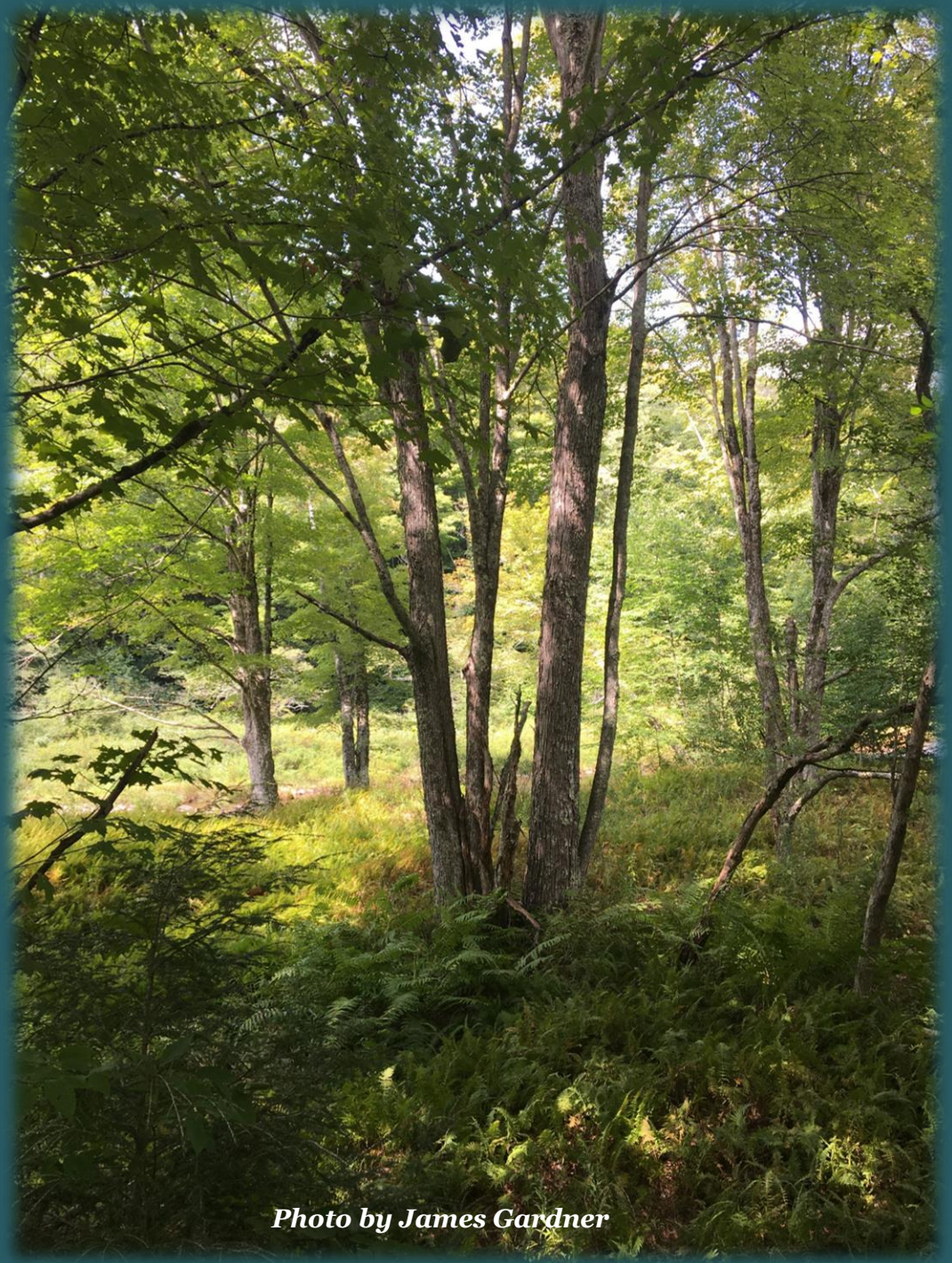


Sunday, March 8, 2026

Culmore United Methodist Church

Welcome and Good Morning!

Happy Birthday!

Once again it's your birthday. Once again the time is here.
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.
Happy time is your birthday, happy time this year.
What a loving gift from Jesus, He has given you one more year.
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.
For you have Jesus Christ everyday of your life.
Oh happy birthday to you, oh happy birthday to you.
The Lord bless and keep you.
Happy birthday to you. And to Jesus with you.
God bless you and keep you. Happy birthday to you.

LENT

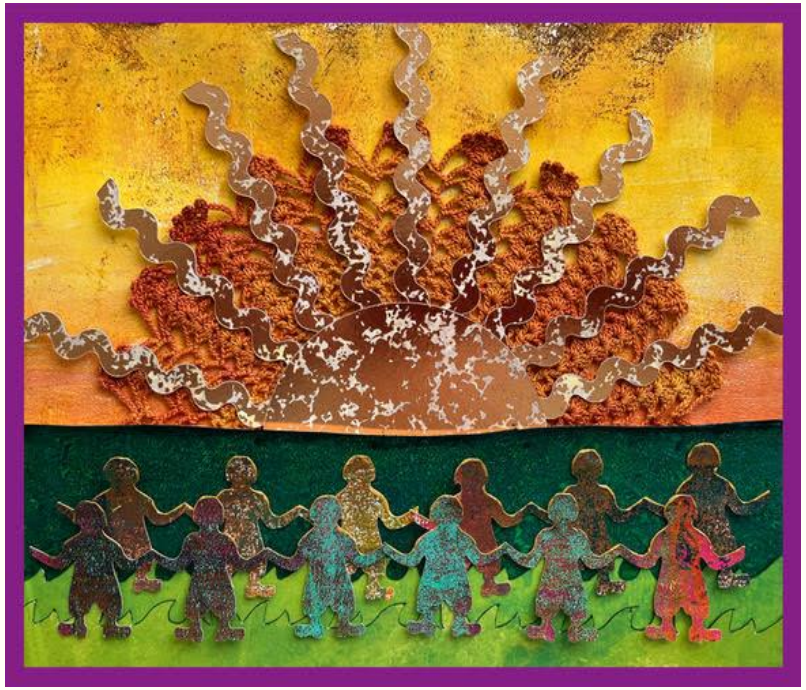
Isaiah 40: 3-5

A voice of one calling:

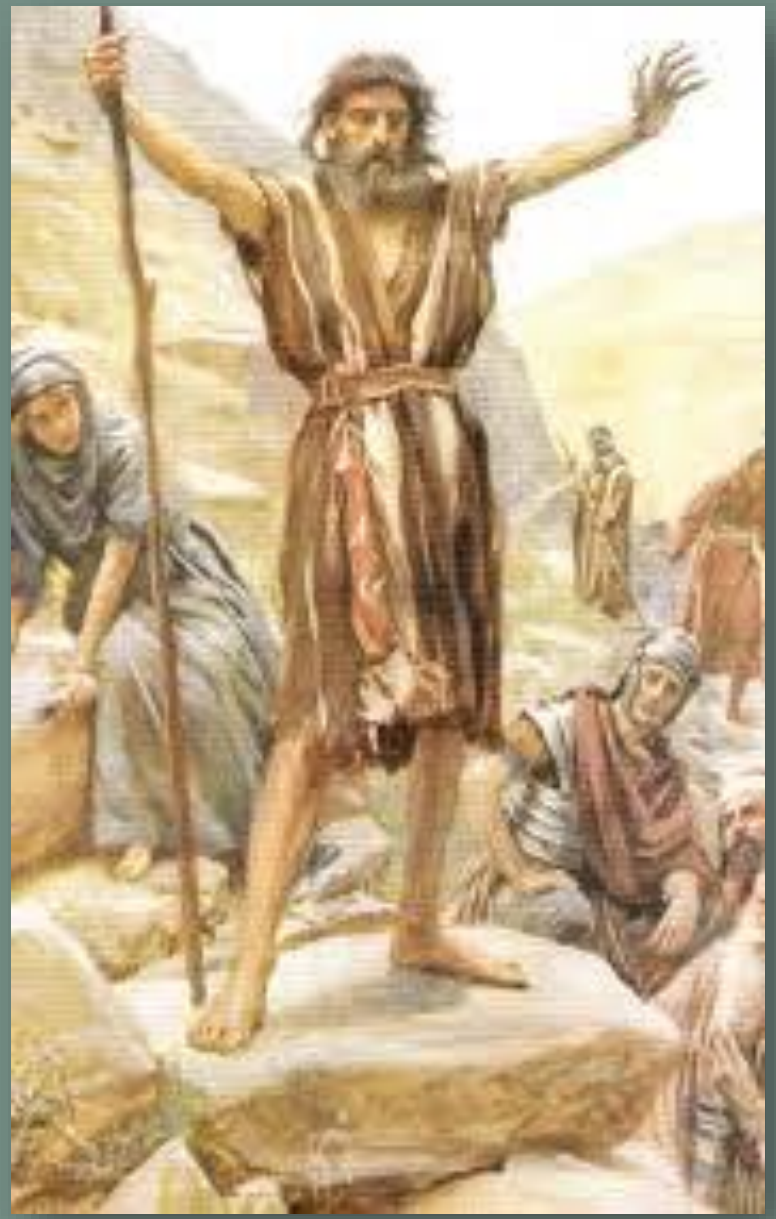
"In the wilderness **prepare the way for the LORD.**

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up,
    every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
    the rugged places a plain.
And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
    and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."



Art by Sue Carroll



John the Baptist

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

We know **PREPARATION** matters, but it's so hard to do. Just when we think we're on the right track, something happens that shows us

…yet again… that we've gone off the wrong way.

Lord, help us get prepared, just as John the Baptist did, just as Jesus did, just as so many saints have done before us. Lord, prepare us to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true. ***AMEN***

Lord, Prepare Me to Be a Sanctuary - TFWS 2164

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary

Pure and holy, tried and true.

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for You

Isaiah 40: 3

A voice of one calling:

In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Reflective Prayer – John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but thine.

Put me to what thou wilt,

rank me with whom thou wilt.

Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,

exalted for thee or brought low for thee.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely heartily yield all things

to thy pleasure and disposal.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit,

thou art mine, and I am thine.

So be it. So be it.

And the covenant which I have

made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 145 (selected verses)

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;

his greatness no one can fathom.

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—

and I will meditate on your wonderful works.

They tell of the power of your awesome works—

and I will proclaim your great deeds.

They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

My mouth will speak in praise of the Lord.

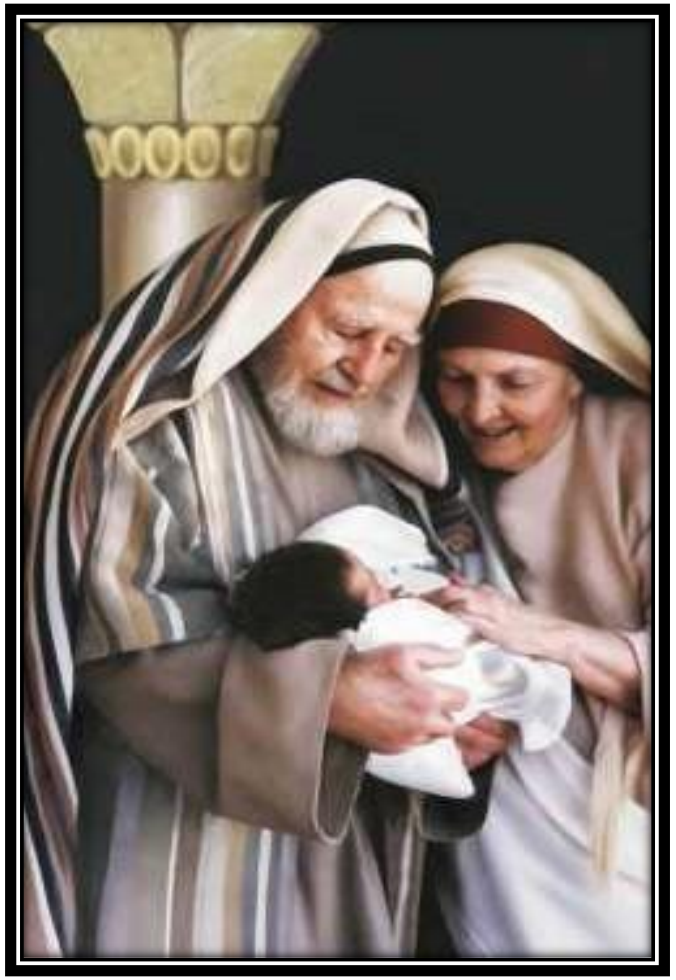
Let every creature praise his holy name

for ever and ever.

Luke 1:12-17

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him,
standing at the right side of the altar.
When Zechariah saw him, he was startled
and was gripped with fear.

But the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah.
Your prayer has been heard."



Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God.

And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Luke 1: 76-79: Song of Zechariah

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the
forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy
of our God…

And the child grew and became strong in spirit,

and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

Matthew 3: 1, 4

In those days John the Baptist came,
preaching in the wilderness of Judea...

John's clothes were made of camel's hair,
and he had a leather belt around his waist.

His food was locusts and wild honey.

Be STILL

....and know that I am God.

--Psalm 46: 10

God is present to us and loves us all the time,
but we are often not quiet and alert enough
to be aware of it.

~Irma Zaleski

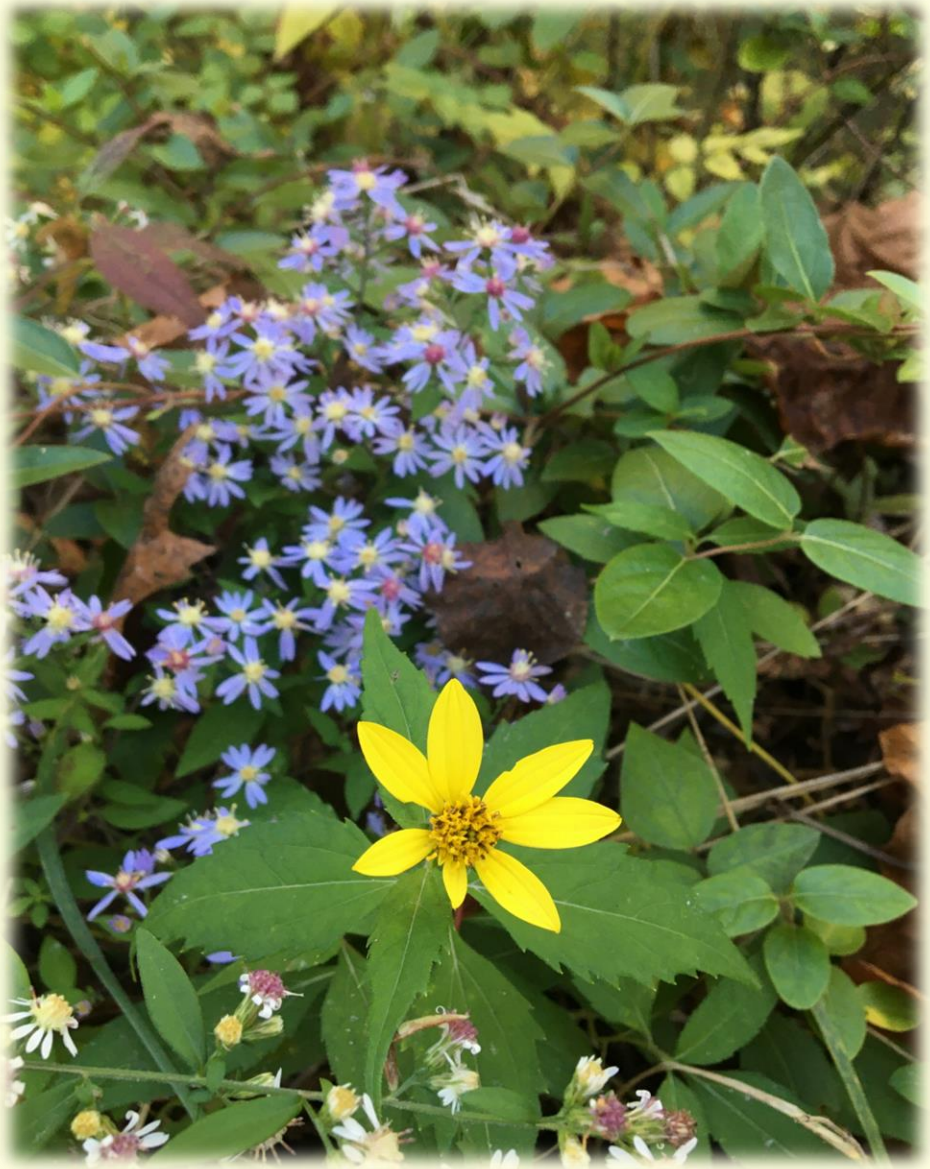


Photo by James Gardner

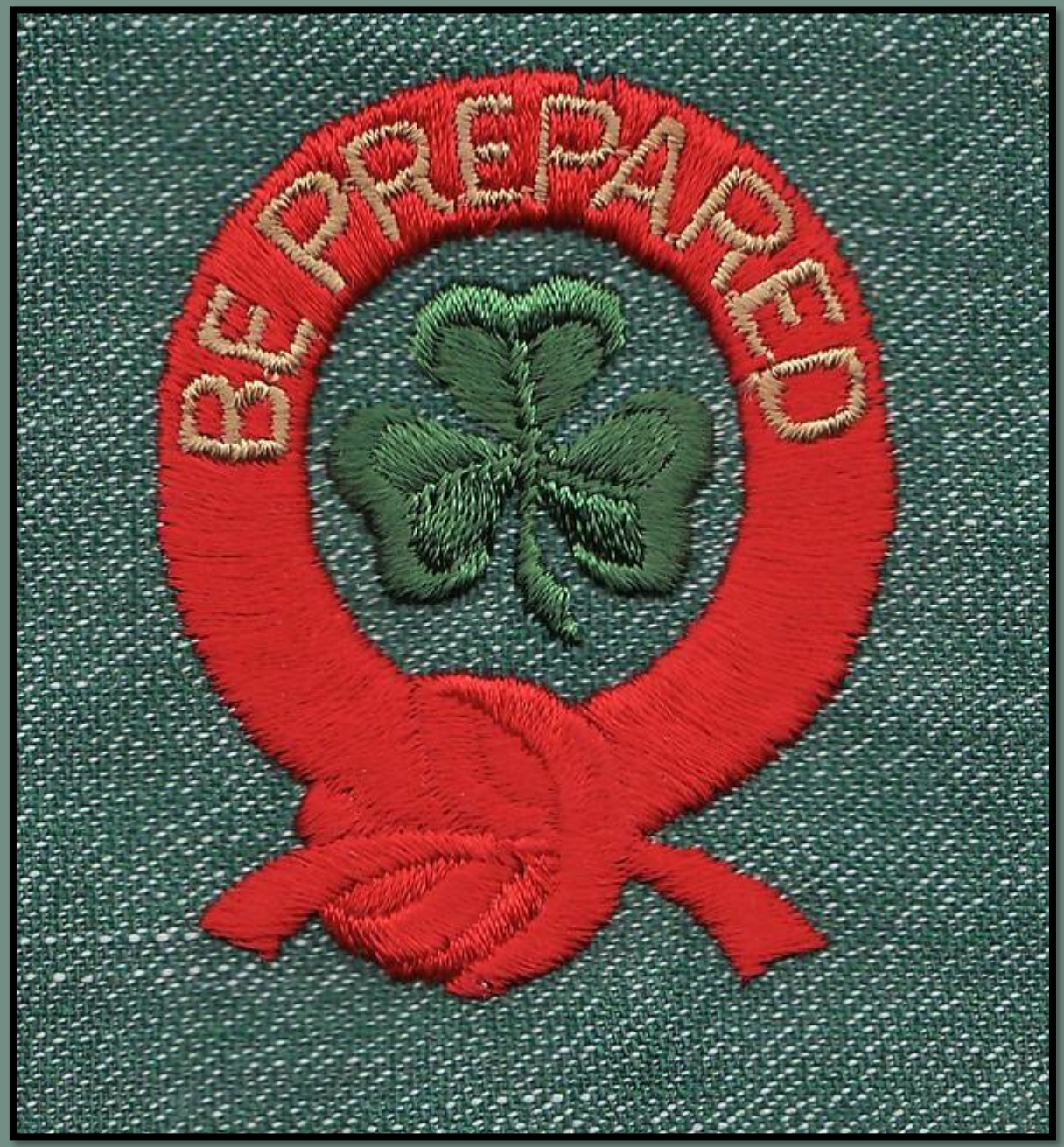
God is always here, but we sense Him only when we search.
He teaches, but only when we are ready to learn.
He speaks, but only when we listen.

The question is never, "*Where is God?*" It is always,
"*Where are we?*"

God lives where we let Him in

-- Menachem Mendel

Prepare


BE PREPARED

Cry of My Heart TFWS 2165

It is the cry of my heart to follow You

It is the cry of my heart to be close to You

It is the cry of my heart to follow

All of the days of my life.

Teach me Your holy ways, oh Lord,
So I can walk in Your truth.
Teach me Your holy ways, oh Lord,
And make me wholly devoted to You.

Open my eyes so I can see
The wonderful things that You do.
Open my heart up more and more
And make me wholly devoted to You.

Community Prayer

LORD Jesus, some of us discover early on what we want to be when we grow up, and then we devote time and energy to make that vision a reality. How lucky some of us are to have that clear vision so early in life!

When we ask Jesus into our hearts and lives, that's when we seem to get clarity about becoming the person You intend for us to be. Along the way, You provide us with guidance and direction on what we need to do.

Lord, help us be willing to receive Your guidance when it comes.

Like John the Baptist, let us say *Yes* to whatever call You have for us. Give us willing hearts to do what we must to become the people You want us to be. **AMEN**

Offering and Doxology
UM Hymnal 95

We give thanks for this wonderful,
generous community of faith.

Doxology - UM Hymnal 94

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;

Praise God, all creatures here below

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God the source of all our gifts!

Praise Jesus Christ whose power uplifts!

Praise the Spirit, Holy Spirit!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Benediction

Painting by Kim DeGroat