



UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH OF ANOKA

Following Jesus, Providing Hope, Making Disciples

GHOST STORIES
Sunday, July 25, 2021

PRELUDE

Miles Lane arr. by Will Stockton

WELCOME

HYMN

Holy, Holy, Holy (#64)

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee, which wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee, perfect in power, in love and purity.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Today we gather to worship the almighty God!

We worship with our singing, with our words, and with all our hearts.

We worship together here in this place.

May our worship spill over into all our lives.

OPENING PRAYER

**God of heaven and earth, we praise your holy name. Meet us now as we worship you.
Shake open the gates that hold us back from living fully as the people you have made
us to be. Guide us into the world to love our neighbors in Jesus' name. Amen.**

COMMUNION HYMN

Be Present at Our Table Lord

Be present at our table, Lord. Be here and everywhere adored.

These mercies bless and grant that we, may feast in fellowship with thee.

HOLY COMMUNION

We open our weekly worship here, at the table, together as one body in Christ. Jesus invites us all to this table - every one. Here, God's grace is freely shared. Come, share a meal together. Come, you who love Jesus, who are learning to love Jesus, who want to love Jesus. Come, confess and discover grace. Come, be at peace with God, with others, and within yourself.

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts to the Lord

We lift up our hearts with thanks and praise!

We are yours, all yours, Holy God, all our lives, all our thanks, all our praise, we give it all to you, with all our bodies, and minds, and voices. We are your people, whom you have called covenant with you, a covenant we have continually broken, and you have continuously sustained. How can we but praise you, joining our voices with the song of angels and saints,

Jesus Christ who comes in our God's name, you are worthy! Lamb of God who died and rose again, you are worthy! Hosanna now we sing! Hosanna now we sing!

You are holy, O God! You are worthy, O Christ! Worthy when you preached the good news that God's kingdom has drawn near and as you have gathered disciples, then and now, to learn and show the world what life in God's reign means: healing for the sick, new life for the dead, cleansing for the lepers, freedom for the possessed, new birth, new hope, new creation breaking in for all.

Worthy too, the night we betrayed you, when you took the bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to your disciples. Worthy when you told them, "This is my body broken for you. Remember me."

We remember.

Worthy when you took the cup, praised God and shared it, and worthy when you said, "This is the cup of salvation. Drink from it and remember me."

We remember.

We remember, and we praise you with our lives and these gifts of bread and cup, proclaiming with one voice the mystery of faith:

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

Come upon us, Holy Spirit and upon these gifts. Make them Christ for us. Make us one in Christ as we pray for the church and the world:

That we may proclaim the gospel boldly, **Hear us, O God.**

That we may offer your healing for all who are sick, or torn, or weary, **Hear us, O God.**

That our beloved dead may be raised, and death's power vanquished, **Hear us, O God.**

That all who are possessed, oppressed, and distressed may be set free, **Hear us, O God.**

Come and fill this feast, Holy Spirit, this day, and every day until that day when we eat together in your kingdom and our rejoicing shall know no end. All blessing, honor, glory and power be yours, Holy God, now and forever. **Amen!**

We eat together in grace and love. We drink together in mercy and salvation.

PRAYER FOLLOWING COMMUNION

Lord, you renew us at your table with the bread of life. May this meal and the grace we receive from you strengthen us in love. Send us to serve you as we serve others in the name of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN

Be Still, My Soul (#534)

Be still my soul the Lord is on your side. Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide; in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still my soul your best, your heavenly friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still my soul your God will undertake to guide the future, as in ages past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake; all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still my soul the waves and winds still know the Christ who ruled them while he dwelt below.

A SECRET ESCAPE (based on Acts 12)

Read by Nancy Jo Mattson

Today our ghost story is of a strange and suspenseful escape. The story comes from the book of Acts, and is a story about the leaders of the early church, after Jesus had ascended to heaven and his followers were finding their way.

King Herod got it into his head to go after some of the church members. He murdered James, John's brother. When he saw how much it raised his popularity ratings with the Jews, he arrested Peter—all this during Passover Week, mind you—and had him thrown in jail, putting four squads of four soldiers each to guard him. He was planning a public lynching after Passover.

All the time that Peter was under heavy guard in the jailhouse, the church prayed for him most strenuously. Then the time came for Herod to bring him out for the kill. That night, even though shackled to two soldiers, one on either side, Peter slept like a baby. And there were guards at the door keeping their eyes on the place. Herod was taking no chances!

Suddenly there was an angel at his side and light flooding the room. The angel shook Peter and got him up: "Hurry!" The handcuffs fell off his wrists. The angel said, "Get dressed. Put on your shoes." Peter did it. Then, "Grab your coat and let's get out of here." Peter followed him, but didn't believe it was really an angel—he thought he was dreaming.

Past the first guard and then the second, they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It swung open before them on its own, and they were out on the street, free as the breeze. At the first intersection the angel left him, going his own way. That's when Peter realized it was no dream. "I can't believe it—this really happened! The Master sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's vicious little production and the spectacle the Jewish mob was looking forward to."

Still shaking his head, amazed, he went to Mary's house, the Mary who was John Mark's mother. The house was packed with praying friends. When he knocked on the door to the courtyard, a young woman named Rhoda came to see who it was. But when she recognized his voice—Peter's voice!—she was so excited and eager to tell everyone Peter was there that she forgot to open the door and left him standing in the street.

But they wouldn't believe her, dismissing her, dismissing her report. "You're crazy," they said. She stuck by her story, insisting. They still wouldn't believe her and said, "It must be his angel." All this time poor Peter was standing out in the street, knocking away. Finally they opened up and saw him—and went wild! Peter put his hands up and calmed them down. He described how the Master had gotten him out of jail, then said, "Tell James and the brothers what's happened." He left them and went off to another place.

SPECIAL MUSIC

I'll Fly Away by Albert Brumley
Charlotte Michels and Hannah Ruth Patterson

SERMON

A Secret Escape
Rev. Rachael Warner

SPECIAL MUSIC

Beautiful Savior by F. Melius Christiansen
Charlotte Michels and Hannah Ruth Patterson

PASTORAL PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

The Trees of the Field

You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace
The mountains and the hills will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy and all the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands
And all the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands
The trees of the field will clap their hands as you go out with joy

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Send the Light arr. by Humphrey Turner

Organist, Diane Gronewold
Worship Tech, Jake Berg