

**A Lenten Prayer Journey**  
**Wednesday Evening**  
**Taize Prayer Service**  
**March 22, 2023**  
**God's Love Heals Us**



Welcome to Hope UCC's Wednesday Evening Taizé Prayer Service. We're glad you have joined us! Since this is intended to be a service of contemplative prayer, only a brief spoken welcome will be made, and no instructions will be given during the service. Each part of the service will follow immediately upon the one before. The service includes two periods of silence that will last from 5 – 7 minutes each. That will seem like a long time if you're not used to it. You are welcome to use this silence as you see fit, whether in thought, prayer, meditation, or nothing at all. Thank you for remembering that others will be using this time of silence for their contemplative prayer practices as well.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

OPENING SONG *In Our Darkness*  
*In our darkness there is no darkness.*  
*With you, o Lord, the deepest night is clear as the day.*

SCRIPTURE

**Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters;  
he restores my soul.  
He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.  
Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.  
You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

**Matthew 9: 27-33**

As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you have faith that I can do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith, let it be done to you." And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." But they went away and spread the news about him through all of that district. After they had gone away, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel."

SILENCE

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

*Please respond with **May your love strengthen us, o Lord.***

One: May your peace shine among us and your love set us free, Lord, we pray.

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: Keep us persevering in faith and set in our hearts the desire for your Kingdom...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: Guide your Church along the way of the Gospel; may your Holy Spirit keep us welcoming...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: We pray for the leaders of all nations; may they have the will to promote justice and freedom...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: We pray for those who suffer; may those going through trials know our support and your healing presence...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: For those who work with the oppressed, with refugees, and with those who are alone and afraid...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: We entrust to you our families and friends, all who have asked for our prayers and who pray for us...

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

One: For followers of Christ everywhere, that we may be witnesses to truth and creators of unity, Lord, we pray.

**Many: May your love strengthen us, o Lord.**

**Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

SILENCE

SONG *Bless the Lord My Soul*

*Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.*

*Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

With you, Risen Christ, we go forward from one discovery to another. As we try to find out what you want from us, our life opens up to the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit comes to bring to fulfillment in us things we did not even dare hope for. Amen.

## POSTLUDE

*Thank you for sharing this time with us.  
May God be gracious to you and bless you.*

## ABOUT TAIZE

Taizé is a tiny village in the hills of the eastern part of France. Since 1940, it has been the home of an ecumenical community of Catholic Brothers whose prayer, three times each day, is at the center of their life. Today, Taizé is a place to which visitors of all ages and backgrounds come on pilgrimage, to participate in international meetings of prayer and reflection.

Song is one of the most essential elements of Taizé worship. Short songs, repeated again and again, give it a meditative character. Using just a few words, they express a basic reality of faith, quickly grasped by the mind. As the words are sung over many times, this reality gradually penetrates the whole being. And these simple songs then enable us to keep on praying when we are alone, by day, by night, and sometimes in the silence of our hearts when we are at work.

Icons contribute to the beauty of worship. They are like windows open on the realities of the kingdom of God, making them present in our prayer on earth. Icons are not simply decorations, they are symbols of the Incarnation.

Relax, breathe, and enjoy this contemplative worship experience.