



Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

A Service of the Word

Conducted at Hicks Memorial Chapel

Wednesday, January 18, 2017

GATHERING

Silent Preparation for Worship

As we gather, envision the intercultural community surrounding you.
The beloved community for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is an achievable goal.
It is a place where people of different races and cultures live together in community.

Envision how you will commit today to build an intercultural community, with God's help,
where racial equality is prevalent.

What is getting in the way? What actions steps will you take today to love more deeply?

Believe that building this community is possible. In preparation for worship, pray that God will empower us
to build the intercultural community of God.

***Call to Worship**

Leader: We have come to the mountain,
We have come to find reconciliation and peace.

People: **We peer over the mountain, to see the promise on the other side,
but there is still trouble in the land;
confusion is all around.**

Leader: Our brothers and sisters are still dying;
church burnings remind us of days long past;
we are still torn apart by hatred.

People: **We have come together to the mountain, seeking reconciliation and peace.
We peer over the mountain,
but there is trouble in the land.**

Leader: Where we are torn and pulled apart by hate because of our race,
dishonored is your living face on earth, O God.

People: **God, we bear the imprint of your face:
the colors of our skin are your design,
and what we have of beauty in our race as man or woman,
you alone define.**

Leader: We have come to the mountain,

People: **to seek your face, Gracious God,
to pray for reconciliation,
to pray for peace.**

*please rise in body and/or spirit

***Opening Song**

Holy Ground

The musical score is written in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are: "We are stand - ing on Ho - ly Ground, and I know that there are an - gels all a - round, Let us praise Je - sus now. We are stand - ing in His pres - ence on Ho - ly Ground." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a mix of quarter and eighth notes.

Text & Tune: Geron Davis, b. 1960; arr. by Nolan Williams, Jr., b1969
© 1983, Meadowgreen Music Co./Songchannel Music Co.

***Call to Confession**

Leader: God is filled with grace and acceptance. God continues to redeem and heal.
In this assurance, let us confess our sin before God and each other.

***Prayer of Confession**

Leader: We confess, O God, that we have rejected members of your family.

***People:* We have neglected to speak up for justice.**

Leader: We confess, O God, that we color you, gender you, and nationalize you.

***People:* We have behaved as if you belong solely to us,
refusing to recognize that you are the God of all.**

Leader: We confess that we have participated in a flawed system,
one that privileges some and disadvantages others,
based on something as arbitrary as the color of one's skin, the texture of one's hair...

***People:* Forgive us for the things we have said,
and the things we have left unsaid.**

Leader: Give us the strength to speak up for racial justice,

***People:* Forgive us for the things we have done,
and the things we have left undone.**

Leader: Give us the strength to love the intercultural community of God,

***People:* Forgive us for our inaction,
based on our uncertainty in a course of action.**

Leader: Lead us to a new beginning,
where love and faithfulness meet together,

***People:* where righteousness and peace will kiss each other.**

Silent Confession

***Sung Prayer**

Precious Lord, Take My Hand

GtG #834

***Assurance of Pardon and Freedom**

Leader: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see everything has become new. In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

People: **Thanks be to God! Amen.**

***Passing of the Peace**

Leader: The peace of Christ be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

THE WORD

Song of Hope

We Shall Overcome
(stanza 1)

GtG #379

Readings

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

— *Martin Luther King Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail*

Scripture: Amos 5:18-24

Song of Hope

We Shall Overcome
(stanza 2)

GtG #379

Readings

Love is creative and redemptive. Love builds up and unites; hate tears down and destroys.

The aftermath of the ‘fight with fire’ method which you suggest is bitterness and chaos, the aftermath of the love method is reconciliation and creation of the beloved community. Physical force can repress, restrain, coerce, destroy, but it cannot create and organize anything permanent; only love can do that.

Yes, love—which means understanding, creative, redemptive goodwill, even for one’s enemies—is the solution to the race problem.

— *Martin Luther King, Jr., 1957*

Scripture: Matthew 5:43-45

Song of Hope

We Shall Overcome
(stanza 3)

GtG #379

Readings

But the end is reconciliation; the end is redemption; the end is the creation of the beloved community.

It is this type of spirit and this type of love that can transform opposers into friends. It is this type of understanding goodwill that will transform the deep gloom of the old age into the exuberant gladness of the new age. It is this love which will bring about miracles in the hearts of men.

— *Martin Luther King, Jr., “Facing the Challenge of a New Age,” 1956*

Scripture: Revelation 7:9-10

Song of Hope

We Shall Overcome
(stanzas 4-5)

GtG #379

Prayer

**People: We believe that God has entrusted the church with the message of reconciliation
in and through Jesus Christ;**

- **that the church is called to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world,
that the church is called blessed because it is a peacemaker,
that the church is witness both by word and by deed to the new heaven and the new earth
in which righteousness dwells.**
- **that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit have conquered the powers of sin and death,
and therefore also of irreconciliation and hatred, bitterness and enmity,
that God's lifegiving Word and Spirit will enable the church to live in a new obedience
which can open new possibilities of life for society and the world;**
- **that the credibility of this message is seriously affected and its beneficial work obstructed
when it is proclaimed in a land which professes to be Christian,
but in which the enforced separation of people on a racial basis
promotes and perpetuates alienation, hatred, and enmity;**
- **that any teaching which attempts to legitimate such forced separation by appeal to the gospel,
and is not prepared to venture on the road of obedience and reconciliation,
but rather, out of prejudice, fear, selfishness, and unbelief,
denies in advance the reconciling power of the gospel,
must be considered ideology and false doctrine.**

Therefore, we reject any doctrine which,

**in such a situation sanctions in the name of the gospel or of the will of God
the forced separation of people on the grounds of race and color
and thereby in advance obstructs and weakens the ministry and experience
of reconciliation in Christ.**

To the one and only God be the honor and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

SENDING

***Closing Hymn**

Lift Every Voice and Sing

GtG #339

***Blessing**

Postlude