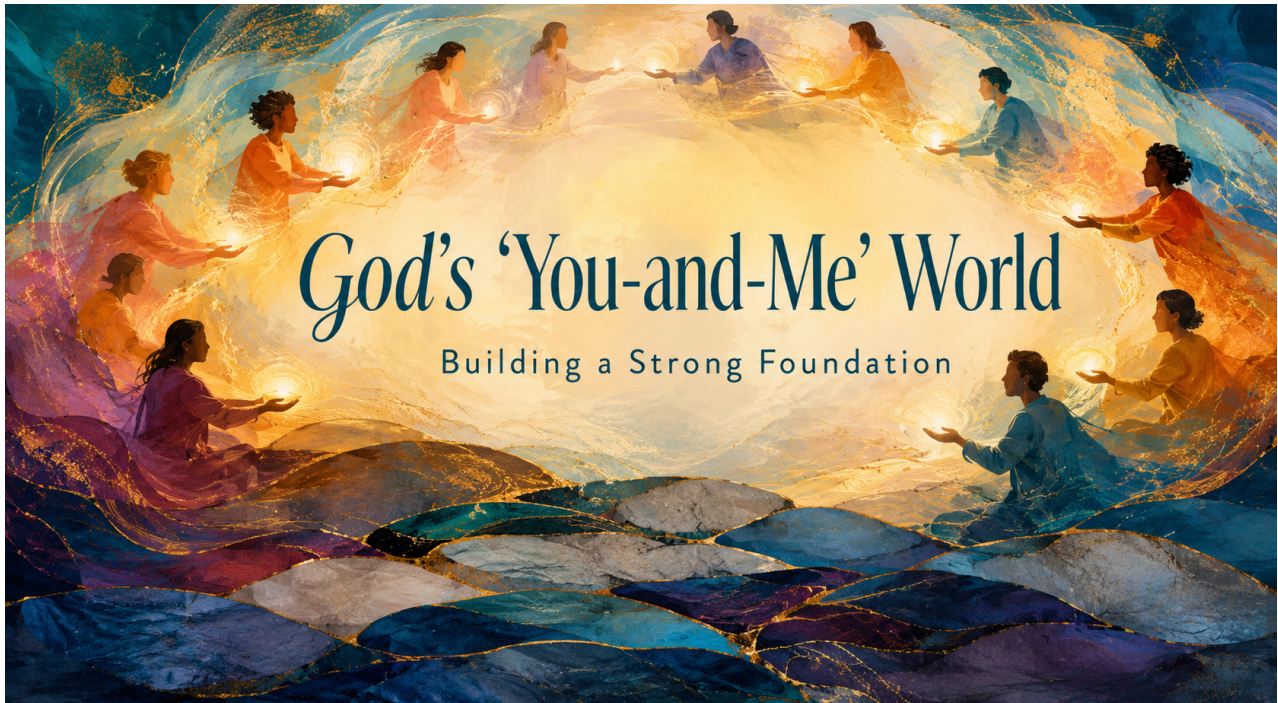




God's 'You-and-Me' World

Building a Strong Foundation

**Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 23, 2026**

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dickason, BCC

United in Christ's love, a just world for all.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost
August 23, 2026

Singing Prelude

Walk with Me

Rice

**Walk with me, I will walk with you
and build the land that God has planned
where love shines through.**

Walk with Me

Refrain

Walk with me, I will walk with you and

The first line of musical notation is for the song 'Walk with Me'. It features a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics 'Walk with me, I will walk with you and' are written below the notes. The music ends with a double bar line.

build the land that God has planned where love shines through.

The second line of musical notation continues the song. It features a treble and bass staff in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics 'build the land that God has planned where love shines through.' are written below the notes. The music ends with a double bar line.

Words and Music: John S. Rice © 1988

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Welcome and Announcements

Good morning, Venice United Church of Christ.

Grace and Peace to you in the name of Jesus who welcomes each and every one of us into this sacred space. I am Pastor Barb, John Yahres is our liturgist, and Jeff Cook and Phillip Munsey are our song leaders. Many thanks to all of our staff and volunteers for all that they do so that we can come together to worship God.

Beautifying our sanctuary today, we have flowers given by VUCC Flower Ministry.

For those of us who are worshipping online, whether today or some point in the future, I invite you to like us, share us, and let your presence be known in the comments so that we can keep each other in prayer.

For those of us here in this space of stained glass and compassionate friendship, if you have a prayer request or a joy to share, please make sure that you let the office know. Call us, drop us an email, or follow the prayer request button in the app, as I want to make sure that we can lift up everyone's prayers as we worship.

For some of you, this is your first time joining us. I hope that you have been warmly greeted and have notated your presence either at our welcome table or through the QR codes found in the pews. We are excited to get to know you. We also have an

exciting new gift for you, so please stop by the Welcome Table if you haven't already to pick it up.

For in this holy, wonderful, ordinary space,
as Venice United Church of Christ,
we empower and invite everyone
to join us in this divine place
that we share on line and in person.

For when we gather, everyone is invited,
no matter who you are
or where you are on life's journey,
and no one is turned away.

Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for coffee and fellowship across the lane in Naar Hall. Many thanks to Sharon & Gary Leidheiser who are serving as our hosts today.

This week, there are several events for which you will want to schedule time, ... Monday events.

Our Wednesday Bible Study will be meeting; we are on the fourteenth chapter of Matthew, and new members are always welcome. On Friday, the Men are meeting at Panera. On Saturday, Men's Breakfast.

There are many ways to get involved here at Venice UCC, whether through activities, volunteering for special projects or helping with our mission projects, or serving on a team or committee. Please check out the information table to explore new ways to become connected to the ministries of our church.

Today, as we continue our stewardship journey, “There Our Hearts Will Be,” Jesus asks the disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter’s answer becomes more than a confession; it draws him into the world Christ is building—a world entrusted not to perfect people, but to people willing to offer themselves for the flourishing of others.

From her book, *The Soul of Money*, we will hear Lynne Twist describe God’s vision of a “you-and-me world,” where we remember that we belong to one another and share the gifts that are uniquely ours to give. This morning, we will consider how recognizing Christ also calls us to recognize what God has placed within us—and to offer ourselves to the world God has created us to care for together.

May our worship align us again with God’s holy purpose — to love one another as Christ loves us.

So Come, beautifully authentic, humbly transforming, faithfully Good-news following body of Christ, and let us Worship God!

We Approach God's Presence

Bringing in the Light of Christ

Rock of Ages

Hastings

Responsive Call to Worship

John Yahres

Jesus asks, "Who do you say that I am?"

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Christ calls us into relationship with one another—

to share the gifts entrusted to us,

and to build together a world where all may flourish.

We come to offer ourselves to God and to one another.

Christ is building a community where scarcity does not separate us

and difference does not divide us.

We come, choosing to be a part of God's "you-and-me" world.

Come, living stones, gifted and beloved — and give thanks to God!

***Hymn**

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Mote/Bradbury

**1. My hope is built on nothing less
than Jesus' love and righteousness.**

**I dare not trust this earthly frame,
but wholly lean on Jesus' name.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

**2. When shadows veil my savior's face,
I rest upon unchanging grace.**

**In every high and stormy gale,
my anchor holds within the veil.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

**3. Christ's oath and covenant and love
support me in the rising flood.**

**When all around my soul gives way,
Christ then is all my hope and stay.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

**4. When Christ shall come
with trumpet sound,**

oh, may I then in Love be found.

**Dressed in God's righteousness alone,
faultless to stand before the throne.**

**On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
all other ground is sinking sand;
all other ground is sinking sand.**

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

Matt. 7:24-27; 1 Cor. 3:11; Heb. 6:19; Rev. 11:15

Edward Mote, c. 1834; alt.

1 My hope is built on noth-ing less than Je - sus' love and
 2 When shad - ows veil my Sav-ior's face, I rest up - on un -
 3 Christ's oath and cov - e - nant and love sup - port me in the
 4 When Christ shall come with trum-pet sound, oh, may I then in

right - teous-ness; I dare not trust this earth - ly frame, but
 chang-ing grace; In ev - ery high and storm - y gale, my
 ris - ing flood; When all a - round my soul gives way, Christ
 Love be found, Dressed in God's right - teous - ness a - lone, fault -

Refrain
 whol-ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 an-chor holds with - in the veil. On Christ, the sol - id Rock, I stand;
 then is all my hope and stay.
 less to stand be - fore the throne.

all oth - er ground is sink-ing sand, all oth - er ground is sink-ing sand.

William Bradbury met great success by composing hymn tunes and religious songs in a lively, popular style. He also helped establish music programs in New York public schools, served a church, and co-founded a piano company.

Tune: SOLID ROCK L.M. with refrain
 William B. Bradbury, 1863

CCLI License #11176734

***Prayer for Transformation and New Life**

Let us pray:

Living God,

You have created each of us with gifts that can bring
compassion, healing, and hope.

Yet we confess that we sometimes hold ourselves back.

We compare our gifts with the gifts of others, cling to what we have,
or imagine that someone else will do the work.

Forgive us when we choose a you-or-me world
instead of the abundant life you offer us together.

Free us from the need to accumulate, compete, and control.

**Teach us to recognize Christ among us,
trusting that what we offer is a part
of the community Christ is building.**

Re-member us as your people.

**Bring us again into relationship,
that our lives may proclaim your love
and our gifts may serve your world.**

Amen.

***Words of Grace**

Hear the Good News:

Christ does not build the church from perfect people,
but from people who are willing to be shaped by love.

God receives us, renews us, and calls forth the gifts within us.

**We are forgiven. We are beloved. We are being built together
into a dwelling place for God's grace. Amen.**

***Response** *My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (reprise?)* Mote/Bradbury

**On Christ the solid rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand.**

We Encounter God in the Word

Contemplative Reading *The Soul of Money*¹

Lynne Twist

Hear these words of contemplation:

“When we have the courage to let go of the dream we have now—the dream and drive and trance to accumulate more—then we have the space to envision and create the new dream, a dream that sees us engaged in respecting, preserving, honoring what we have. In that space of nourishment, in that vision of a new relationship with life, natural harmony and creativity abound.

“As Buckminster Fuller said, "everyone has the perfect gift to give the world—and if each of us is freed up to give the gift that is uniquely ours to give, the world will be in total harmony." As the indigenous people say in their prophecy of global collaboration for survival, we need to ‘re’-member each other, reunite, be in relationship, share our gifts, and the world will come naturally into balance. None of us wants our children or our children's children to live in a you-or-me world where they have to fight for survival. We want those children to be free, self-expressed, living in harmony and collaboration, with reverence for life and the resources we all share. All of us want a you-and-me world.”

God is still speaking. **Thanks be to God.**

Special Music

How Majestic Is Your Name
Jeff Cook and Phillip Munsey, *Duet*

Smith

¹ Twist, Lynne. *The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2017. Pg 183, 182.

31-32 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” And they said, “Some say John the Baptist but others Elijah and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” And

Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah

The Word of God for the People of God. **Thanks be to God!**

Let us pray:

For the gifts you awaken within us,
for the relationships through which you form us,
and for Christ, who calls us to build your beloved community,
we give you honor and thanks and praise.

Amen.

When I was in high school, I ended up sitting beside another young woman on the bus. We had not planned to sit together. We were simply two people traveling in the same direction who happened to share a seat. Yet, day after day as the miles passed and first introduced ourselves and then really began talking, we discovered that we were both practicing Christians.

At first, it seemed pretty awesome that we held something important in common. We both went to church. We both knew the stories of Jesus. We both understood ourselves as people seeking to live in response to God’s Word. We used the same language—God, Jesus, love, obedience, Christian—but as we continued talking, it became clear that the faith communities forming us had taught us to understand those words very differently.

My family and church were opening a world of opportunity to me. I was being encouraged to learn, explore, and imagine what I might become. Her family and church had already mapped out the life they believed she should live. She was expected to marry, bear children, and remain obedient to the authority of her husband. These were not possibilities she had freely chosen from among many faithful ways of living. They had been presented as the boundaries God had placed around her life.

As we talked, we found ourselves speaking about the love Jesus showed and the love Paul described in 1 Corinthians 13—a love that is patient and kind, that does not insist on its own way, that rejoices in truth, and that endures. Although she regularly attended church, this was not the God, nor the Christ, she had been introduced to. The God she had been taught to obey was primarily a God of strict rules and subservience rather than a God of compassion, forgiveness, and generosity.

Two faith communities could speak the same language and proclaim almost opposite visions of God. Two young women could call themselves Christians while being formed to imagine entirely different worlds. And so the question beneath our conversation became much larger than either of us understood when we first shared that bus seat: Who is Jesus, and what kind of world becomes possible when we recognize him?

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Matthew tells us that Jesus had taken the disciples into the district of Caesarea Philippi when he asked, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”

Now, this location is important to what comes next in our scripture, because Caesarea Philippi was associated with political power, religious claims, and the reach of the Roman Empire. Even its name honored Caesar. Surrounded by the visible reminders of people and institutions claiming the divine authority of Rome’s emperor, Jesus asked his disciples to consider what they had heard about him.

They answered with the names circulating among the crowds: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, or another of the prophets. None of these responses was dismissive. Each placed Jesus within Israel's sacred story. Each recognized that something of God was happening through him. Yet each answer still kept the disciples at a safe distance. They were reporting what other people believed.

Then Jesus turned the question toward them: "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Peter had not yet understood everything his confession would mean. In the verses immediately following our reading, he would resist Jesus' description of suffering and try to redirect him. Peter recognized something true before he understood where that truth would lead. Matthew allowed these moments to remain side by side: Peter named Jesus correctly, and then almost immediately misunderstood what it meant for Jesus to be the Messiah. His confession was not the conclusion of his formation. It was part of its beginning.

Jesus responded, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven." Peter's recognition was a gift. He had not solved a theological puzzle or distinguished himself through superior insight. God had enabled him to recognize who stood before him.

Yet the gift was not given so Peter could claim possession of Jesus or assume that every judgment he made from then on would be correct. Peter still had to follow, listen, misunderstand, be corrected, and grow into the confession he had spoken. He knew enough to say, “You are the Messiah,” but he did not yet know all that this truth would ask of him.

Jesus then spoke of a church built upon rock, a community against which the gates of Hades would not prevail. He entrusted Peter with the keys of the kingdom and spoke of binding and loosing. These words have sometimes been used as though Jesus handed Peter—and, through him, the church—authority to control the doors, decide who belonged, and enforce whatever boundaries religious institutions preferred.

Yet the keys belonged to the kingdom of heaven, not to Peter’s private kingdom and not to the church’s private kingdom. The authority Jesus entrusted to Peter remained inseparable from the Messiah Peter had just named. It could not faithfully be exercised in ways contrary to the life of Jesus: his mercy, his forgiveness, his attention to those others overlooked, and his refusal to treat human beings as expendable.

And Peter did not receive this responsibility as an isolated disciple being rewarded for producing the correct answer. Jesus had asked the question of all the disciples: “Who do you say that I am?” Peter was the one whose voice rose to answer, but he spoke from within the community Jesus was gathering. In Matthew’s Gospel, Peter frequently stood both as an individual

disciple and as a representative of the others—capable of insight, misunderstanding, courage, fear, and continuing formation.²

The responsibility that followed his confession also belonged within that community. Binding and loosing concerned the difficult, ongoing work of discerning how the community would live together in response to who Christ had just been revealed to be. It was not power bestowed upon one person so that the world would become his. Nor was it authority given to the church so that the world would become ours. It was responsibility entrusted to people who would have to keep listening to Christ and to one another in order to continue shaping God's vision of the world.

Peter's confession, then, did more than identify Jesus and proclaim God's realm emerging from within the shadow of Rome. It began to reveal the kind of community Jesus was creating: a community in which insight is received as a gift, understanding continues to grow, and responsibility is carried together. The question "Who do you say that I am?" does not end when we find the correct words. Our answer becomes visible in the world we create around those words—in whose voices we receive, whose gifts we welcome, which doors we open, and how we care for one another.

That is why the question reaches beyond Peter and the other disciples. It comes to us. We, too, can speak words that are true while still growing into their meaning. We, too, can recognize something of Christ and then discover that following him unsettles the world we have assumed must remain as it is. And we, too, are

² Boring, "The Gospel of Matthew," commentary on Matthew 16:13–20.

entrusted with responsibility—not to make the world belong to us, but to participate together in the world that belongs to God.

A You-and-Me World

This is where Lynne Twist's language helps us hear the passage within our stewardship practice. Twist contrasts a "you-or-me world" with a "you-and-me world." A you-or-me world teaches us that one person's opportunity must come at another's expense. There is not enough freedom, authority, safety, or abundance for everyone. Someone must lead and someone else must submit. Someone must speak and someone else must remain silent. Someone must possess the keys while others wait to learn whether the door will open for them.

A you-and-me world begins somewhere else. It does not begin with the assumption that we are competitors for a limited supply of God's love. It begins in relationship. It recognizes that each person has a gift that is uniquely theirs to offer and that the world becomes more whole when those gifts are received, shared, and joined together.

This does not mean that everything is easy or that differences disappear. Peter's confession did not eliminate his misunderstandings. The beloved community Jesus envisioned would still have to discern, forgive, repair, and learn. But its foundation would not be the ability of one person to possess the truth while everyone else obeyed. Its foundation would be the

living Christ, recognized in relationship and followed within community.

That changes how we understand offering ourselves.

Stewardship is not simply the contribution of something we own to something God is doing elsewhere. We offer ourselves because we already belong within the world God loves. Our gifts are not interchangeable pieces of labor. Nor are they possessions to be accumulated as evidence of our worth. They are ways we participate in God's care for a world entrusted to all of us.

God's "You-and-Me" World is not simply God's world, as if we are passive guests waiting for God to manage everything. It is not solely my world, arranged around my ambitions, fears, or preferences. It is the world God has created us to care for together.

Offering Ourselves

On the bus that day so many years ago, I watched God's "You-and-Me" World open before my new friend. As we talked about the Jesus I had come to know and the great love and compassion he extends to us, her face lit with an incredible joy. It was as if she were encountering someone she had been told about throughout her life but had never truly been allowed to meet. For a moment, another life, another world, seemed imaginable: one in which God's love was not measured by her submission, her worth was not confined to the role others had assigned her, and the life of Jesus revealed compassion and generosity rather than control.

Yet, as we continued talking, the practical boundaries of her life closed around that possibility. She recognized that she could not simply choose to attend worship with me. Her marriage would go forward even though she was barely at the age of consent. She already carried the child who would bind her more fully to the life others had chosen for her. As the distance between the Christ she had glimpsed and the future she could not escape became clear, I witnessed the most devastating heartbreak.

She had just met God as generous, loving, and compassionate, and she believed she would be denied regular access to any community that knew God in this way.

That memory has remained with me because our answer to Jesus' question is never contained only in the words we say. Every generation of the church must hear Jesus ask again, "Who do you say that I am?" Our answer is spoken in worship, but it is also revealed in the world our shared life makes possible.

If we say that Jesus is the Messiah and then create communities governed primarily by fear, suspicion, and control, our lives contradict our confession. If we proclaim the Son of the living God while treating some people's gifts as essential and others as inconvenient, we have not yet understood the responsibility of the keys. If we speak of Christ's love while mapping out another person's life without listening for what God may be calling forth within them, we are building our own world rather than caring for God's "You-and-Me" World.

But whenever we make room for another person's gifts, the foundation grows stronger. Whenever we use our opportunities to open possibilities for others, the doors of the kingdom open wider. Whenever we listen before deciding that we already know

what another person needs, we loosen something that has held human life too tightly. Whenever compassion carries greater authority than control, our confession becomes visible.

Perhaps the invitation before us is not simply to tell people about the God of generosity, love, and compassion, but to become a community through which we all can regularly encounter that God. We can help create a place where the joy that lights a person's face is not immediately overcome by the heartbreak of a door closing; where no one person controls the keys; where our different gifts become part of the world we are building together.

It may begin, as it did for two young women, simply by sharing a seat and a conversation. Yet within an ordinary encounter, another world can open—not simply God's world, not solely my world, but God's "You-and-Me" World: the world God has created us to care for together.

Amen.

We Respond to God's Grace

Congregational Prayers

Joys

Good Medical Tests

What a wonderful world with God in it.
Beautiful weather,
Getting up each morning,
Thankful that the Lord listens to prayers whatever they might be,
Music,
Kindness,
Our volunteers who do so much,
Those who light up our lives,
love,
playing golf,
the awe of each new day.
friends and neighbors who are like family,
being able to come to church,
being able to express ourselves to God,
diversity of the congregation,
God's new morning painting,
that we are able to celebrate our joys — for celebrating joy
reminds us that we share the same source of our joy,
the depth of human creativity and spirit,
gathering together to study God's word,
rebirth and recreation in communities that empower and hold us
as we ask tough questions of God and each other,
those who pitch in and help out,
birthdays, anniversaries, milestones...

When we pray for our loved ones, we have a duty of care to not spread their business without explicit permission. Instead, as we pray, we hold our loved ones close to our

heart and lift them up to God, trusting that the Spirit intercedes in all of our prayers, especially those too deep for words.

Intercessions:

Clete	Sara	Chip
Judy	David	Will
Harold	Jenny	Carolyn
Jim	Lisa	Bob
Liz	Vinnie	Carol
Sandy	Paula	Sandy
The family and friends of Clark Moore		Lynda
Brian	Morgan's family	Vicki
Sandy	Roger	Sara
Chip	The family and friends of Ellie	
The family and friends of Lowell		Edwin
The family and friends of Ann		
Our neighbor and his family		Chanel
The family and friends of Joseph and Robert		
The family and friends of Troy		
Area faith communities and their members		

Jimmy, Christine, Cerenity, Mark, Helen, Gay, Rev. Ryan's family, Pam, Jack, Rick, Kip, Emily

Natashia added on 8/20

Chanel Thomas (she came to get a gas card) for Joseph Roberts, Keith Sims, and Troy. Joseph and Keith passed away in a car accident and Troy passed away from a drug overdose

Those who are struggling with a cancer diagnosis.

We pray for those people who have lost their jobs and their means of supporting their families, ... pets that need homes

**We pray for everyone to be healthy,
Everyone impacted by the decisions of governments that
choose violence and war instead of diplomacy;** all essential
workers and all frontline healthcare workers; everyone impacted
by recent hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, and flooding;
and

**The staff and participants of Word Made Flesh in Sierra
Leone, Immokalee Farm Workers,** black and brown fathers and
their sons, everyone living through domestic violence, people of
all religions who are being persecuted because of their faith, all
who struggle with or are affected by mental illness and
depression. We also pray for law enforcement officers, service
men and women, missionaries and rescue workers doing God's
work in dangerous places.

(Fourth Sunday: alternative)

Silent Prayer

Prayers of the People and our Lord's Prayer

Living God,

You call us into a world shaped not by "you or me," but by "you
and me." Re-member us as your people. Draw us beyond the
divisions that separate us and teach us to recognize the gifts you
have placed within every person. Build us together as living
stones in a community of compassion, justice, and hope.

Free us from the belief that what we have or who we are is not
enough. Give us courage to offer ourselves—our time, our
abilities, our resources, and our love—for the work of your kin-
dom. May our lives answer Christ's question not only with words

spoken by our lips, but through the ways we serve, welcome, forgive, and care for one another.

We pray this morning for those who are grieving, for those who are suffering, for those who are sitting in that place of waiting and not knowing. Soothe our fears, nourish our bodies, and feed our souls with the bread and cup of your compassion and mercy.

We praise you for your vision of a new heaven and a new earth, in which everyone treats each other as your beloved children, as together we sing the prayer that you have taught us:

Our Loving God who is above all, holy is your name.

**May your kin-dom come and
your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive the ways in which we have knowingly
or unknowingly caused harm to others,
as we forgive the harm done to us.**

**Protect us in our times of trial,
and keep us from retaliation.**

For all that is, is Yours;

**So we return all that we have claimed as our own
to your care.**

And we Glorify You, Forever and Ever. Amen

Musical Response *Prayers of the People*

Johansen-Werner

**Lord, let your kingdom come. Your will be done.
Lord, let your kingdom come. Alleluia.**

We Share God's Love

Invitation to Generosity

God has placed within each of us gifts that the world needs. When we offer those gifts—our resources, our time, our compassion, and ourselves— we help build a world shaped not by “you or me,” but by “you and me.” Let us share what has been entrusted to us and take our place in the community Christ is building.

(The offering plates are found by each doorway for your use. For those of us online, please follow the QR code.)

*Song of Gratitude

*We Are an Offering*³

Liles

**We lift our voices, we lift our hands,
We lift our eyes up to You,
We are an offering, We are an offering.**



*Unison Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Generous God,

Receive these gifts and receive our lives. Free us to offer the gifts that are uniquely ours to give. Use them to strengthen relationships, restore hope, and build your beloved community. Re-member us as your people, that together we may help create a world where all can flourish. Amen.

³ *We are an Offering*. CCLI Song #16220 © 1984 Curb Word Music. For use solely with the SongSelect® Terms of Use. All rights reserved. www.ccli.com CCLI License # 11176734

We Go to Carry the Light

***Hymn**

Take My Gifts

Murray/Gibson

**1. Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me,
gave me light and food and shelter,
gave me life and set me free.**

**Now, because your love has touched me,
I have love to give away;
now the bread of love is rising,
loaves of love to multiply!**

**2. Take the fruit that I have gathered
from the tree your Spirit sowed,
harvest of your own compassion,
juice that makes the wine of God;
spiced with humor, laced with laughter-
flavor of the Jesus life,
tang of risk and new adventure,
taste and zest beyond belief.**

**3. Take whatever I can offer-
gifts that I have yet to find,
skills that I am slow to sharpen,
talents of the hand and mind,
things made beautiful for others
in the place where I must be:
Take my gifts and let me love you,
God who first of all loved me.**

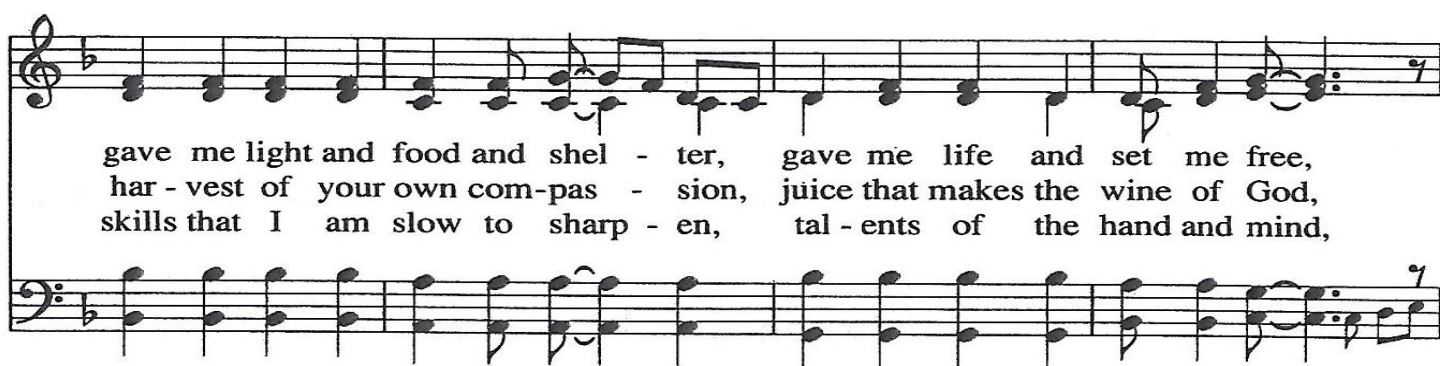
Take My Gifts

562

Shirley Erena Murray, 1991



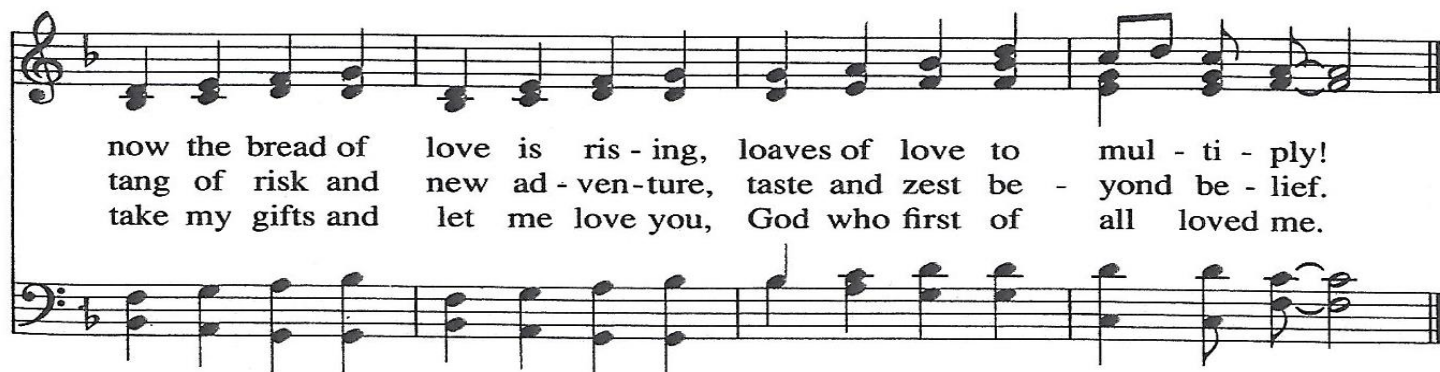
1 Take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me,
 2 Take the fruit that I have gath - ered from the tree your Spir - it sowed,
 3 Take what - ev - er I can of - fer— gifts that I have yet to find,



gave me light and food and shel - ter, gave me life and set me free,
 har - vest of your own com - pas - sion, juice that makes the wine of God,
 skills that I am slow to sharp - en, tal - ents of the hand and mind,



now be - cause your love has touched me, I have love to give a - way,
 spiced with hu - mor, laced with laugh - ter— fla - vor of the Je - sus life,
 things made beau - ti - ful for oth - ers in the place where I must be:



now the bread of love is ris - ing, loaves of love to mul - ti - ply!
 tang of risk and new ad - ven - ture, taste and zest be - yond be - lief.
 take my gifts and let me love you, God who first of all loved me.

Shirley Erena Murray recounted that Colin Gibson composed this tune for her stewardship text "almost instantaneously." Gibson has served as professor at the University of Otago, as well as organist and choir director in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Tune: TALAVERA TERRACE 8.7.8.7.D.
 Colin Gibson, 1991
 Alternate tune: HOLY MANNA
 CCLI License #11176734

***Blessing and Benediction**

Go into the world as living stones in the community Christ is building.

Offer the gifts that are yours to give.

Choose relationship over division,
collaboration over competition,
and abundance over fear.

May your lives proclaim who Christ is
as together we build God's "you-and-me" world.

Go in peace. Amen.

***Sending Blessing** *Go, My Children, with My Blessing* Vajda/Welsh Melody

**Go, my children, with my blessing, never alone;
waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own.
In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever.
Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.**

***Postlude**

The Church's One Foundation

Lew

**Please remain seated in silence for the Postlude
as the Light of Christ is carried into the world.
The worship has ended; our service begins.**

Supporting Our Service Today

Liturgist: John Yahres

Song Leader: Jeff Cook and
Phillip Munsey

Welcome Table: Lynn Woodrum

Greeter: Charlene Frick

Acolyte: Bella Clapham

Head Usher: Bob Zittel

Usher Team: Fran Kulak, Wendy
Seeley, John Yares, Barbara Zittel

Technology Team

Gary Woodrum, Debra Mosely,
Maria Groody, David Jack,
Linda Newton, Wally Davis,
Patty Fjetland

The **Lord's Table** was decorated
by Victoria Augustine

The **Sanctuary Flowers** are
given by VUCC Flower Ministry
The **Church Sign** was changed
by Faye Newton & Lisa Sclafani

Sunday Librarian: Helen
Markus

Fellowship Hosts:
Sharon & Gary Leidheiser



Senior Minister

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dickason, BCC

Staff

Gary Leidheiser: *Custodian*

Marguerite Long:

Administrative Specialist

Natashia Laughnan:

Social Media and

Communications Specialist

Barbara Quinn: *Music Director*

Lynda Weston:

Bella Handbell Director

This Week at a Glance

Monday, August 24

Pack a lunch and join us **on ZOOM** for prayer, study and connecting with each other. It's a come-as-you-are space designed to help us confront the loneliness epidemic while growing closer to God.
Click on the link below to join.

Tuesday, August 25

9:00 AM Staff Meeting
10:00 AM Leadership Council Meeting—CR

Wednesday, August 26

9:00 AM - Noon Library Hours
10:00 AM Bible Study—CR

Friday, August 28

8:30 AM Men's Coffee—Panera
9:00 AM - Knit Wits

Sunday, August 30

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost
9:00-9:45 AM Library Hour
10:00 AM Worship

Coming Events

The church office is open
M-Th, 9-1.

Would you like to donate to VUCC online?

Use this link:

<https://veniceucc.org/give>

Or...Use your Smart Phone to scan the QR code:
and it will take you directly to our donations page.
It is really easy!

