

## Countdown

**Welcome** - Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

**“And Are We Yet Alive” v.1** - Christopher Jackson

And are we yet alive, and see each other's face?  
Glory and thanks to Jesus give for his almighty grace!

**Greeting** - Gary Locklear

Yet alive, we gather for the AC session in this unique time, always to be remembered.  
Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Opening Prayer** - Gary Locklear

Join me in our opening prayer. Let us pray:

You are our God: be gracious to us, we pray. Gladden our hearts, for we are your servants. We know you abound in steadfast love to all who call on you. In this year of challenge, you answered us with your presence and strength. You continue to be our strength and our life, our help and our comfort.

Gracious and loving God, come to us in our fears and frustrations. Give us courage, and help us joyfully serve you by serving others. In hope and trust, we offer our prayers and praises to your Holy Name. We pray all of these things in and through your Holy Spirit. Amen.

**“And Are We Yet Alive” v.2**

Preserved by power divine to full salvation here,  
again in Jesus' praise we join, and in his sight appear.

**Psalm 86:1-10, 15-16 (Responsive Reading)** - Rev. Donna Banks, Gayle Tabor, Daryl DeCotis, Rev. Jason Villegas, Rev. Sang-Seon Park

Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you. You are my God;

**You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.**

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to you do I cry all day long. Gladden the soul of your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

**You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.**

Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

**You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.**

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours. All the nations you have made shall come and bow down before you, O Lord, and shall glorify your name. For you are great and do wondrous things; you alone are God.

**You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.**

Teach me your way, O Lord, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.

**You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.**

For great is your steadfast love toward me; you have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol. O God, the insolent rise up against me; a band of ruffians seeks my life, and they do not set you before them. Turn to me and be gracious to me; give your strength to your servant; save the child of your serving girl.

**You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on you.**

### **“And Are We Yet Alive” v.3**

What troubles have we seen, what mighty conflicts past,  
fightings without, and fears within, since we assembled last!

### **A Time of Lament - Rev. Jamie Thompson**

Hear our cry, Almighty God. Listen to our prayer. Physically distanced from one another to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we remember those who have served among us and who have died in the past year. During recent months, grieving families were unable to gather to thank you for these lives and to receive the support of the larger community of faith gathered with them. We pause to remember these dear persons who served faithfully among us and who now are gathered into the embrace of God Eternal.

**[SILENCE]**

We lament the death of these who have served faithfully among us:

**May their good work continue to yield good fruit in the world,**

**May their families be comforted by your grace and strength**

**May we continue faithfully in the way that they have led.**

**May your light and love surround them through all eternity.**

We continue to share profound grief in the midst of a global pandemic, compounded with economic inequity and racist violence. Our souls are weary from the strain of the life-altering uncertainties and very real and present dangers.

We lament the loss of our shared life together:

**gathering with families and loved ones,  
gathering as churches and communities of faith,  
gathering together as an annual conference,  
gathering with those in hospitals and nursing homes,  
gathering to mourn death and celebrate resurrection.**

While we remain the body of Christ even when apart, we long to be in each other's presence once again for times of worship, fellowship, and companionship for our journeys through life.

**God, sustain us.**

We weep in memory of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery, whose brutal deaths are the latest reminders of the deep and systemic injustice that persists in our country.

We lament for a world ravaged by racism, violence, and grief:

**a world where the lines between us are drawn more sharply than ever,  
a world where some are deprived and some enjoy privilege,  
a world where the burden of disease and violence weighs more on people of color,  
a world where the brokenness of sin threatens to overshadow love and justice.**

While we cling to hope, O God, we long for the healing of body, mind, spirit, and relationship that only comes from you.

**God, heal us.**

God, we cry out to You. With fearful hearts and anxious minds, we plead with You. Rescue us, O giver of compassion and grace. We lift up our eyes to You, Lord God, the One who sits enthroned in heaven.

At this time, you are invited to lift up your own lament, out loud or in your hearts. Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayers.**

**[SILENCE]**

On all who have contracted the virus, on all who have lost loved ones to this sickness and are in mourning and anguish, and on all who are unable to earn an income because their jobs have been suspended,

**Lord have mercy. We cry out for healing and needed resources and we cry out for comfort and peace**

On all medical professionals and caretakers attending to those infected with the virus, on all scientists and technologists striving to find a vaccine and to make it available, and on all leaders of institutions and governments as they make decisions to try and contain the virus,

**Christ have mercy. We pray for strength in the long and exhausting hours of labor; we pray for wisdom in the research and difficult decisions.**

Life is sacred and precious in your sight. You are the God Who sees us and sustains us. Nothing can separate us from Your unfailing love and kindness, not even sickness or violence or inequity. You are our Light as we walk in this time. We will remember to celebrate the beautiful gifts You have given us even in this present moment.

Almighty God, You are our Rock, our Refuge from the enemy, our hiding place. You calm our frantic thoughts and fill our despairing hearts with joy and strength. In Your Presence living water springs forth in the wilderness. You restore our souls.

O God, hear these the prayers of your people; we lift them to you, even as we pray together the prayer you shared with your disciples, praying:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**

**“And Are We Yet Alive” v.4**

Yet out of all the Lord hath brought us by his love;  
and still he doth his help afford, and hides our life above.

**Sermon: “Yet Alive?” - Bishop Hope Morgan Ward**

**The Love Feast - Rev. Laura and Nathan Wittman**

**“And Are We Yet Alive” vv. 5-6**

Then let us make our boast  
of his redeeming power,  
which saves us to the uttermost,  
till we can sin no more.

Let us take up the cross  
till we the crown obtain,  
and gladly reckon all things loss  
so we may Jesus gain.

**“Lift High the Cross” v. 4**

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
‘Til all the world adore his sacred name

So shall our song of triumph ever be,  
“Praise to the crucified for victory!”

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
‘Til all the world adore his sacred name

**Benediction** - Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

**Thank you to all who participated in leading our worship service today!**

Preacher: Bishop Hope Morgan Ward

Rev. Donna Banks

Daryl (DJ) DeCotis

Gary Locklear

Rev. Greg Moore

Rev. Sang-Seon Park

Rev. Jamie Thompson

Rev. Jason Villegas

Rev. Laura Wittman

Rev. Nathan Wittman

**Musicians**

“And Are We Yet Alive” / “Lift High the Cross” - Prospect UMC

Duda Dial - Trumpet

Christopher Jackson - Vocals

Paula Jones - Piano

**“I Believe” - Wesley Memorial UMC**

Vocalists: Daphne Driskill, Sharon Hoffmann, Joe Hutsell, Catriona MacLean, Hunter Oates, Beccy Rowell, Page Sundy, Tori Thomas, Becky Varner, Wayne Varner, and Emily Whitney

Soloist: Christina Guenther

Accompanist: Bettsy Curtis

Videographer: Wesley Curtis

**“God of Grace and God of Glory”**

Jay Locklear - Piano / Vocal