

June 3, 2012

Mysterious Encounters

John 3:1-17

Call to Worship

We believe in you, O God. Eternal Spirit. God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify: You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death. You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles. In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end. Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

- Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ

Invocation

Creator God, we welcome you. Every day we place in your hands our trust and all our relationships. You are faithful forever. You call us to join you in standing up for those who are beaten down. You invite us to open our hearts and hands to give food to hungry people and shelter to the homeless. You announce freedom to the oppressed. You lift up those who fall into difficulty. Oh LORD, you love it when we do what is right. You watch over all outsiders and aliens who live in our land. You have chosen to take care of children whose fathers have died or deserted their families. You take care of widows. You cause confusion when evil schemers mislead the vulnerable. You, LORD, rule forever with mercy and wisdom in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Come enter our daily activities so that we honor your name in both body and soul till the very end of our days. Amen.

Call to Confession

Can anyone hear the voice shouting, "Clean up your act in all the ways you live and in everything you do"? You yourselves are a temple of the Holy Spirit - a place for the indwelling love of Christ.

Confession

O God, when I read the newspaper, or open the utility bills, or take trash to the dump - I can see that the footprint of my responsibility is way beyond the limits of my personal desires. Help me to embrace accountability in caring for the environment and justice for all creatures in your world. Help me to insure quality education for every child. Help me to welcome strangers as neighbors and family. Help me see each person as a blessing from the hand of your creation. We confess our love. We confess our need. Now embrace us with a courageous willpower of new life in your Holy Spirit so that we risk living by faith in Jesus Christ who offered himself so others might live. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Jesus said, "If you live by my example, living as I tell you, you are my disciples. Then you will experience for yourselves the joy of truth and integrity, and this truth will set you free." Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Believers live in wonderful harmony, holding everything in common - meeting the needs around them and sharing generous joy from the center of their souls.

Prayer of Dedication

May our God's enduring hope flow into us with joy and calming peace. Come, Lord Jesus, enable our believing souls to have the ever expanding energized courage to share. Let your gift of the Holy Spirit be at work in us. Empower every resource available to us to serve Christ here in Hilo and in communities around the world. Amen.