

Flowers are given by the Worship Team in honor of all the workers who built this country, especially essential workers who have courageously served during the pandemic.

PRELUDE

My Hope is Built on Nothing Less

arr. Raymond Haan

INVITATION

One: Lord we gather today to thank You for all Your children, enslaved or free, who toiled to make this country great. We ask Your blessing for those who toil still. For those who work on the land, on the sea and in the air.

Many: For those who grow, harvest, deliver, prepare and serve our food; for those who harvest the bounty of the seas;

One: For those who manage our forests, cut our lumber, build our structures and make our paper; for those who build our roads and bridges;

Many: For those who work on computers, supply our electric power and operate our communications and transportation systems;

One: For our first responders and medical workers; for those who teach, research, develop technology and carry us to the stars;

Many: For those who bring us clean water and clean air; those who clean our streets and pick up our trash;

One: For those who lead us in worship--words, images and music-- so that we may understand and follow Your teachings;

Many: On all of these, Your children, Lord, we humbly ask Your blessings.

OPENING HYMN

Lift Every Voice and Sing

#593

**Lift every voice and sing, till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise high as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.**

**Stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.**

**God of our weary years, God of our silent tears
God who has brought us thus far on the way;
God, who by Your might led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met You,
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget You;
Shadowed beneath Your hand may we forever stand,
True to our God, true to our native land.**

OPENING PRAYER

One: We thank you, Creator for our hands. Hands that build, plant, plow, chop, saw, weave and sew. Other hands that lift, cook, clean, repair, heal and protect.

Many: **The labor of our hands has built America. The labor of our bodies has sustained us. Our collective labor is honorable.**

One: We thank You, Almighty, for our brains. Brains that create, solve, research and design. We think in ways to improve, maintain and preserve.

Many: **The labor of our minds has built America. The labor of thinking seeks to improve our quality of life. The labor of our minds is honorable.**

One: We are grateful for feeling hearts, Loving Lord. Our hearts dream, feel, relate and ache. Our hearts are our souls and they connect with other hearts.

All: **For the labor of our bodies, minds and hearts, Gracious God, We thank You! We praise You! We dedicate all our labors to Your service! We “Hold On” and keep plowing!**

CELEBRATION of TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE

HYMN

We Would Be Building

#607

**O keep us building, Savior; may our hands
Never falter when the dream is in our hearts,
When to our ears there come divine commands
And all the pride of sinful will departs.
We build with You; O granter enduring worth
Until Your promised realm shall come on earth.**

DEDICATION

O God, in the beginning, You gave the first humans the holy work to tend the garden. We never cease from this holy calling. To tend the garden of our soul, to care for others in community, and to cultivate a world You, O God, continue to love into being. Bless the works of our hands, hearts, and whole lives every day this week. Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 2:2-5

One: There will come a time in the last days when the mountain where the Eternal's house stands will become the highest, most magnificent, grander than any of the mountains around it. And all the nations *of the world* will run there *wanting to see it, feel it, fully experience it*. Many people *of all languages, colors, and creeds* will come.

People: Come! Let's go to the Eternal's mountain, to the house of the God of Jacob, so that we might learn from Him how best to be, to go along *in life* as He would have us go.

One: After all, the law will pour out from Zion, the word of the Eternal, from Jerusalem. God will decide what's fair among nations and settle disputes among all sorts of people. *Meanwhile*, they will hammer their swords into sickles, reshape their spears into pruning hooks. One nation will not attack another. They will not practice war anymore. O house of Jacob—*people of the promise*—come, come walk with me by the light of the Eternal.

SERMON

Freedom's Plow

by Langston Hughes

Readers: Dale Moore, John Ristow, Brenda Robinson,
Clarence Rogers, Lois Watson, & Lynne Woodman

Images: Carol Fields

When a man starts out with nothing, When a man starts out with his hands Empty, but clean,
When a man starts to build a world, He starts first with himself

And the faith that is in his heart- The strength there,
The will there to build.

First in the heart is the dream-
Then the mind starts seeking a way. His eyes look out on the world,
On the great wooded world,
On the rich soil of the world,
On the rivers of the world.

The eyes see there materials for building,
See the difficulties, too, and the obstacles.
The mind seeks a way to overcome these obstacles. The hand seeks tools to cut the wood,
To till the soil, and harness the power of the waters. Then the hand seeks other hands to help,
A community of hands to help-
Thus the dream becomes not one man's dream alone, but a community dream.
Not my dream alone, but our dream.
Not my world alone,
But your world and my world,
Belonging to all the hands who build.

A long time ago, but not too long ago, Ships came from across the sea Bringing the Pilgrims and prayer-makers, Adventurers and booty seekers,

Free men and indentured servants, Slave men and slave masters, all new- To a new world, America!

With billowing sails the galleons came
Bringing men and dreams, women and dreams. In little bands together,
Heart reaching out to heart,
Hand reaching out to hand,
They began to build our land.
Some were free hands
Seeking a greater freedom,

Some were indentured hands
Hoping to find their freedom,
Some were slave hands
Guarding in their hearts the seed of freedom, But the word was there always:

Freedom.

Down into the earth went the plow
In the free hands and the slave hands,
In indentured hands and adventurous hands,
Turning the rich soil went the plow in many hands That planted and harvested the food that fed
And the cotton that clothed America. Clang against the trees went the ax into many hands That hewed and shaped the rooftops of America. Splash into the rivers and the seas went the boat-hulls That moved and transported America.
Crack went the whips that drove the horses
Across the plains of America.
Free hands and slave hands,
Indentured hands, adventurous hands,
White hands and black hands
Held the plow handles,
Ax handles, hammer handles,
Launched the boats and whipped the horses
That fed and housed and moved America.
Thus together through labor,
All these hands made America.

Labor! Out of labor came villages
And the towns that grew cities.

Labor! Out of labor came the rowboats And the sailboats and the steamboats, Came the wagons,
and the coaches, Covered wagons, stage coaches,

Out of labor came the factories,
Came the foundries, came the railroads.

Came the marts and markets, shops and stores, Came the mighty products moulded,
manufactured, Sold in shops, piled in warehouses,
Shipped the wide world over:
Out of labor-white hands and black hands-
Came the dream, the strength, the will,
And the way to build America.
Now it is Me here, and You there.
Now it's Manhattan, Chicago,
Seattle, New Orleans,
Boston and El Paso-
Now it's the U.S.A.

A long time ago, but not too long ago, a man said: ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL-
ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR
WITH CERTAIN UNALIENABLE RIGHTS- AMONG THESE LIFE, LIBERTY
AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS.

His name was Jefferson. There were slaves then, But in their hearts the slaves believed him, too,
And silently took for granted
That what he said was also meant for them.

It was a long time ago,
But not so long ago at that, Lincoln said:
NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH
TO GOVERN ANOTHER MAN
WITHOUT THAT OTHER'S CONSENT.

There were slaves then, too,
But in their hearts the slaves knew
What he said must be meant for every human being- Else it had no meaning for anyone.
Then a man said:
BETTER TO DIE FREE
THAN TO LIVE SLAVES

He was a colored man who had been a slave
But had run away to freedom.
And the slaves knew
What Frederick Douglass said was true.

With John Brown at Harper's Ferry, Negroes died. John Brown was hung.
Before the Civil War, days were dark,
And nobody knew for sure

When freedom would triumph
'Or if it would,' thought some.
But others new it had to triumph.
In those dark days of slavery,
Guarding in their hearts the seed of freedom, The slaves made up a song:

Keep Your Hand On The Plow! Hold On! That song meant just what it said: Hold On! Freedom will come!

Keep Your Hand On The Plow! Hold On! Out of war it came, bloody and terrible!

But it came!

Some there were, as always,

Who doubted that the war would end right, That the slaves would be free,

Or that the union would stand,

But now we know how it all came out.

Out of the darkest days for people and a nation, We know now how it came out.

There was light when the battle clouds rolled away. There was a great wooded land,

And men united as a nation.

America is a dream.

The poet says it was promises.

The people say it is promises-that will come true. The people do not always say things out loud,

Nor write them down on paper.

The people often hold

Great thoughts in their deepest hearts

And sometimes only blunderingly express them, Haltingly and stumblingly say them,

And faultily put them into practice.

The people do not always understand each other. But there is, somewhere there,

Always the trying to understand,

And the trying to say,

'You are a man. Together we are building our land.'

America!

Land created in common,

Dream nourished in common,

Keep your hand on the plow! Hold on!

If the house is not yet finished,

Don't be discouraged, builder!

If the fight is not yet won,

Don't be weary, soldier!

The plan and the pattern is here,

Woven from the beginning Into the warp and woof of America:

ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL.

NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH

TO GOVERN ANOTHER MAN

WITHOUT HIS CONSENT.

BETTER DIE FREE,

THAN TO LIVE SLAVES.

Who said those things? Americans!

Who owns those words? America!

Who is America? You, me!

We are America!

To the enemy who would conquer us from without, We say, NO!

To the enemy who would divide

And conquer us from within,

We say, NO!

FREEDOM!

BROTHERHOOD!

DEMOCRACY!

To all the enemies of these great words: We say, NO!

A long time ago,

An enslaved people heading toward freedom

Made up a song:

Keep Your Hand On The Plow! Hold On!

The plow plowed a new furrow

Across the field of history.

Into that furrow the freedom seed was dropped.

From that seed a tree grew, is growing, will ever grow. That tree is for everybody,

For all America, for all the world.

May its branches spread and shelter grow

Until all races and all peoples know its shade.

KEEP YOUR HAND ON THE PLOW! HOLD ON!

SERMON DUET

Hold on Freedom's Plow

Dr. Marsha Kindall-Smith
and Felix McElroy

CELEBRATION of HOLY COMMUNION

One: For the farmers who stewarded the soil that grew the wheat and grapes,

Many: We celebrate the work of their hands.

One: For the bread bakers and grape stompers,

Many: We celebrate those whose energy mixes and mingles in these elements.

One: For the delivery drivers, grocery store workers, and every single person who is part of the community bringing food from farms to our table,

Many: We celebrate the ways our global lives are intertwined at this table.

One: Come to the feast of God for the people of God.

Many: May this holy meal remind us of who and whose we are; the body of Christ for such a time as this. Alleluia and Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER & PASTORAL PRAYER

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

PARTICIPATING in COMMUNION

**We shall overcome, we shall overcome, we shall overcome some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe we shall overcome some day.**

**We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in hand some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe we'll go hand in hand some day.**

**We are not afraid, we are not afraid, we are not afraid today;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe, we are not afraid today.**

**Our God will see us through, our God will see us through,
our God will see us through some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe, our God will see us through some day.**

**The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
The truth shall make us free some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe, the truth will make us free some day.**

**We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace, we shall live in peace some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall live in peace some day.**

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Amazing Grace

arr. George Shearing

WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS

GREETERS: Ruth Ann Wade, Kate Eaton

SONG LEADER: Felix McElroy