

*Illinois Conference United Church of Christ
57th Annual Celebration
Closing Worship*



*"a rope that is woven of three strings is hard to break."
Ecclesiastes 4:12*

Prelude

Prelude in G Minor

Angelic Harp Duo

Call to Worship

David Holston, *Illinois Conference President*

Song

All Are Welcome

by Marty Haugen

Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions, rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where prophets speak, and words are strong and true,
where all God's children dare to seek to dream God's reign anew.
Here the cross shall stand as witness and as symbol of God's grace;
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus.

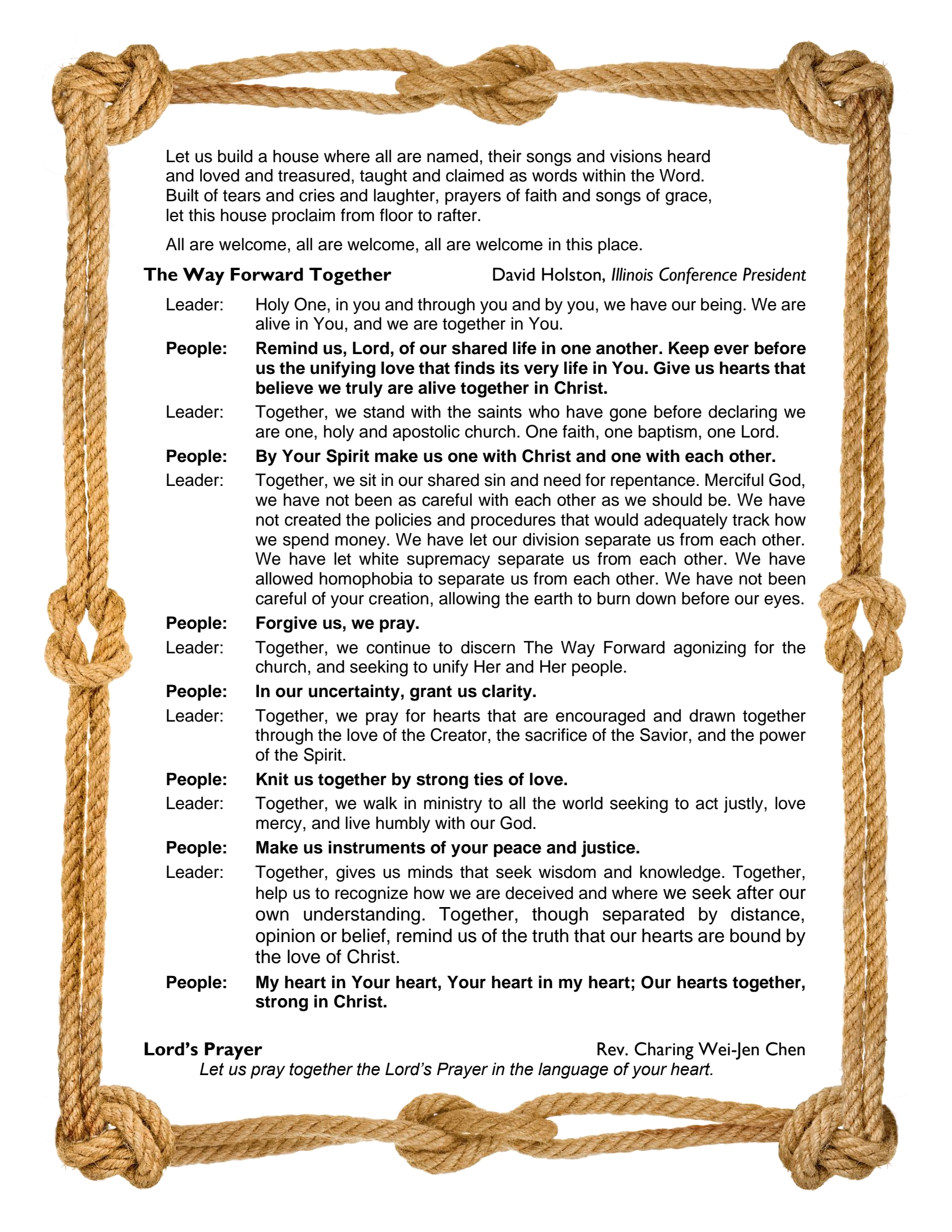
All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where love is found in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus, is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

Let us build a house where hands will reach beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach, and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.



Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

The Way Forward Together

David Holston, *Illinois Conference President*

Leader: Holy One, in you and through you and by you, we have our being. We are alive in You, and we are together in You.

People: **Remind us, Lord, of our shared life in one another. Keep ever before us the unifying love that finds its very life in You. Give us hearts that believe we truly are alive together in Christ.**

Leader: Together, we stand with the saints who have gone before declaring we are one, holy and apostolic church. One faith, one baptism, one Lord.

People: **By Your Spirit make us one with Christ and one with each other.**

Leader: Together, we sit in our shared sin and need for repentance. Merciful God, we have not been as careful with each other as we should be. We have not created the policies and procedures that would adequately track how we spend money. We have let our division separate us from each other. We have let white supremacy separate us from each other. We have allowed homophobia to separate us from each other. We have not been careful of your creation, allowing the earth to burn down before our eyes.

People: **Forgive us, we pray.**

Leader: Together, we continue to discern The Way Forward agonizing for the church, and seeking to unify Her and Her people.

People: **In our uncertainty, grant us clarity.**

Leader: Together, we pray for hearts that are encouraged and drawn together through the love of the Creator, the sacrifice of the Savior, and the power of the Spirit.

People: **Knit us together by strong ties of love.**

Leader: Together, we walk in ministry to all the world seeking to act justly, love mercy, and live humbly with our God.

People: **Make us instruments of your peace and justice.**

Leader: Together, gives us minds that seek wisdom and knowledge. Together, help us to recognize how we are deceived and where we seek after our own understanding. Together, though separated by distance, opinion or belief, remind us of the truth that our hearts are bound by the love of Christ.

People: **My heart in Your heart, Your heart in my heart; Our hearts together, strong in Christ.**

Lord's Prayer

Rev. Charing Wei-Jen Chen

Let us pray together the Lord's Prayer in the language of your heart.



The Peace

Rev Charing Wei-Jen Chen

May the peace of Christ be with you.

Song

We Gather Together

Scripture

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Rev. Regena Glenn-Caldwell

Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help them up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help them. If it is cold, two can sleep together and stay warm, but how can you keep warm by yourself. Two people can resist an attack that would defeat one person alone. A rope made of three cords is hard to break.

The Word in Music

Way Maker
Grace UCC, Sauk Village

by Sinach

Sermon

Nothing

Rev. Jesse Knox III

Music

Love Has Broken Down the Wall
Vestry Choir, First Congregational Church, Crystal Lake
Ann Tucker, *Director*

by Mark Miller

The Offering

Medical Debt Relief

Offering Prayer

Rev. Melody Seaton

The Lord's Supper

Rev. Jesse Knox III and Rev. Molly Carlson

Welcome

Remembrance

Blessing

Hymn

One Bread, One Body

by John Foley

Chorus:

One bread, One body, One Lord of all
One cup of blessing which we bless
And we, though many, throughout the earth
We are one body in this one Lord

Verse One:

Gentile or Jew
Servant or free
Woman or man, no more
(Chorus)

Verse Two:

Many the gifts
Many the works
One in the Lord of all
(Chorus)

Prayer (unison):

Holy One, we are fed by your love; we are strengthened by your life. We are sent forth into this world to live your way and share your hope. We are now commissioned to: feed as we have been fed, forgive as we have been forgiven, love as we have been loved. Amen.



Hymn

One Bread, One Body

by John Foley

One bread, One body, One Lord of all
One cup of blessing which we bless
And we, though many, throughout the earth
We are one body in this one Lord

Verse Three:

Grain for the fields
Scattered and grown
Gathered to one, for all
(Chorus)

Benediction

David Holston, *Illinois Conference President*

In the loving of neighbor and the sharing of love,

we'll go on together

In the celebration of life and the sharing of that life together,

we'll go on together

In the caring of the earth and the sharing of her harvest,

we'll go on together

In the variety of people and the sharing of our talents,

we'll go on together

In the laughter we make and the sharing of the journey,

we'll go on together

In the love of this community and the sharing of our faith,

we'll go on together

We'll go on together into the world to love, creating a community that is stronger together. Amen.

Postlude

Ave Maria by J. S. Back & Charles Gounad Angelic Harp Duo

Liturgy Notes:

Adapted from <https://www.sgaumc.org/litanyforworship> by *Shannon Baxter and Rev.*

Aimee Baxter, Deacon, South Georgia Conference

Communion Liturgy adapted from

<https://progressivechristianity.org/resources/nonviolent-communion-liturgy/>

Prayer adapted from Roddy Hamilton, *Together We Shall Go On*,

<http://newkilpatrickblog.typepad.com/nk-blogging/mucky-paws/>

Music Notes:

the Angelic Harp Duo is Nanette Felix and Claire Cifonie

Rob Campbell singer and piano

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