

6:30 – 6:40am: Praise Song

-During this time, we will learn a new praise song that invites us to open our hearts before God

Living Hope – Phil Wickham

<https://youtu.be/u-1fwZtKJSM?si=FtGyXDpBFSUX0vSE>

Writers: Phil Wickham, Brian Mark Johnson

How great the chasm that lay between us
How high the mountain I could not climb
In desperation, I turned to heaven
And spoke Your name into the night
Then through the darkness
Your loving kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul
The work is finished, the end is written
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame
The cross has spoken, I am forgiven
The king of kings calls me His own
Beautiful savior, I'm Yours forever
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope

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Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the roaring lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the roaring lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me
Jesus, Yours is the victory, whoa!

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope

Jesus Christ, my living hope
Oh God, You are my living hope

6:40 – 6:50am: Scripture Reading & Devotional

Today's reading comes from [John 15:1-11](#).

I'm not much of a gardener, but when I was appointed to serve at my first church, I made a challenge to myself. The challenge was, if I could tend and keep a rose bush, then it would be a sign that I can tend and keep a congregation.

Of course, the only thing I really can do for a rose bush is water it, prune it, spray it for bugs, and such. I can't really make it grow.

But that's equally true of tending to a congregation. I can only be obedient to preach the word, pray together, and offer care, but I can't make it grow.

Making it grow is what God does. Jesus tells us exactly who he is in this morning's scripture passage. Jesus is the vine – of Jesus' "I AM" statements. Jesus' claim to be God.

Jesus is the True Vine. Consider what a vine is. It's the stem that connects the roots to the fruit. The roots that collect the water and nutrients from the earth that are passed through the vine to the fruit. The fruit only blooms because it receives the water and nutrients from the vine which received it from the roots.

In other words, Jesus is the very conduit of life – the umbilical cord that nourishes us.

And we are the branches that abide in the vine, in order that we might produce fruit. That branches, as Jesus said, cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine. We branches are but another conduit to send forth life-giving hope, life-sustaining love, life-enriching care, to everyone around us. In the same way when I care for a rose bush (or a congregation) I cannot make it grow, so the fruit does not grow unless we abide in Jesus.

It is not out of our own strength, but because we abide in Jesus.

The word 'abide' means to 'reside', to stay or live in a place. So how do we 'live in' Jesus?

Do we find our rest in Jesus? Do we find our sustenance in Jesus? Do we go to Jesus as the source of all that have and all that we are?

Do we find joy in Jesus? In the end, Jesus promises us that from his words, we have joy complete. Not partial joy. Not some joy some of the time. Not joy that conditioned on circumstance. But complete joy. A joy that is full, unbreakable, unshakable.

I think this kind of joy is not only an emotion. But also motivation. And the ability to love as Jesus loved. This is the true proof that we abide in Jesus, that we are able to love as Jesus loved. This is our joy.

6:50 – 7:10am: Prayer

First, pray for peace across the world. Pray for the end of war and violence. For the end of bloodshed and conflict. For lasting peace and reconciliation. For the restoration and rebuilding of broken communities.

Secondly, pray for our country. For revival in this land that all might come to worship God, and in so doing, return to the values of righteousness and justice.

Thirdly, pray for our church and God's blessing to grow. To grow in faith. To grow in number. To grow in influence in the community. All for the sake of God to be known and worshipped.

Lastly, pray to be able to abide in Jesus. To live in Jesus. To have joy in Jesus. All of that to move us to love as Jesus loved. That we might bear fruit for Jesus.

7:10 – to whenever: Personal prayer time

-During this time, there will be gentle instrumental music that will play in the background and all are invited to stay as long as they wish in prayerful posture, lifting up everything into God's hands.