



United Intergenerational Ministry

SS Series 64-01 Rally Day Worship

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost - Series A

Scripture: Isaiah 51:1-6; Romans 11:33-12:8; and Matthew 16:13-20

"Welcoming All God's Children"

Based on: Romans 15:7 -

"Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Worship Leader's Guide

Preparations: Worship Bulletin: Reproduce as needed.

Opening Hymn: To include children, invite and encourage those sitting near them to help them listen for and sing the words that are the same at the beginning of each verse. This and any kind of repetition in worship can also allow others with sight or learning challenges to participate. Encourage those with any challenges that keep them from singing this hymn to listen to the words and those with hearing challenges to read the words of this hymn as it is sung and be blessed by the message.

"Alleluia! Let Praises Ring" LSB 822/ TLH 23 / LW 437

Invocation: Group responses can be read in a traditional style responsively. To include children and those with sight or reading challenges, ask them to repeat the responses. This kind of repetition increases the participation of all generations and helps children enjoy worship and be enjoyed in worship. Ask those sitting near the hearing challenged to point to responses when they should be said to help them participate.

*** Denotes words children and those with vision or reading challenges may repeat.**

Leader: We begin in the name of our God of grace and glory,

Generations: Who welcomes us through His Son.*

Leader: We begin in the name Jesus Christ, His Son,

Generations: Whose forgiveness welcomes us to God.*

Leader: We begin in the name of the Holy Spirit,

Generations: Whose sanctification prepares us to welcome all people.*

Leader: Because our God loves, welcomes, forgives, and prepares us,

Generations: We are ready to welcome all people in His name. *

A Psalm of Strength: Adapted from Psalm 136

Read or ask volunteers of all ages to read the verses. For very young readers, read a few words to them at a time that they can repeat after you. Instruct all ages to respond with the words "**My strength of soul You increased**" each time they hear you read the words "**On the day I called, You answered me.**" Even practice these words and the response before you begin to help children learn them, and remind those sitting near them to help children respond to keep them involved. Remind those sitting near the hearing challenged to point to responses when they should be said to help them participate in worship.

Response: **Leader:** On the day I called, You answered me;

Generations: My strength of soul You increased.

Verse 1: Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You preserve my life;

Response

Verse 2: You stretch out Your hand against my enemies, and Your right hand delivers me.

Response

Verse 3: The Lord is high, He regards the lowly, but the haughty He knows from afar.

Response

Verse 4: The Lord will fulfill His purpose for me; His steadfast love endures forever.

Response

Confession: You may read this confession in unison. To include children and those with vision and reading challenges, read a few words at time so they can repeat them after you to help them participate in worship. Remind those sitting near those with hearing challenges to point to words as they are repeated to help them participate in worship.

All Generations: We confess that we do not always call upon You. We are not strong. We do not always welcome all people to Christ. Some people are difficult to welcome. Some people do not want to be welcomed. Still, we must welcome them. Forgive us when we fail. Strengthen our faith, O Lord. Help us welcome all people to You, O Christ.

Absolution: If this absolution is being spoken by someone other than a pastor, omit the last sentence in the brackets. Pastors may omit the last sentence in this absolution before the brackets.

Leader: Through Christ's saving and redeeming work, we are forgiven and saved. Through the power of God's Holy Spirit, we are sanctified in faith to welcome all people just as Jesus welcomes us through the cleansing of all our sins. For this reason, as a fellow servant of Christ the crucified and one redeemed through God's love, I can declare to you that all our sins are forgiven. [As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I, therefore, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.]

Leader: And All God's people say: **All Generations:** Amen

Interactive Lesson FOR ALL GENERATIONS: "Who Is The Greatest?"

Based on: Matthew 23:11 - [Jesus said,] "The greatest among you shall be your servant."

INSTRUCTIONS : If you have children present, invite them to come forward to help them participate in Worship, but present this lesson even if you do not have children present. UIM Interactive Lessons are for all generations. As you present this lesson, speak to the children but bring the entire congregation into your conversation

- Ask members to name great people and even share what makes a person great. If no one else does, share that Presidents and Kings are great. Heroes are great. People usually become great because they do great things. In this worship service, we are going to learn about what it takes to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 23:11, [Jesus said,] "*The greatest among you shall be your servant.*"
- Did Jesus have it backwards? Are servants great? The answer is "Yes" in God's sight when they serve Him in His kingdom. And listen, there's more! In Matthew 20:16 [Jesus said,] "*So the last will be first, and the first last.*"
- Being children of God is all about our being the least, the most unworthy, because then we need to depend completely upon God to lift us up. And He will lift us up. In Luke 14:11, [Jesus said,] "*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*" How wonderful to know our God who finds us in our sin, dirty and worthless, humbles us and not only welcomes us back to Him but exalts us, lifts us up and prepares us to do just as Romans 15:7, the verse this worship service is based on, tells us to do - "*Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*"
- If you are offering the UIM SS Lesson that complements this service, add: "Those who attend(ed) UIM SS (learned/will learn) about the gifts we receive by God's grace to welcome all people to Christ.
- Invite everyone to join you in singing the following UIM Song that shares how we learn about the gifts we receive by God's grace through His Holy Spirit to help us welcome all people to Christ.

Those who have come forward may return to their seats.

UIM Song: Encourage children and those with sight or any reading challenges to listen to the words of this hymn and those with hearing challenges to read the words of this hymn and be blessed by the message.

"Gifts by God's Grace the Spirit Gives"

Sung to the tune of "Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" LSB 805 /TLH 644 / LW 461

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Note: This is the Opening Song for the UIM SS Lesson that complements this UIM Worship Service. Opening Songs introduce and clarify lessons. They do the same for UIM Worship services.

1. Gifts by God's grace the Spirit gives To those in whom His Spirit lives
To help them welcome all to Christ For faith that gives eternal life.
2. To learn of our gifts from the Lord, We pay attention to His Word,
Which guides and strengthens us to use Our gifts in all we say and do.

Options for Readings:

- *Option 1:* Worship Leader reads all readings.
- *Option 2:* Invite different generations to read the first two readings during the service. Remember, you can help very young readers by reading words to them that they can repeat after you. Always have the Worship Leader read the Gospel to give it reverent significance.
- *Option 3:* Invite all generations to repeat the words of the first two readings a few words at a time in unison to include all generations.

Notes:

- Always remind readers to state chapter and verse after every reading to teach generations where these passages are located so they can use them in their times of need.
- The readings are made shorter intentionally so that they can be read more easily by all ages.

Old Testament Reading : Isaiah 51:4

"Give attention to Me, My people, and give ear to Me, My nation; for a law will go out from Me, and I will set My justice for a light to the peoples."

Epistle Reading: Romans 11:33-34

33 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! 34 "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?"

Drama: **The Son of the Living God** Invite children to listen as a story is told to keep them involved.

There are two options for presenting this drama:

- Ask two volunteers to practice this drama ahead of time and present the two parts as a Chancel Drama: Turn lights off to bring characters onstage. Turn lights on to present the drama. Turn lights off to exit characters. Turn lights on for the reading of the Gospel.
- To read this drama as a responsive reading, the Worship Leader or a volunteer may be the "Leader" and Generations may be the "Reader." Share how important it is to read all parts "dramatically."

Leader: God created and loves all people.

Reader: Some people do not love God.

Leader: We who love God must welcome those who do not.

Reader: Some do not deserve to be welcomed.

Leader: Neither do we. We are sinners.

Reader: But we are forgiven. They are not.

Leader: That is exactly why we need to welcome them.
Reader: Because they are not forgiven?
Leader: Because they need to be forgiven.
Reader: But they don't love Jesus.
Leader: Jesus forgave those who crucified Him.
Reader: How can He forgive like that?
Leader: He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

The Gospel Reading: Ask generations to stand out of reverence (1) for words that our Lord actually said when He walked on earth or (2) for words that were said about Him. *Option:* For deeper effect, process with a cross to the middle of the center aisle and read the Gospel.

Read Matthew 16:13-16:

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" 14 And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Creed: Type in the page number from the hymnal for the Creed you will be using.

Communion Service: Nicene Creed (LSB back page, TLH pg. 22, LW pg. 166)

Non-Communion Service: Apostle's Creed. (LSB back page, TLH pg.12, LW pg 167)

Sermon Hymn of Praise: To include children, invite and encourage those sitting near them to help them listen for and sing the words that are the same at the end of each verse. This and any kind of repetition in worship can also allow others with sight or learning challenges to participate. Encourage those with any challenges that keep them from singing this hymn to listen to the words and those with hearing challenges to read the words of this hymn as it is sung and be blessed by the message.

"Sing Praise to God, the Highest Good" LSB 819 / TLH 19/ LW 452

UIM Sermon: "In Jesus' Name"

Based on Matthew 18:4-5 -

[Jesus said,] "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me."

Introduction: What is most wonderful about UIM Worship is that it can involve all generations. Explain to generations that each time they hear the worship leader say "**Welcome all people,**" they should respond with the words "**In Jesus' name.**" This response is also the title of the sermon to make it easy to remember. Always remind children to listen for the worship leader's cue so they can respond and participate. Give those with hearing challenges printed copies of the sermon or of this outline and ask those seated near them to point to the responses so they can respond right along with everyone else! If you are uncomfortable with having worshipers respond or would like to ask for a response for some sermons and not others to add variety and meet the needs of those who may like one or the other, you may omit the response, but do try to make it part of your sermon by saying it yourself for stronger emphasis and effect.

I. Our Interactive Lesson shared our need to be servants, unworthy sinners and humbled by God so that He can lift us up to serve Him and welcome all people to Christ. In Mark 9:35, Jesus Himself teaches us, "*If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.*" In Matthew 18: 4, the first verse of our Sermon Text, Jesus says: "*Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*" (Say: "It is Rally Day", if you are having Rally Day!) Today we are going to celebrate and focus on children because Jesus wants us to trust and depend completely on Him for our help and salvation just like children

depend on their earthly fathers for earthly needs. As we humbly serve Him, we become great in God's sight. But how are we in the sight of man, in the sight of our friends, and in the sight of the world where people want to be great, even need to be great? How can we be like a child when we are adults? The whole idea is embarrassing by human standards or thinking. This is exactly why we need God. We need God to strengthen our faith to depend on Him. He will strengthen our faith to the point where how others see us or perceive us to be is no longer important to us. Only how God sees will matter. We will feel honored to be the least because then we are great in His sight. God gives us our worth. He gives us His strength. He tells us in His Word all that is required of us, all we need to do, and that is *listen to Him*. As we listen, God will lead us, be our light, just as He promises in our Old Testament Reading, "*Give attention to Me, My people, and give ear to Me, My nation; for a law will go out from Me, and I will set My justice for a light to the peoples.*" As we give attention to or listen to God in His Word, He leads us to become as little children and He makes us able to humbly and genuinely

Leader: Welcome all people

Generations: In Jesus' name.

- II. God's ways are usually not understood by the world, and sometimes we do not understand them either. But neither should we question them. Our New Testament Reading describes *the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!* "*For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been His counselor?*" If God desires the first to be last and the last to be first, who are we to question His inscrutable ways? If He desires us to welcome all people, even those who do not love Him as we heard in our Drama, that is what He will prepare us to do in His Word. All we need to do is listen to Him and He will make us servants of all. So, it is not really about being the least, it is about being the Lord's and, in the end, it is because we are His that we will

Leader: Welcome all people

Generations: In Jesus' name.

- III. Congregations place a great deal of emphasis on welcoming guests; God desires us to welcome all people and that includes members. Missed opportunities to welcome members and also visitors often happen because we are focused on church business rather than church ministry. We all have different jobs to do and we all need to do them well. But, these are only the "doing" parts of ministry. The true ministry of welcoming is about what God does in us and through us to help each person who comes through our church doors find His love. Certainly this happens in worship through God's Word and Sacraments and prayer. But it also happens as we use the gifts God gives us to welcome all people, gifts of love, forgiveness, patience, etc. The gifts we learn about in His Word. [Add: Gifts we (have learned/will learn) about more specifically in our UIM SS lesson - if you are offering it]. The ministry of welcoming is about establishing a relationship with people that lets them see Jesus in us and helps them come to Him and be strengthened in their faith by Him. So, we should take care of church business; it is important for ministry. But above all, first and foremost, we need to welcome all of the people in our congregation, visitors and members alike, just as Christ welcomes us so that with one voice we all might glorify God in heaven. (Words from Romans 15:7, the verse on which this service is based). The glory of God is the miracle of faith and fellowship that happens as we together with all believers in our congregation

Leader: Welcome all people

Generations: In Jesus' name.

- IV. Now, how about welcoming people during the week? There are families and friends and strangers all around us every day. It's easy to forget they need welcoming in Jesus's name. We think they are all fine, but are people around us sad or alone? Have we taken time to ask them? Have we been a true friend to those who need a friend? Are we welcoming to our parents when they ask for our help? Are we welcoming to our children when they come to us for help? All of the people around us need the Lord and that is why we need to every day and in every way

Leader: Welcome all people

Generations: In Jesus' name.

V. As we welcome all people, it is especially important that we welcome little children. In Matthew 19:14, Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.”* Little children need our constant encouragement. So, we want to send our prayers to heaven for all children, asking God to bless and keep them in His love and grace (especially our Sunday School students, if we have a Sunday School). As a congregation, we also want to be welcoming to every child of God of every age. This means having ministry resources in place for every age and generation to help them grow in faith. It is so good to know that UIM Resources like the one we are using, minister to every age and generation and are available to help us as a congregation

Leader: Welcome all people **Generations:** In Jesus’ name.

VI. Finally, as we welcome all people, every age and generation, we need to remember that we are actually welcoming Jesus as we heard in Matthew 18:5, the text for this Sermon: *“Whoever receives (welcomes) one such child in My name receives Me.”* We come across lots of little children in our lives, but we also need to remember that we are all God’s children whom He created and loves, the mission and theme of our Fall UIM Resources; these are the people all UIM Resources this year will help us welcome to Christ under the theme, *“Welcome All God’s Children.”* As we do, God will surely bless us and our congregation. But most importantly, we pray that all of the people we welcome will come to Christ for faith and strengthen to

Leader: Welcome all people **Generations:** In Jesus’ name.

Leader: Amen.

Offering: Taken according to custom. To add a stewardship or any hymn, type the number in your bulletin.

Prayers: You may use the following prayer petitions provided or your own prayers. The words to the prayer do not need to be printed in your bulletin. Do print the response if you choose to use it. Responses generate the participation of all generations. However, using responses some weeks and not other weeks can add variety and also meet both the needs of those who like responses and those who prefer not to say responses. If possible, pass out a printed copy of your prayers for those who cannot hear well or at all. This will help to include them and help them feel this worship is reaching out to them. Remind those sitting near them to help especially children respond and to point to responses for the hearing impaired. Conclude your prayers with the Lord’s Prayer unless it is part of your communion liturgy.

Prayer of the Church for Rally Day

Leader: Knowing that God through His Son and Spirit strengthens us, we pray for strength of faith to welcome all people to Christ and for His forgiveness each time we fail. Each time you hear **“Father, through Your Son and Spirit,”** please respond with **“Hear our prayer and strengthen our faith.”**

Leader: Strengthen us, O Lord, Father, Almighty, Powerful, and Everlasting God, to become like a child in our faith - humble and trusting and depending upon You for our help and strength of faith on earth and for our salvation in heaven. Above all, strengthen us to pay attention and listen to You in Your Word so that we may know Your ways and follow them to welcome all people to Christ.

Leader: **Father, through Your Son and Spirit,**
Generations: **Hear our prayer and strengthen our faith.**

Leader: Forgive us, O Christ, when we forget or neglect to welcome all people to You. Change us from the sinful, rebellious, forgetful, and fearful people that we are through Your forgiveness and give us wisdom and words through Your Holy Spirit to be strong Christians who desire and are determined to welcome the members of our congregation, our family, friends, and people we don't even know, as well as the most difficult, the unlovable, and the unbelieving in Your name.

Leader: **Father, through Your Son and Spirit,**

Generations: **Hear our prayer and strengthen our faith.**

Leader: Father, we pray for Your wisdom and power to welcome and befriend all of the people You have created and love in their times of need. Be with us and strengthen us in faith to be Your humble servants and attend to the sick in any way we can, (especially_____). Give us words to guide those facing a crisis of any kind. Strengthen us to comfort those who are facing death and those who mourn the passing of people they love, (especially_____). Bless all people of every age and disposition according to their needs and Your will.

Leader: **Father, through Your Son and Spirit,**

Generations: **Hear our prayer and strengthen our faith.**

Leader: In our efforts to welcome all people, guide us to reach out in words and actions especially to little children, giving (our Sunday School children/all children) priority so they may feel welcomed and return to church every week. Also, strengthen and show us how to reach out and welcome all those who are young in their faith or troubled, encouraging them to grow in their faith more every day. Help us to grow in our faith and ability to welcome all people by sending us to Your Word in Worship and in the Study of Your Word every time these are offered. Grant us wisdom and strength to be alert, looking for, and prepared to welcome all of the people around us every day to Christ and to our congregation.

Leader: **Father, through Your Son and Spirit,**

Generations: **Hear our prayer and strengthen our faith.**

Leader: All these things we lay at Your throne trusting that You hear and answer as we
[boldly say **AMEN!**]

or

[join together in praying the prayer Jesus taught His disciples to pray: "Our Father who art in....."]

[Holy Communion may be celebrated according to custom.]

Note: You may choose a Communion Hymn or use the hymn below.

Hymn for Guidance: To include children, invite and encourage those sitting near them to point to the words and help them sing "**Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus**" every time they are sung in each verse. This and any kind of repetition in worship can also allow others with sight or learning challenges to participate. Encourage those with any challenges that keep them from singing this hymn to listen to the words and those with hearing challenges to read the words of this hymn as it is sung and be blessed by the message.

"Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us" LSB 711

If you are not using LSB you may reprint this public domain text and tune.

Benediction:

May we leave this place strengthened in faith and spirit to welcome all people in Jesus' name.

May we welcome the members of our congregation, our family, friends, and people we don't even know, as well as the most difficult, the unlovable, and the unbelieving because Christ has welcomed us, so that with one voice we might glorify God together here on earth and forever in heaven.

Leader: And All God's people say: **All Generations:** Amen

Closing Hymn: To include children, invite and encourage those sitting near them to help them listen for and sing the words that are the same at the beginning and the end of each verse. This and any kind of repetition in worship can also allow others with sight or learning challenges to participate. Encourage those with any challenges that keep them from singing this hymn to listen to the words and those with hearing challenges to read the words of this hymn as it is sung and be blessed by the message.

"O God, Forsake Me Not" LSB 731/ TLH 402 /LW 372

BEFORE WORSHIPERS LEAVE: Invite them to say the God's Word For Us Today passage from the UIM SS Lesson that complements this Rally Day UIM Worship Service:

Give attention to Me, My people, and give ear to Me, My nation; for a law will go out from Me, and I will set My justice for a light to the peoples. Isaiah 51:4

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