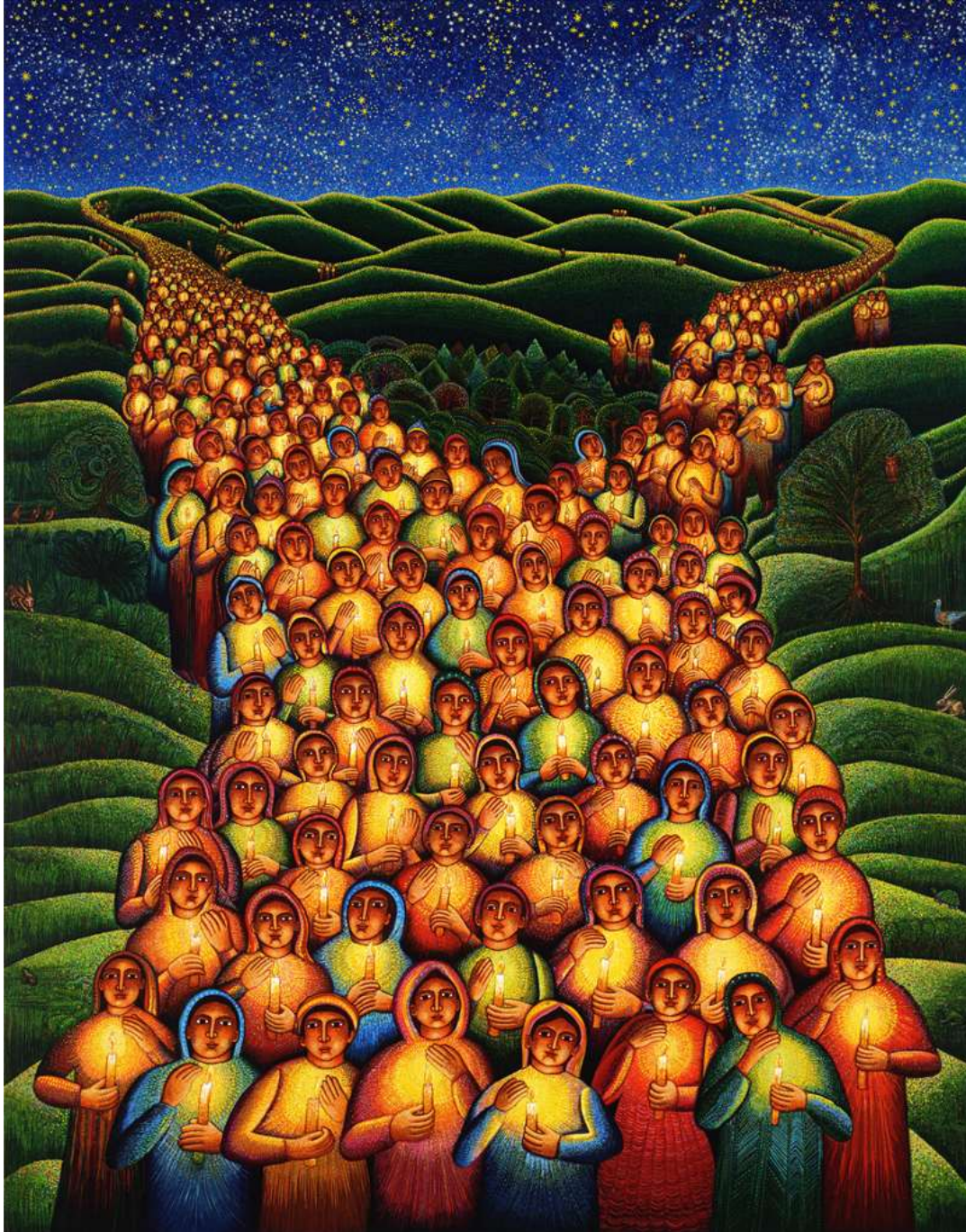


# Durham Mennonite Church

February 5, 2023



*"Festival of Lights" by John Augustus Swanson*

# Welcome and Announcements

## Opening Prayer

O God, in the foolishness of the cross you reveal the great distance between your wisdom and human understanding. Open our minds and hearts to the simplicity of the gospel in our worship today, that, fervent in faith and tireless in love, we may become light and salt for the world, reflecting the light and life we receive in the Spirit of Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

## Call to Worship (from Psalm 112)

Happy are those who fear the Lord,  
    who greatly delight in his commandments.  
Their descendants will be strong  
    and riches aplenty in their houses,  
    and their righteousness endures forever.  
**Blessed is the generation of the just.**

**They rise in the darkness**

**as a light for the upright;**

**they are gracious, merciful, and righteous.**

It is well with those who deal generously and  
lend, who conduct their affairs with justice, for  
the righteous will be remembered for ever.

**They have distributed freely,**

**they have given to the poor;**

**their righteousness endures forever.**

They are not afraid of evil tidings;

their hearts are firm, secure in the Lord.

Their hearts are steady, they will not be afraid;

in the end they will see victory over adversity.

**Praise the Lord!**

## Opening Hymns

### **VT #715, Longing for Light**

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,  
Light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has pow'r to save us.

Make us your living voice.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,

Shared until all are fed.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,

Walls made of living stone.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

Many the gifts, many the people,

Many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

Making your kingdom come.

Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

## **VT #273, Arise, Your Light Is Come!**

Arise, your light is come!

The Spirit's call obey;

Show forth the glory of your God,

Which shines on you today.

Arise, your light is come!

Fling wide the prison door;

Proclaim the captives' liberty,

Good tidings to the poor.

Arise, your light is come!

All you in sorrow born,

Build up the broken-hearted ones  
And comfort those who mourn.

Arise, your light is come!

The mountains burst in song!

Rise up like eagles on the wing;

God's power will make us strong.

## **Confession of Sin**

God of the foolish cross

you are not the savior we expect

Your power does not look like the power  
we want our God to demonstrate.

Your wisdom makes no sense to us.

We are happy to join the crowd,  
waving branches,



but not sure we want to follow you  
into the courts, into the upper room,  
into the garden of Gethsemane,  
to the foot of the cross.

**Forgive our false assumptions.**

**Clarify our clouded vision.**

**Free us to relax into the foolishness  
of your love and grace!**

## **Assurance of Grace**

Praise to God who has given us life.

**Blessed be God for the gift of love.**

Praise to God who forgives our sin.

**Blessed be God who sets us free.**

Praise to God who kindles our faith.

**Blessed be God, our strength, our hope.**

## **Hymn - HWB #369**

### **Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service**

Lord, whose love in humble service

Bore the weight of human need,

Who upon the cross, forsaken,

Worked Your mercy's perfect deed:

We, Your servants, bring the worship

Not of voice alone, but heart;

Consecrating to Your purpose

Every gift which You impart.

Still Your children wander homeless;

Still the hungry cry for bread;

Still the captives long for freedom;

Still in grief we mourn our dead.

As you, Lord, in deep compassion

Healed the sick and freed the soul,

By Your Spirit send Your power

To our world to make it whole.

As we worship, grant us vision,

Till your love's revealing light

In its height and depth and greatness

Dawns upon our quickened sight,

Making known the needs and burdens

Your compassion bids us bear,

Stirring us to ardent service,

Your abundant life to share

# Virginia Mennonite Conference

## Winter Delegate Assembly

Delegate Report - Cheryl Van Horn

### Isaiah 58:1-12

Shout out, do not hold back!

Lift up your voice like a trumpet!

Announce to my people their rebellion,  
to the house of Jacob their sins.

Yet day after day they seek me

and delight to know my ways,

as if they were a nation that practiced  
righteousness,

and did not forsake the ordinance of their God.

They ask of me righteous judgements,

they delight to draw near to God and say,

‘Why do we fast, but you do not see?

Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?’

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast-day,  
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight

and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?

Will you call this a fast,

    a day acceptable to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I choose:

    to loose the bonds of injustice,  
    to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
    to let the oppressed go free,  
    and to break every yoke?

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
    and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
    when you see the naked, to cover them,  
    and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
    and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
    your vindicator shall go before you,  
    the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.

Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
    you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

If you remove the yoke from among you,

the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,  
if you offer your food to the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,  
then your light shall rise in the darkness  
and your gloom be like the noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually,  
and satisfy your needs in parched places,  
and make your bones strong;  
and you shall be like a watered garden,  
like a spring of water,  
whose waters never fail.

Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;  
you shall raise up the foundations  
of many generations;  
you shall be called the repairer  
of the breach,  
the restorer of streets to live in.

## 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart imagined, are what God has prepared for those who love him' —

these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For who knows the inner things of a person except the spirit within that person? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand the things freely given to us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not receive the things of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to him, and he is unable to understand them because they are discerned spiritually. The spiritual person discern all things, and is himself subject to evaluation by no one.

'For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?'

But we have the mind of Christ.



## **Matthew 5:13-20**

‘You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot.

‘You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

‘Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfil. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter, not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

# **Sermon - Spencer Bradford**

## **Congregational Response**

### **Sharing and Prayers of the People**

#### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name;  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
are yours, now and forever. Amen.

## **Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving**

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. We come in grateful celebration of Jesus' cross and resurrection, giving from our receiving, inviting as we have been invited, serving as we are served, renewing our bond to the narrow way of Jesus. There is room at his table for all who follow Jesus in God's covenant of grace and obedience.

**The Lord is God, compassionate and gracious, overflowing in loving mercy and steadfast kindness. Blessed be God, now and forever!**

As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hills are now united on this table in bread and drink, so Lord, may we be made a true community of your Spirit as your Body on earth, and may your whole people soon be gathered together from across the earth in your Kingdom of holy peace.

**Come, Lord Jesus! To you be glory forever!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise  
to the Lord, because he is good;  
his love is eternal.**

Truly, it is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to offer our praise, worship, and thanksgiving to you, Almighty and Ever-living God. For your generous creating grace, for redemption from slavery and sin, and for calling your people into obedient love through your law, prophets, and apostles,

**Blessed are you, O God, holy and mighty.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whom you have revealed yourself, our light and our salvation.

Baptized in Jordan's waters, Jesus took his place with sinners, and your voice proclaimed him your beloved. Your Spirit anointed him to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, to restore sight to the blind, to free the oppressed, to announce your time of deliverance. We thank you for his call to faith and peace; for his redeeming death and resurrection to bring forgiveness while we were your enemies killing him; for life in his Spirit, free from sin and death; for our communion with him in his Body, and the promise of his return in your full kingdom.

**Blessed are you, Creator Spirit,  
who makes all things new!**

Come, Spirit of Christ, and fulfill the promise of your kingdom among us. For on the night that he was betrayed, during supper, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it, he broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying: "Drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." So with praise and thanksgiving, we offer to you all these gifts and our very selves, received from your grace, to be a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's self-giving for us and for the whole world:

**We praise you, we bless you, we worship  
and thank you, O Lord our God.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon this communion, on us gathered here and on these gifts, that the sharing of this bread and cup may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Sanctify and fill us with your true presence, that in all our lives we may be for the world the Body of Christ, redeemed by his blood, shining with the light of his love and grace toward all. As we share your presence anew at this table of your giving, let us share your presence with the world in the giving of our lives and selves, in your service for all people. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one in fellowship with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until we feast together at your heavenly table with all your saints, where the hungry and poor are filled and satisfied. Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**AMEN.**

## **Sharing of Bread and Cup at the Lord's Table**

### **Closing Hymn: VT #714, Let There Be Light**

Let there be light, Lord God of hosts,  
Let there be wisdom on the earth;  
Let broad humanity have birth,  
Let there be deeds, instead of boasts.

Within our passioned hearts instill  
The calm that endeth strain and strife;  
Make us thy ministers of life;  
Drive out the urge to curse and kill.

Give us the peace of vision clear  
To see our brothers' good our own,



To joy and suffer not alone,  
The love that casteth out all fear.

Let woe and waste of warfare cease,  
That useful labor yet may build  
Its homes with love and laughter filled;  
God give thy wayward children peace.

## **Sending**

May the peace of God  
Which passes all understanding  
keep your hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of God's son, Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
remain with you always. Amen.