

Inclusiveness

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Date: 20 August 2017

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[0 : 00] Let us rejoice and be glad in it. This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

Let us rejoice, let us rejoice, and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day, that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice, and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day, that the Lord has made. Good morning, welcome to our church.

We have a gift for our visitors at the Connection site. Please fill out your friendship card for any prayers or concern, or just so we can get to know you. It's fun to be part of the welcoming committee here at Hamilton Center.

[1 : 08] It is fun indeed. I have just a couple of announcements this morning. This afternoon at 12.15, we're going to have a meeting for all of the people who take part in visitation and caring ministries.

So if you do anything like going out to visit at hospitals or visit the sick, if you take a meal to a family in crisis, if you help out with a funeral luncheon, if you pray for people, if you do anything that is part of our caregiving ministry, you're welcome to come back at 12.15 and join us for an organizational meeting and an appreciation lunch.

The other announcement is that the church is planning a trip to Kentucky to see Noah's Ark and the Creation Museum. And if you are interested in that, we need reservations right away.

We at least need to know who all is going. And if you can make a deposit of \$100, that's helpful too. But we need to get those numbers in by September 1st in order to reserve our spots.

And it includes the bus trip and the hotel and most of the meals and admissions to the things we're going to see. And it's a really great and fun time. So I hope that you'll either talk to me or see somebody, see Julie at the desk and she can give you information.

[2 : 29] Okay. Okay. All right. Let's pray to our Lord. Oh, gracious God, it is so good to be here this morning, lifting up our praises and our worship to you.

We ask that your spirit would walk among us to inspire us, uplift us, and bring us to that place where we can experience you. And we ask this in Jesus' holy name.

Amen. Our opening hymn is, God is here. God is here. God is here. God is here.

As we, your people, need to offer praise and prayer.

May we find in fuller measure, what it is in Christ we share.

[3 : 41] Hear us in the world around us, all our very skills and arts.

We are the coming of the Spirit. We are the coming of the Spirit into open minds and hearts.

Hear our symbols to remind us. Hear our symbols to remind us of our life, no need of grace.

Hear our table, font and pulpit. Hear the cross, a central place.

Hear our ■, amen and reverence. Hear our thoughts, a central place. Hear our Ten elevated heart. Hear our way there is a powerful earth. Hear the cross and Nieto is redeemed. Hear the cross, a central place. Hear our heaven and truth. Hear our city to ■ us and mets our faith. Hear the cross and arise.

[4 : 53] Hear our goodness, angels and grande s ■. Hear the cross, a ■ ossian. Hear the cross, rar the cross for the mountains. Here in newness and real, God the Spirit comes to each.

Here our children find a welcome, in the shepherd's walk and hold.

Here as bread and wine are taken, Christ the Savior has abode.

Hear the servants of the servant, speak in worship to explore.

What it means in daily living, to believe and to adore.

[6 : 13] Lord of all our church and kingdom, in an age of change and doubt.

Keep us faithful to the Christ of all. Help us work your purpose out.

Here in this day's dedication, all we have to give receive.

We cannot live without you. We adore you.

We believe. The peace of the Lord be with you. And also with you. Won't you greet your neighbors with the peace of the Spirit.

[7 : 28] Good, how are you?

Do you have a spot? Sure. Do you want to come up? I'd like to invite any of the children who would like to, to come up. Come on up.

I need somebody to help me out here. Somebody can hold the bowl for me. Would you like to? This is my favorite candy dish. And in it I'm going to put one of my favorite candies.

Do you know what they are? Skittles. Skittles, yeah. Ooh. There, how's that? We'll put some in there where we can get at them more easily. Tell me, tell me what colors you see here.

Orange, black, red, green, yellow. Which one's better? Red. Green. Oh, see, everybody likes a different one. I kind of like the purple ones.

[8 : 35] You like the red? I like the purple. You like purple? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. They all look pretty good, don't they? Yeah. You know what? Every one of these is worth the same amount, isn't it?

Yeah. Every one of them is very special. And God made us in all kinds of varieties just like Skittles. Some of us are different sizes and shapes. Some of us are different colors.

Some of us have blue eyes. Some of us have brown eyes. Right. Exactly. Exactly. But you know what? God loves each of us in the same way.

He loves us with a full love that's complete. And he wants us to love other people in that same way. Whether they're people who are tall or short, whether they're white or skinny, doesn't matter.

Whether they're big or small, God loves us all, doesn't he? And he doesn't care whether you're good at baseball or you're not. And he doesn't care if you can sing a whole bunch or you can't.

[9 : 33] He loves you anyway. Completely. Just like I love Skittles. Do you guys like Skittles too? I like Skittles. You love Skittles? If it's okay with the parents, maybe each of you could have a couple of those.

Maybe just a couple. How many is a couple? A couple is two. That's not many. It's just enough to tease you, isn't it? Just enough to tease you.

Anybody else? Yeah. And while we're doing this, is there anything that any of you are thankful for today? Yes.

You're thankful for Skittles. For my friends. You got some, right? What are you thankful for? My family and friends. Your family and friends. Skittles.

It's a rainbow of flavors, isn't it? Yeah. All right. Let's pray. Lord, we do thank you that you've given us family and friends.

[10 : 34] And that you make such a wide variety of people. And Lord, we want to include all of them in our church. And include all of them in your love. We thank you that you have made us so perfectly.

Each one of us in the very special way that you want us to be. Thank you for your love. Thank you for your goodness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. All righty.

You can head out to your program, your children's program if you want to. Oop. There. You found another one, didn't you? 20-second rule. This morning you will find in your envelope a special mission moment offering envelope.

And this is for our back-to-school efforts. This is to fill out backpacks and to help children get shoes and all different kinds of things that this goes for.

To help kids who maybe couldn't afford to have all the things they need for school. So if you find it in your heart to help the children, this is one way that you can do it today. As you consider all that you're thankful for, won't you prepare your gifts for the Lord?

[11 : 42] Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray.

Let's pray. Praise God, all my blessings flow.

[14 : 12] Praise Him, all creatures who belong. Praise Him, all the heavenly host.

Praise God, all the heavenly host. Oh, gracious Lord, we come to you offering back just a small portion of all that you have blessed us with.

We pray that you would take this offering and receive it with joy, knowing that it comes from grateful hearts. We ask that you would bless it and multiply it and use it for your goodwill.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen. Won't you please be seated? We always have lots of joys and concerns, and you'll see all the names listed inside your bulletin.

But I wanted to lift up two in particular. We need to pray for Paul Parise, Debbie's husband, who took a fall and put a gash in the top of his head and had staples and is having some problems with it, but is coming along.

[15 : 31] He's home and coming along. And also for Lois Macaluso. This is the sister of Ruth Oaks and Sharon Hedges. She had a heart attack this week, and they put in some stents, and she came home yesterday, and she's doing much better.

But she needs some prayers for some healing. And I know that there are many of you who have various prayers and concerns and also some joys that we can lift up to our Lord today.

Will you pray with me? Oh, holy God, you are the awesome creator of everything, the one who made the universe and the one who made us out of your vast love.

We come to you today in humble gratitude. We come offering praises for the beauty of this world. For the joy of family and home.

For the goodness that you provide for us each day. We ask, Lord, that you would help us to be grateful and to give you thanks in all things.

[16 : 41] For we know that your hand of love is in it all. We pray also, Lord, for those who are struggling. The ones who are hurting. The ones who are sick.

The ones who are facing surgery. Those who are having trouble in their relationships. The ones who are helping us to help us. The ones who are helping us to help us. The ones who are helping us to help us. We ask, Lord, that you provide whatever these persons need.

Whether it's healing or guidance or just plain encouragement. Lord, let your spirit work inside of our lives. We ask that you would be with this church.

Lead her and guide her. And show her exactly what she needs to do to fulfill your mission and build your kingdom on this earth. And gracious God, be with the leaders of our country where there's so much unrest, so much trouble going on.

And we know we need your godly wisdom in order to make things right. Oh, Lord, you know what's on our hearts and what's on our minds.

[17 : 49] Search us now. Take away those things which are keeping us from being close to you. Open us up to receive your goodness, to receive your direction, to receive your mercy and your grace.

For we know that in all things you love us greatly. And that there is nothing that can separate us from that love. And we ask that you would show us that today.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Shall we prepare to hear the word of scripture as it's read to us? Good morning.

Our scripture reading today is from the book of Galatians, chapter 3, verses 1 through 9, and then verses 23 through 28. You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?

Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

[19 : 11] Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain, if it really was in vain?

So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? So also Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Understand then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham.

All nations will be blessed through you. So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed.

So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

[20 : 20] So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female.

For you are all one in Christ Jesus. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you, Jan, for sharing the scripture with us this morning.

I'm sure most of you know that over the summer we've been talking about what it means to be a United Methodist. What it means to be a Christian in our particular denomination.

And in the midst of that we've been focusing on the scriptures, but also looking at the life and the teachings of John Wesley, who along with his brother Charles was the founder of the Methodist movement.

It started in England and then it spread to the American colonies. And after the Revolutionary War, Methodists flourished in the new nation and it traveled across the frontier of North America.

[21 : 32] John Wesley was born on June 17, 1703 in Upworth, England. And his father was Samuel Wesley, who was a priest and a preacher in the Church of England.

His mother was Susanna Wesley, who gave birth to 19 children. Can you imagine? That included two sets of twins. But you know how things were in those days.

There were several of her children, nine of them, who died when they were just little infants. Now if you think that's a big family, you have to realize that Susanna was the youngest of 25 children from her parents.

Can you believe that? Oh, that poor woman. So who do you suppose John Wesley received most of his religious beliefs and training from?

Let's take a poll. And it can be by raising your hand. We're not going to hand out papers today. Just raise your hand to cast your vote. Do you think it was his father Samuel who taught him the most, the preacher?

[22 : 35] How about his mother Susanna? Yeah, I see a lot of hands there. Maybe it was his brother Charles. He was the great hymn writer, wrote beautiful hymns. How about Billy Graham, the great evangelist?

That was a little after his time, wasn't it? Well, John Wesley once wrote, I learned more about Christianity from my mother than from all the theologians in England.

Mothers have this huge influence on their children when it comes to the faith. And I can remember how my mom taught me about Jesus when I was just a little girl.

She taught me to say my prayers at night. You know that one, now I lay me down to sleep. Pray the Lord my soul to keep. Yeah, that's the one. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. That's the one.

Mom made sure that my brother and my sister and I got to Sunday school most Sundays. She even taught Sunday school for a while and helped out in the nursery and we helped her too. And she sang the alto part in the church choir at Emanuel United Methodist Church up in Lockport where I grew up.

[23 : 37] And I really believe that that might be where my love of harmony and my love for sacred music was first born. Now, Susanna Wesley taught her son John and his brother Charles and all the siblings to have faith in Jesus Christ.

And because of the size of her family, Susanna learned to be very methodical in raising her children and in living out her faith practices. She had specific times for daily prayers and for Bible reading.

And she lived out her faith by caring for others that were less fortunate than her. And her children were well disciplined in their faith life and in their practices of faith.

As an adult, John followed those practices. He got up very, very early in the morning to pray every single day and to read his Bible. And he visited the sick and he cared for the poor on a regular basis just like his mother did.

She taught him well. He also took communion as often as he could almost every day. And he gathered with other believers so that they could learn together and be accountable to one another.

[24 : 43] It was his methodical practices that earned him that nickname, Methodist. And of course, at first, it was supposed to be a derogatory term, an insult. But the name stuck.

It stuck to John and it stuck to those who would pattern their faith life after his. His mother, Susanna, was a really great teacher. And at one time, she had more people coming to her Sunday evening teaching and worship time than the regular preacher had on Sunday mornings.

And this is probably why John had a deep respect for female teachers and preachers. And Susanna might be part of the reason that we have ordained clergy in our United Methodist Church today.

There are some denominations still who don't ordain women as clergy. The clergywomen have been part of Methodism almost since the beginning.

John Wesley licensed a woman named Sarah Crosby to be a lay pastor to preach the word in 1761. And although women were ordained in the Methodist tradition as early as the late 1800s, it wasn't until 1956 that women were given full clergy rights in the United Methodist Church.

[25 : 59] Now, as a female pastor, I'm really grateful there were women who paved the way for me. And I'm grateful that the majority of the people in our churches have come to approve of women in this role and to support us in our calling from God.

However, I still find that there are some people who resist the idea of having a woman as the leader of their church. What if the shoe were on the other foot? What if it were men who were discriminated against?

Imagine if they were told some of the things that we're told as women about being pastors. It might look something like this. Men can still be involved in the church.

They just don't need to be ordained. The children's ministry is always in need of male leadership. Some men are handsome. They could be too distracting for us on Sunday.

They're too emotional to be priests or pastors. Go to a March Madness game and tell me I'm wrong. Male pastors who have children might be distracted by the responsibility of being a parent.

[27 : 08] Jesus was betrayed by a man. How can men be trusted to lead? About once a month, male pastors get really cranky. Men are still vitally important to the life of the church.

I mean, they could sweep sidewalks or repair the church roof. They could even lead worship on Father's Day. So yeah, we hear stuff like this all the time.

All the time. But it's 2016. So don't be that guy. Support women in the church. Some of them might be too handsome and be distracting.

What would it be like for men if they heard those things? Well, that's what it feels like for us sometimes as women clergy. You know, in the Bible, it seems like there are mixed messages about women in roles of leadership.

And each of those scriptures needs to be understood in the context of the culture in which it was written. But the story of creation starts out.

[28 : 13] And it shows a shared responsibility between Adam and Eve. Both men and women are commissioned by God to care for the world and to care for other people.

The Old Testament period did include some significant ministry that was done by women. If you look at Esther, Queen Esther, and if you look at the judge, Deborah, you see that they had leadership roles that were important.

It's also clear that Jesus included women in leadership in his faith community. The stories of their ministries reveal the equal role that women are supposed to have in God's plan for his kingdom.

I think a turning point in the life of the church happened in Acts chapter 2. You know, the day of Pentecost? That's the day that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled.

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions.

[29 : 12] Your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy. And afterward, I will pour out my spirit on all people.

On Pentecost, both male and female believers were filled with God's spirit and they spoke the good news to everyone who would listen. In Romans chapter 16, there are women mentioned, such as Priscilla, who helped to lead a house church with her husband.

In fact, sometimes she's mentioned first in the scripture, which means she had higher importance. And then there was Phoebe, who was listed as a deacon of the church. And there was Junia, who is referred to as prominent among the apostles.

So there's a female apostle. These women and many more were reported as carrying the gospel of Jesus Christ out into the rest of the world. And with certainty, by the 4th century AD, women were being ordained to ministry in the church.

And this never would have happened if the early leaders of that day felt as though they were in violation of the scriptures. Now, John Wesley not only agreed with women having a place in the ministry of the church, he also believed strongly in the inclusion of all kinds of people in the life of the church.

[30 : 36] In other words, no one who was hungry to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ should be turned away. John saw that in his own church, the Church of England, the rich had taken over the leadership, and they were excluding those who were less wealthy.

Some congregations even charged a fee for the use of their pews. How would you like it if you came in on Sunday morning and you saw one of these for rent signs on your favorite pew? Would you like to have to pay a fee in order to sit there?

That's how it was in the Church of England at that time. And I have to tell you that in the Methodist Church later on in America, they also charged a fee for their pews.

It caused a rift in the church. I don't know if they thought it was a good fundraiser or if they were trying to keep some of the less wealthy out. But in Wesley's day, they thought they could exclude the riffraff from having a seat in the sanctuary.

In fact, the very, very poor people were not allowed inside the building at all. And Wesley knew this was wrong. But when he preached that all should be allowed in, he was thrown out of the pulpit.

[31 : 48] There's an account of a wealthy woman protesting to one of her friends. That Wesley fellow, he believes as if my maid has just as much right to be in the church as I do.

Can you imagine? We must do something about this man, John Wesley. And so church after church, rejected John Wesley because of his heart for the poor.

And so he began preaching out in the open fields and the marketplaces. And you all know what happened. Thousands of people were converted. Thousands of people accepted salvation through Jesus Christ.

You know, sometimes when we face adversity, it's not because we're doing something wrong. It's because we're doing exactly what's right in God's eyes. Why did Wesley feel so strongly about inclusion?

Think about it. A family with ten children had a pretty hard time on a poor preacher's salary. Finances were always a problem for the Wesleys.

[32 : 53] John's father, Samuel, was very often traveling. And he spent what little income he did have trying to write a book and get it published. But it never came to fruition.

It never made any money at all. In fact, it cost him money. Meanwhile, John's mother, Susanna, had to scrimp and save and do without for herself in order to keep her children fed and provide what they needed, those ten children.

Twice, their home burned down. John almost perished in one of those fires. And it was a difficult life as John was growing up. And so he had this special sympathy for people who were struggling.

And he knew that all people, including the poor, maybe the poor most of all, needed to have the hope of the gospel. You know, in our church down in Niagara Falls, where I normally am on Sunday mornings, we have a wider variety of people on an economic level.

On Thursday nights, we have our free community meal. And you'll find people that look just like you. You'll find people that are maybe middle class. You'll find people that are really quite poor that come for dinner.

[34 : 05] And they all come together. And that group of people has kind of coalesced into a church. In fact, my husband Bill leads a worship service for them. And most of the people stay after dinner for that worship service.

But there were a couple of guys who came at the beginning and came to the meal quite often. And you could tell that they were on hard times. They didn't look so neat and clean. And they would show up for worship on Sunday mornings once in a while.

And I'm proud to say my church up there was welcoming to them and invited them in. And I spent some time talking to the one fellow quite a bit. His name was Donald. What really touched me, though, was when they filled out their friendship card and put their address on the friendship card, they wrote homeless.

Their address was homeless. And my heart just really was wrenched by seeing that. But they would come from time to time, and we would try to help them out and feed them and give them a little hand up once in a while.

Well, about a month ago, I don't know if you saw that there was an accident on River Road up along on the Tonawanda, North Tonawanda end. Someone was trying to cross the road in the dark and was struck by a car and killed.

[35 : 23] And it was Donald. It was Donald. My heart was broken. I thought, what could we have done more? How could we have included him more? How could we have helped him more?

And maybe that wouldn't have happened. I don't know. I don't know. We need to include other people. We need to be welcoming to all kinds of folks in our churches, in our circle of friends, in our communities.

Wesley believed that all people who come seeking after Jesus Christ should also be welcomed not only into the church but to the communion table. Rich or poor, young or old, all should come to the Lord's Supper and receive his grace in the bread and the cup.

And that's why we have in our church what we call an open table, where everyone who wants to draw closer to God is welcome. We announce it every week. You don't have to be a member of our church in order to receive communion here.

You just have to be seeking Christ. Think about it. If Jesus himself were here and he were setting the table and handing out the bread and the cup, would he refuse anyone that came to him?

[36 : 34] No. No. And neither should we. Neither should we. It's the same with the sacrament of baptism. In some churches, you have to be a certain age to be baptized.

And in the United Methodist Church, we believe that people of all ages can be baptized, whether they're babies or the oldest. They're welcome to be baptized. I baptized a tiny baby.

His name was Jace. And he was only a few weeks old. And he didn't live much longer than that. And his family wanted to be sure that he was baptized into the family of God.

And another time, I baptized a lady who was in her 90s. She had been attending church all her life, different churches. But for some reason, she never was baptized. And she was homebound.

She couldn't see very well. And I would go to visit her. And she said to me, I really, really want to be baptized. I said, I think you have your relationship with God right. We're going to go ahead and baptize you.

[37 : 33] So we did that one day. And she was just delighted. She couldn't see it very well. But I gave her a certificate. And she used her little eyeglass to look at it. And then her son framed it and put it on the wall. And she was very, very happy and pleased.

In chapter 16 of the book of Acts, it says the whole household of Lydia was baptized when she became a believer. It doesn't say only the adults were baptized.

And later in that same chapter, the whole household of the jailer who had custody of Paul and Silas in prison also believed. And the whole household was baptized.

And in chapter 18, Crispus, the synagogue leader, believed in Jesus. And again, his whole household was baptized. And there doesn't seem to be any limitation on age or status.

All were accepted into the family of faith. In the United Methodist Church, we not only feel that all age groups can be baptized, we also agree that the amount of water that is applied doesn't matter very much.

[38 : 38] We can baptize with a sprinkling of water or a pouring of water. Or we can dunk somebody right in a tank and cover them up completely with water. It's not the amount of water that really matters so much as it is the condition of the person's heart.

Or the condition of the hearts of the parents who brings tiny babies for baptism. Because they're intending to raise their child in the faith. And then later on, we offer confirmation to our youth when they're about 13, so that they can make their own faith confession.

And so that they can be confirmed in their belief. And that baptism has even more meaning. Sometimes kids are baptized at 13 when they're confirmed. We can do both on the same day.

God accepts all people who come to him. Now there are still some disagreements within the greater church throughout the world on these details about who should be baptized when and how much water.

And there are arguments still about what Holy Communion means and how it ought to be given. But John Wesley loved to quote this theologian whose name was Rupertus Meldenius.

[39 : 47] And he used to say, In essentials, unity. In non-essentials, liberty. In all things, charity. There are certain essentials of our faith that we have to believe if we're going to be called Christians.

Here are a few that I came up with, and you, I'm sure, can think of others. We believe in one God, the eternal, the creator of the universe. We believe in Jesus Christ, who was God manifest in human flesh, come to earth to offer himself as the only sacrifice for our sins, our Lord, our Savior.

We believe in God, the Holy Spirit, dwelling in us and among us, in the hearts of believers all over. The Holy Spirit is there to convict us and convert us and consecrate us to God's service.

So those are some of the essentials of our faith. But there are many that are non-essentials, which we can disagree upon. And we should never allow these non-essentials to divide the church of Jesus Christ in the world.

The very first apostles encountered some problems among the new Christian believers because they came from different cultural backgrounds. Some were Jews who still thought that they needed to follow the Old Testament laws.

[41 : 08] And they had trouble setting that aside in order to take up the freedom of grace. And some were former pagans who had very few rules.

And they were struggling to live a better moral life in order to show that they believed in Jesus and were following him. So you can see the struggle is not new.

It's as old as the church is. In our reading from Galatians chapter 3, the Apostle Paul addresses this question by asking this.

Does God give you his spirit and work miracles among you by works of the law or by your believing what you heard? And of course, the answer is by believing.

We can't do enough to receive God's grace. But if we believe and accept God's grace, then we want to do to show our faith.

[42 : 04] You know, the law was a good thing. It was given as a way of keeping God's people out of trouble. Like a legal guardian watches over the affairs of a child until they're old enough to handle things for themselves.

But at just the right time, as the child reaches maturity, their affairs become their own responsibility. As we mature, our belief in God is not so much about keeping rules as it is about having faith in the saving grace of Jesus Christ.

When we're believing in faith, then we're all made equal in the eyes of God. Paul says in verses 26 to 28, So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

All one. You know, children really seem to get this. They want to include everyone. They don't see the differences among us when they're little.

[43 : 14] We teach them those things. Sometimes we need to teach each other. How many of you have watched Sesame Street? You know, when you had kids or grandkids. You know what I love about Sesame Street?

The humor is geared towards adults so that we can stand to watch it time after time after time, right? But I love the way they teach lessons. Watch this. Hi, I'm Mila.

Oh, and Elmo's Elmo. And we are here to tell you about the word include. Include. Include. Now, the word include means to let someone into a group.

And right now, we'd like to show you include. Include. But we can't. You see, these two sheep are dancing, but they aren't letting Elmo dance with them.

No. Elmo's not included. No. And tell me, Elmo, how does it feel to not be included? Well, Miss Mila, it does not feel good. No. It doesn't feel good at all.

[44 : 10] I didn't think so. In fact, Elmo feels kind of sad that he's not included. Wait! Stop the music! What? What's going on?

Well, we don't want Elmo to feel sad. You don't? No. In fact, we want Elmo to be happy. You do?

Yeah, that's why we want him to join us. Yeah. So you want to include Elmo? Yes! Come join us, Elmo!

That's why Elmo's included! Elmo's included! Music! Music! Okay. Well, there you have it. The word include means to let someone in the group, and the sheep just included Elmo.

Stop the music! Stop the music! What's going on now, guys? We want to include someone else! Who? You! Me?

[45 : 06] Mm-hmm. Music! Music! Include! Yeah! Yeah! Include!

God wants to include all people in his kingdom. God wants us to love one another. Kids, get this. Why can't we, as adults, get this? You know, it really breaks my heart to see the violence and the hatred going on in parts of our country right now.

What happened in Charlottesville should be a shame to all of us, all of us who call ourselves Christian. We are all children of God. There is not one race or gender or economic status or educational level that makes one person better than another.

We are all God's children deserving of God's mercy and God's grace. You know, finally, John Wesley agreed that in all things we are to have charity, which is loving compassion.

He once said, though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike. The Greek word for charity is agape, and it means a love that's willing to sacrifice for the good of another person.

[46 : 22] It's sometimes difficult to include people who are different from us in our church and in our community. But God finds value in all people. God loves all people because God made them out of his love.

And God longs for us to love one another in that same way, in that sacrificial love, which was modeled by Jesus Christ when he died for us on the cross.

We need to include others in our circle of friendship, in our church family, in our community. And we need to share the love of Jesus with all people, not just a select few.

It is God's will that none should perish, but that everyone should come to the repentance that leads to eternal life. John Wesley understood that, and he made it a part of his daily living out of the faith.

Inclusion is an important part of our Wesleyan heritage and something we need now more than ever. Everyone needs compassion, a love that's never failing.

[47 : 31] Everyone needs forgiveness and the kindness of a Savior. And our God is mighty to save. I invite you to join us in singing God's praises. Amen. Everyone needs compassion, a love that's never failing.

And mercy for me. Everyone needs forgiveness and the kindness of a Savior. cZn Be a for God im nuke your heart.

Èb anointing v Réal haar God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save. Forever, author of salvation, heroes who conquer the grave.

Jesus, conquer the grave. You take me as you find me, all my fears and failures.

You fill my life again. I give my life to follow everything I believe in.

[49 : 27] Now I surrender. I surrender. Savior, Lord, He can move the mountains.

My God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save. Forever, author of salvation, heroes who conquer the grave.

Jesus, conquer the grave. Shine your light and let the whole world see. We're singing for the glory of the risen King.

Jesus, shine your light and let the whole world see. We're singing for the glory of the risen King.

Savior, Lord, He can move the mountains. My God is mighty to save, He is mighty to save.

- [50 : 37] Forever, author of salvation, heroes who conquer the grave. Jesus, conquer the grave.
Nothing has the power to save but the name of Christ.
Christ of all, amen. Join in dawns and evening fades.
You inspire songs of praise. And rise from earth to touch your heart And glorify your name
Your name is a strong and mighty tower Your name is a shell like no other Your name let
the nations sing it louder There's nothing else to allow me to say But your name As
morning dawns and evening fades
You inspire songs of praise And rise from earth to touch your heart And glorify your name
Your name is a strong and mighty tower Your name is a shell like no other Your name let
the nations sing it louder There's nothing else to allow me to say But your name is a
strong and mighty tower Your name is a shell like no other Your name is a shell like no
other
- [53 : 49] Your name we pray Come and fill our hearts today Lord give us change to live for you And
glorify your name You know God calls us to love all people Just as God loves all people
And yet we know that sometimes we'll fail in that Sometimes we'll hurt others Sometimes
we'll break God's heart And so we come today offering our prayer of confession I ask that
you would pray after me Dear Lord You are holy You are loving You are loving And you
care for all your people You ask us to do the same You ask us to do the same And yet
sometimes we fail And yet sometimes we fail We hurt others
We harm ourselves And we break your heart We ask you to forgive us In the strong name
of Jesus Wash us clean with your Spirit Help us to have faith in you and help us to live
with love for others.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Hear the glorious good news. God loves us all. He loves
us so much, he sent his only son into the world to live and to die and to be raised again for
each one of us.
And so I can say to you with confidence, in the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are
forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen.
Jesus, lead up my heart, Father, my peace and my life, Spirit, the joy of my soul you are.
- [56 : 12] Jesus, do you not compare, Father? I rest in your cares, Spirit, the hope of my heart you
find.
But heaven, declare you, our God, and the mountains rejoice. Lord, we all shout, my
hallelujah, as we worship you, Lord.
For this is our song of love. Jesus, you save my soul.
I'll thank you forevermore. Lord, Jesus, the love of my life you are.
Lord, we all shout, my love of my life you are. But heavens prepare you, our God, and the
mountains rejoice. Lord, we all shout, my hallelujah, as we worship you, Lord.
- [57 : 22] As we worship you, Lord. For this is our song of love. Jesus, I am in all, the love that you
have shown.
Jesus, how precious you are to me, to me. The heavens declare you, our God, and the
mountains rejoice.
Lord, we all shout, my hallelujah, as we worship you, Lord. For this is our song of love.
Oh, that and I know we all shout, my hallelujah, O from our of your, or to our women.
So this is our song of love. newsletter to the sun at God. The hearing of that range 0933's
Orange caption ■ ■ polynom Together Lift up your hearts.
- [58 : 41] Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. 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. And when our love failed and we turned away, still your love remained steadfast. 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, the one who came in the fullness of time to reveal your love to the people.

He walked with us on this earth. He fed us. He healed us. He forgave our sins. He taught us. And at exactly the right moment, he gave up his very life for us.

[59 : 52] On that night in which he was to give himself up for us, Jesus took bread, gave thanks to God, broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. And he said to them, This is my body which is broken for you.

Eat of this in remembrance of me. After the supper, he took the cup. He gave thanks to God. He gave it to his disciples and he told them, This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Drink of this as often as you will 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 cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ that we might 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 your Holy Spirit and your Holy Church.

[61 : 20] All honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forevermore. Amen. And now as his faithful people, shall we pray together the prayer he taught us, saying, 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 and ever. Amen.

Will those who are helping to serve please come forward. Father, Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I know that you may be Thank you.

Thank you.

[63 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[65 : 41] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[68 : 41] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[72 : 11] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.