

**Vespers Prayer Service**  
**Wednesday November 6, 2024**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**Greeting and Brief Comments from Bishop Sue and Martha Stokes**

**“How Can I Keep From Singing? Drew Willson**

**Prayer One, Read by Martha Stokes**

**\* All prayers crafted by Rev. Dr. Paul Chilcote \***

God Made Visible in Jesus,

You call me to a life of faith that is rooted in the heart but expressed in life. True religion is essentially social religion and to turn it into a solitary religion—a religion of the heart only—is to destroy it.

You call me to immerse myself in, not to separate myself from, your world.

You call me to be like salt in the world and through my meekness, commitment to peace, and humility to flavor life with your love.

Without immersing myself in and influencing the lives of others, I can never be the force for good that you so long for me to be.

How can I possibly conceal the beautiful light you have caused to shine in my heart?

When others say that I should keep my religion to myself, that it is a private matter between you and me and should not be shown outwardly, remind me that the root and the branches are inseparable and that the root must put forth branches if it is to live.

When others say that I can love without putting that love into action, remind me that love is the fulfilling of your law, not by releasing us from it, but by compelling us to obey it.

When others say that outward works are useless and that trying to do good is pointless, remind me that you have commanded us to feed the hungry and care for the needy, not as means to obtain your love, but as the fruit of a living faith in Christ.

I will let my light shine for you, O God. My only desire is that you will be glorified in

all that I do. I will let my light shine for you in all good works of piety and works of mercy and by living simply that others might simply live. Amen.

(John Wesley, Sermon on the Mount IV – Faith and Life)

### **Time for Silent Reflection**

### **Prayer Two, Read by Bishop Sue**

**\* All prayers crafted by Rev. Dr. Paul Chilcote \***

God of Fervent Love,

There is so much religious zeal in the world today.

So much of it alienates people and shatters peace.

But true Christian zeal is about loving you fervently,

and loving our neighbors as passionately as we love ourselves.

True Christian zeal is fervent love,

love that shapes humility, meekness, and patience,

in the deepest part of my inmost being.

Implant your love on the throne of my soul.

Establish gentleness, faithfulness, and peace—

everything comprising the mind of Christ—

in a circle near the throne.

Institute the works of mercy—

the practices of compassion and justice—

in an exterior circle to benefit others.

Expand my love through works of piety—

the practices of devotion and worship—

in yet another circle of grace in my life.

Finally, unite me together with others in your church,

that others might effectually provoke me

to love and good works.

In all this, I press on for the prize of your

upward call in Christ Jesus. Amen.

(John Wesley, On Zeal)

### **Time for Silent Reflection**

### **Prayer Three**

**\* All prayers crafted by Rev. Dr. Paul Chilcote \***

Just and Loving God,

You call us to offer your love to all of your children, to oppose injustice wherever we find it, and to promote your reign of shalom on earth.

For the many times we have failed to be an obedient church, we ask you to forgive us.

Strengthen our resolve to confess Christ by being your agents of justice, peace, and love in an unjust and ungodly world.

Grant us courage, steadfast God of justice and love,

to honor your name by waging peace,

to obey your law of love by offering Christ to all.

If we are to be the agents of your transforming love,

we must not only be harmless, but people of faith, courage, and patience,

we must not only express concern for our neighbors, but truly love them as brothers and sisters in the world, our earthly home.

Enable humility to flow out of our hearts filled with your love,

and compassion to pour from the Spirit of Christ that dwells within.

Keep our motives focused on your glory and the good of all.

And when the cross seems too heavy, the work too hard, the insults too sharp,

the barriers too high, and the dangers too great—

when we are ready to give up all hope—

help us to commit all that we have and are to Christ.

For nothing is more important than our remaining faithful to him

and to his winsome way of love. Amen.

(John Wesley, The Reformation of Manners – Agents of Shalom)

### **Time for Silent Reflection**

**Music: Prayer of St Francis Drew Willson**

**Bishop Sue leads all in unison praying of St Francis's prayer**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.  
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

### **Benediction and Sending Forth -Martha Stokes**