

## January 18-Written Service

**Special Music-** Katie Kirby

**Praise Team-** Deb and Vern Van Peursem, Lesley and Neil Bartholomew, Merlin Thompson, Collen Turner

### Prelude

### Welcome

### Call to Worship

Leader: Let us worship God, who has done great things.

All: We rejoice in our God, who made a way through the desert of this world.

Leader: Let us worship God, who has caused streams of mercy to flow in the wasteland.

All: We are the people God has formed through Christ; we worship Him, and we rejoice!

Leader: Let us worship God in spirit and in truth.

All: We praise God for the grace that has saved us. Alleluia! We rejoice!

### Song: Great is the Lord

Great is the Lord, He is holy and just;

By His power we trust in His love.

Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true;

By His mercy He proves He is love.

Great is the Lord and worthy of glory!

Great is the Lord and worthy of praise!

Great is the Lord! Now lift up your voice,

Now lift up your voice:

Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord!

Great is the Lord, He is holy and just;

By His power we trust in His love.

Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true;

By His mercy He proves He is love.

Great is the Lord and worthy of glory!

Great is the Lord and worthy of praise!

Great is the Lord! Now lift up your voice,

Now lift up your voice:

Great is the Lord! Great is the Lord!

Great are You, Lord, and worthy of glory!

Great are You, Lord, and worthy of praise!  
Great are You, Lord! I lift up my voice,  
I lift up my voice:  
Great are You, Lord! Great are You, Lord!

### **Prayer**

#### **Song: Lord, I Need You**

Lord, I come, I confess,  
Bowing here I find my rest.  
Without You, I fall apart.  
You're the one that guides my heart.

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You.  
Every hour I need You.  
My one defense, my righteousness,  
Oh God, how I need You.

Where sin runs deep,  
Your grace is more.  
Where grace is found,  
Is where You are.

Where You are,  
Lord, I am free.  
Holiness is Christ in me.

Lord, I need You,  
Oh, I need You.  
Every hour I need You.  
My one defense,  
My righteousness,  
Oh God, how I need You.

So teach my song  
To rise to You  
When temptations  
Come my way.

When I cannot stand,  
I'll fall on You.

Jesus, You're my hope and stay.

Lord, I need You, oh I need You.  
Every hour I need You.  
My one defense,  
My righteousness,  
Oh God, how I need You.

You're my one defense,  
My righteousness,  
Oh God, how I need You.

My one defense,  
My righteousness,  
Oh God, how I need You.

### **Announcements**

**Special Music- “Trust in You” sung by Katie Kirby**

### **Congregational Prayer**

**Song: #705- It is Well With my Soul (vs. 1,3,4)**

When peace like a river  
Attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like  
Sea billows roll;

Whatever my lot,  
Thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well,  
It is well with my soul."

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul),  
It is well,  
It is well with my soul.

My sin- O, the bliss  
Of this glorious thought-  
My sin- not in part,

But the whole,

Is nailed to the cross,  
And I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord,  
Praise the Lord, O my soul!

It is well (it is well),  
With my soul (with my soul),  
It is well,  
It is well with my soul.

And, Lord, haste the day  
When the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back  
As a scroll,

The trump shall resound  
And the Lord shall descend,  
"Even so"-  
It is well with my soul.

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well,  
It is well with my soul.

### **Offering/Offertory**

#### **Offering Song- Open the Eyes of My Heart**

#### **Offering Prayer**

### **Children's Message**

### **Scripture: Isaiah 43**

<sup>16</sup>This is what the Lord says— he who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters,

<sup>17</sup>who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:

<sup>18</sup>“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.

<sup>19</sup> See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

<sup>20</sup> The wild animals honor me, the jackals and the owls, because I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen,

<sup>21</sup> the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.

## **Message**

What is history?

Do you have an example of something historic that happened?

And when was that?

*Take examples*

US in WW2 ended over 80 yrs ago

This country established 250 yrs ago

Reformation began over 500 yrs ago

What about when God did something amazing?

*Again take examples*

Scripture-Isaiah 43:16-21

As we continue to focus on new beginnings, listen for that theme in today's passage from Isaiah

Read passage

Looking back

In the text

God introduces Himself in the verses leading into 19

These recall just a handful of things God has done

Especially events from the exodus

Exodus was history for the people in Isaiah's time

Generations before

Estimates are that Isaiah was written 700-800 years after Exodus

Further than WW2, the Declaration of Independence, and the

Reformation

But that's still what everyone was talking about

That's still their reference for God

So focused on the good old days

Best desire was going back in time

Reliving what God had done way back then

V 18-forget-zacar-to remember, to speak

Don't remember these, don't even speak about them

Biyn-to attend, consider, have knowledge of, look well to, perceive

These words give us an indication of how people were approaching the past

They were camped out there, focused only on the past

Only on what God did for their ancestors 700-800 yrs earlier  
And it's good to know and remember these stories  
Trap is believing that God only did amazing things then  
And believing that God doesn't work like that today  
God tells them He has something different in store  
Can't they even see what He's doing?  
Putting that into modern context  
Just so we're clear about how far back that was  
700 years ago (1326) was about when the Ottoman Empire was founded  
800 years ago (1226) Genghis Khan was still in power and Francis of Assisi died  
That's their perspective on God  
He's ancient history to them

### **Us looking back**

We do the same thing, don't we  
When did God do something incredible?  
What stories do we use to answer that question?  
We tell stories from the Bible or from church history  
We reach way back in time  
Just like the people in Isaiah's day  
We trap God in the past tense

Where God wants us to look

And then Isaiah tells the people to forget about all that  
Because God is doing something new  
It's springing up right now, in front of you  
Do we believe that God is still at work  
That God still does amazing things  
Do we live like we believe  
Do we pray like we believe  
Or do we limit our expectations  
Do we shrink God down  
Do we relegate God to what He's done hundreds or thousands of years ago

What He was doing in Isaiah's day

I am making a way in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland.  
<sup>20</sup>The wild animals honor me,  
the jackals and the owls,  
because I provide water in the wilderness  
and streams in the wasteland,  
to give drink to my people, my chosen  
Where everything has been a desert wasteland  
Where before no one was thinking about God or praising Him

Now there will be enough water for streams to flow  
And even the wild animals who populate the wilderness will be honoring God  
Because of the blessing He will shower down on them  
All they had to do was stop looking backward long enough to see it  
And God would come roaring into the present, into their lives and not just the days of their ancestors

What He's doing today

God is doing incredible things today as well

Christianity may feel like it's slipping away in the last decades, but it only feels that way when we're not paying attention to what's happening around the world  
Heaven is getting bigger day by day, minute by minute  
This is especially true in places that might have looked like Christian deserts a short while ago

In Africa, in Asia, in South America churches are multiplying faster than ever  
Estimates have Christianity reaching 3 billion followers by 2050 at this pace  
In our little Reformed denomination, we're seeing churches by the dozens petitioning the join the RCA especially from South America  
Any of our elders who have been to a classis meeting in the last several years have heard about this

There's a hunger for Reformed theology and government  
And it doesn't need to be a one way street  
I believe that God will be using these churches and leaders to help revitalize and reenergize our faith  
We can learn from one another

God isn't only Someone who moved in the past

Yes, we worship the same God who brought His people out of Egypt

The God who helped David kill Goliath  
The God who brought Jesus from the dead  
The God who added 1000s of believers to the early church on Pentecost  
The God who turned Saul into Paul

AND He is the same God who you pray to today

He is the same God who continues to heal and rescue His people  
He is the same God who forgives sins and changes lives today  
All we have to do is look up and see that He is still alive and at work today  
Doing something new  
If only we could recognize it

**Song: #408- How Firm a Foundation (vs. 1,2,4)**

How firm a foundation,  
Ye saints of the Lord,  
Is laid for your faith

In His excellent Word!

What more can He say  
Than to you He hath said,  
To you who for refuge  
To Jesus have fled?

"Fear not! I am with thee;  
O be not dismayed,  
For I am thy God  
And will still give thee aid.

I'll strengthen thee, help thee,  
And cause thee to stand,  
Upheld by My righteous,  
Omnipotent hand.

"The soul that on Jesus  
Hath leaned for repose;  
I will not, I will not  
Desert to His foes.

That soul, though all hell  
Should endeavor to shake,  
I'll never, no never,  
No never forsake!"

### **Benediction**

### **Postlude**