH COMMENTARY Dr. Charles Parker

+ OPENING SONG "He Reigns Forever" Mr. Marshal Carpenter

+CALL TO WORSHIP Mr. Milo Lumpkin

Leader: Hear, O people of God, and declare that the Lord is our God.

People: Our Lord is indeed God, the One who is Creator of heaven and earth and all who dwell in it.

Leader: Today is Juneteenth and together we give thanks to God for strides made toward freedom.

People: We remember our commitment to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. May God send forth wisdom as we fulfill our commitment.

Leader: We celebrate our differences and the diversity of gifts. They affirm to us that we are truly better and stronger together.

People: We worship and give thanks to our God who created all humanity in God's image, equal in dignity, worthy of regard and care.

Leader: Let us worship our God remembering our call to live and serve as bridge builders.

People: To the God of justice, love, and peace we lift up our hearts, minds, and voices. Amen.

INVOCATION Rev. Donna Spencer

Gracious Lord, we give you thanks for the outpouring of your love; a transcendent love that empowers, sustains, and transforms us. Your word reminds us that nothing in this

world can separate us from the power of your love and for that, we say, "Thank you." We thank for your spirit that abides in us, reminding us that we are never alone. We thank you for reminding us always that you are always available to us; to walk with us, to comfort us, to lift us in our darkest hours. Be with us now as we seek to abide in you.

God of justice, we are grateful for the care and concern you've shown to your beloved who have experienced oppression and exploitation in this world. We find joy in knowing that it is your will for all of your children to live in freedom and equality. Help us to identify the broken places in our communities where freedom and equality have yet to be realized. Help us to stand for those who can't stand for themselves. Help us to speak for those who can't speak for themselves. It is our desire to live and serve as your partners, fostering the beloved community, where all are nurtured and valued.

As we gather in this place, abide in our hearts and minds. Give us the strength and assurance we need to pursue this kingdom work. Here we are Lord, ready and willing to serve as agents of justice and reconciliation. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray, **Amen.**

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION OF JUNTEENTH Part I Rev. Marilyn Thornton

SCRIPTURE READING John 15:1-11 Rev. Charles Elliott

¹I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

⁹As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

Leader: This is the Word of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

ACT OF PRAISE

“God Is”

Mr. Robert Fryson

Soloists: Mrs. Vietta Lewis, Soprano and Mr. Derrick Bridges, Tenor

SERMON

“Abiding, Fruitfulness, Love”

Bishop Gregory V. Palmer

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev. Aaron Dennis

Leader: Almighty God, Source of all that is,
Giver of every good gift;

**People: You create all people in your image and
call us to love one another as you love us.**

Leader: We confess that we have failed to honor you
in the great diversity of the human family.

**People: We have desired to live in freedom,
while building walls between ourselves and others.**

Leader: We have longed to be known and accepted for who we are,

**People: while making judgments of others based on the color of skin,
or the shape of features, or the varieties of human experience.**

Leader: We have tried to love our neighbors individually while yet benefiting
from systems that hold those same neighbors in oppression.

**People: Forgive us Holy God. Give us eyes to see you as you are
revealed in all people.**

Leader: Strengthen us for the work of reconciliation rooted in love.

**People: Restore us in your image, to be beloved community, united
in our diversity.**

Leader: Open our eyes to the needs and hurts of others and help us to work for the
day when none of your children are denied a place at the table of life. Grant us grace
to contend fearlessly against evil and to make no peace with oppression.

People: Abide in us with your peace, love, and justice. Amen.

INVITATION CONFESSION AND PARDON

Rev. Dr. Martin McCain

Merciful God,

we confess that we have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have failed to be an obedient church.

We have not done your will,

we have broken your law,

we have rebelled against your love,

we have not loved our neighbors,

and we have not heard the cry of the needy.

Forgive us, we pray.

Free us for joyful obedience,

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All may offer silent prayers of confession.

Hear the good news:
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners;
that proves God's love toward us.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

Glory to God. Amen.

DRAMATIC PRESENTATION JUNTEENTH Part 2 Ms. Telisa Elliott
"I Dream a World" by Langston Hughes

OFFERTORY SONG "I Dream a World" by Langston Hughes Mr. Andre
Thomas

OFFERING

The offering today will go toward The Vine UMC.

The Vine is a new *hybrid (online and in-person)* community of faith of the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church. This new community of faith will be distributed throughout the state of Tennessee, Western Kentucky, and beyond. The Vine is grounded in the words of Jesus found in John 15:5: "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything.*" (CEB) In these times of social polarization, misinformation, and division we choose to commit to a way of living grounded, not in what sets us apart one from the other, but in that which can unite our hearts and minds—Jesus Christ, the True Vine.

DOXOLOGY

Arr. Ms. Roberta Martin

**Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING Bishop William T. McAlilly & Bishop Gregory V. Palmer

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you,
Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
You formed us in your image

and breathed into us the breath of life.
When we turned away, and our love failed,
your love remained steadfast.
You delivered us from captivity,
made covenant to be our sovereign God,
and spoke to us through the prophets.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ.
Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor,
to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people.

He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners.

By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection
you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death,
and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

When the Lord Jesus ascended,
he promised to be with us always,
in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the night in which he gave himself up for us,
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me."

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

"Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

And so,
in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving
as a holy and living sacrifice,

in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.

Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ,
that we may be for the world the body of Christ,
redeemed by his blood.

By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other,
and one in ministry to all the world,
until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father,
now and forever. **Amen.**

And now, with the confidence of children of God, let us pray:

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours

now and forever. Amen.

BREAKING THE BREAD

Because there is one loaf,

we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.

The bread which we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

GIVING OF THE BREAD & CUP

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery
in which you have given yourself to us.
Grant that we may go into the world
in the strength of your Spirit,
to give ourselves for others,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ CLOSING MUSIC “He Never Failed Me Yet” Mr. Robert Ray
Soloist: Mr. Paige D. Parker, Jr., Bass and Mr. Elvin Lackey, Tenor

+ BENEDICTION Bishop Gregory V. Palmer
Let us rejoice and give thanks that God has met each of us in this place.
Go now, abiding in God’s immeasurable love and power.
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE



MUSICIANS

- Annual Conference Director of Music ~ Mrs. Cynthia Haley,
- Organist ~ Dr. Ashley Davis
- Pianist ~ Mr. LaKendrick Little
- Percussion ~ Mr. Roney Simelton
- Rhythm Guitar ~ Mr. Gerard Harris
- Bass Guitar ~ Dr. Autry Parker, Jr

LEADERSHIP

- Preacher ~ Bishop Gregory V. Palmer
- Resident Bishop ~ Bishop William T. McAlilly
- Retired Bishop ~ Bishop Joseph E. Pennel, Jr.