

03.05.23 | COURT STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH



seeking:

How do we
begin again?

10:45 A.M. | WORSHIP IN-PERSON & YOUTUBE LIVESTREAM

GATHERING

Gathering Song

Begin Again

WORDS: Anna Strickland © 2021. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC. Free for congregational use.

MUSIC: Conrad Kocher

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*In the deep night of the soul
Rich in questions, yearning for
Life that matters far beyond
Picket fences and front lawns
When we tire of life mundane
We can still begin again*

*In the sunset of our life
After years of joy and strife
As we ponder legacy
Wondering what we will leave
When the lights are growing dim
We can still begin again*

*Every morning, every hour
Spirit gifts us with the power
To begin our life anew
What then will we choose to do?
Close a chapter, lift the pen
To once more begin again*

Gathering

One: What is it like to begin again?

**All: It is like flowers in the spring that push through frozen ground.
It is like babies learning to walk one clumsy step at a time.
It is like Nicodemus in the night, asking Jesus for guidance.
It is like a Sunday morning, starting our week anew.**

One: May we find God in our seeking.

All: May we learn as we go.

One: May we be brave enough to begin again.

All: Let us worship the God of new beginnings.

Entering the Land of the Seeking

WORDS & MUSIC: © 2023 Spencer LaJoye

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*There's a place you can get to without any sound
It's a place where the wick has burned out
There's a place at the point
that's past turning around
There is a place to be lost long after you're found
There's a land you can reach if you follow yourself
It's a land beyond hoarding
your fears so to quell*

*There's a land where the bottom
falls out of the well
There is a land where your worry
and wonder can dwell
Coax your quiet questionings
Speak your soft uncertainties
There is room for these
In the land of seeking*

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

One: God of new life, you call us into unknown places,

All: and we bury our heads in the sand.

One: You promise all the stars in the sky,

All: and we doubt it can be true.

One: You speak of new life in the Spirit,

All: and we tell ourselves we've missed our chance.

One: Over and over and over again, you invite us closer to you.

All: Show us the way. Forgive our mistakes. Give us the courage to begin again with you.

Amen.

Draw a map without borders and see where you go

In the cover of night, call a question a home

Past the edge of defenses you're never alone

There is a place where your worries

and wonder are known

Coax your quiet questionings

Speak your soft uncertainties

There is room for these

In the land of seeking

The compass points straight to the heart

of a shadow of a doubt

The key is the most honest thing

that you can't speak aloud

There is no wrong way to be unsure of things

There is no wrong way to the land of the seeking

Coax your quiet questionings

Speak your soft uncertainties

There is room for these

In the land of seeking

Words of Forgiveness

Coax your quiet questionings

Speak your soft uncertainties

There is room for these

In the land of seeking

Song of Faith

Who on Earth Can Find God's Kingdom?

WORDS: Copyright © 2017 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All rights reserved.

MUSIC: John Wyeth's Repository of Sacred Music, 1813 ("Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing")

All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*Who on earth can find
God's kingdom?*

*Who can know God's
wondrous reign?*

*How can we receive the freedom
of a people born again?*

*Can we hear the winds a-blowing
—where they come from
and return?*

*Can we see God's kingdom
growing?*

These are things we long to learn.

*Nicodemus said to Jesus,
"God must be at work in you!"*

*Rabbi, you're a God-sent teacher;
we can see the signs you do!"*

*Jesus saw his faith and questions,
so he spoke these words of love:*

*"Surely, none can see
God's kingdom,*

*till they're born from
God above."*

*Nicodemus kept on wondering,
"How can one be born anew?"*

*Jesus said, "This is the birthing
that God's Spirit brings to you.*

*If you want to see
God's kingdom,*

do not be at all surprised.

*You can't see God's Spirit moving,
yet it's working, changing lives."*

*God, we see your world
around us,*

and we wonder what will be.

*Is your loving reign among us;
is it something yet to see?*

*May we trust your Spirit's moving,
giving life and hope and birth.*

*May we trust what you are doing,
joy of heaven, hope of earth.*

ENGAGING

Prayer for Illumination

A Contemporary Word

how do we begin again?

Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed

The Word of God

John 3:1-21 | Genesis 12:1-4a

The Word in Music

I Hope You Dance

Rev. Jim West

Message

seeking: How do we begin again?

Rev. Rebecca Dunger Peak

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a God who meets us in the shadows,
who welcomes our questions,
who invites us to begin again.**

**We believe that Jesus showed us a new way,
a deeper faith,**

a more compassionate existence.

**We believe that all of our beginnings should return us to this foundation,
and that no matter how many times we lose our way,
God always welcomes us home. Amen.**

THANKSGIVING

Prayers of the People

Spirit of the Living God

#393

WORDS & MUSIC: Daniel Iverson, 1926; adapt. © 1935, renewal © 1963 Birdwing Music
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

The Lord's Prayer

*Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

*Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.*

Offering

You may send your gifts to the church at:

719 Court St.
Fulton, MO 65251
Courtumc.org/give

Prayer of Dedication

O God of Boundless Abundance, whose grace is greater than our rebellious nature, whose love is higher and wider and deeper than our imagining, don't just take the gifts we offer today but bless and utilize both the gifts and the givers to fuel ministry that enables the whole world to hear your voice and, in hearing, to follow. Amen.

Doxology

Maker in Whom We Live

#88 Vs 4

WORDS: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788 MUSIC: George J. Elvey
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*Eternal, Triune God, let all the hosts above,
let all on earth below record and dwell upon thy love.
When heaven and earth are fled before thy glorious face,
sing all the saints thy love hath made thine everlasting praise.*

SENDING

Upcoming

Song of Faith

This Is a Day of New Beginnings

#383

WORDS: Brian Wren, 1978; alt. 1987 MUSIC: Carlton R. Young, 1984
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

*This is a day of new beginnings,
Time to remember and move on,
Time to believe what love is bringing,
Laying to rest the pain that's gone.*

*Then let us, with the Spirit's daring,
Step from the past and leave behind
Our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
Seeking new paths, and sure to find.*

*For by the life and death of Jesus,
God's mighty Spirit, now as then,
Can make for us a world of difference,
As faith and hope are born again.*

*Christ is alive, and goes before us,
To show and share what love can do.
This is a day of new beginnings;
Our God is making all things new.*

Blessing

Postlude

Lift High the Cross

Rev. Jim West

MUSIC: Sydney Hugo Nicholson, 1916; arr. Jim West © 1974 Hope Publishing Company
All rights reserved. Reprinted under OneLicense # A-730966

Worship Credits

Permission to podcast/stream the music in this service obtained from One License with license #A-730966. All rights reserved.

Liturgy written by and adapted from Rev. Sarah A. Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

Logo by A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org



seeking:

honest questions for deeper faith

daily devotional prompts & prayers

Beginning with Ash Wednesday and continuing through the beginning of Easter, use these daily devotional prompts and prayers to expand and deepen your spiritual walk through Lent. You might read them first thing in the morning or incorporate them into your bedtime routine. Perhaps use the questions as prompts to journal and reflect. Day by day, may these prayers remind you that, as you seek God, God is always seeking you.

sunday

03.05.23

prompt: Is it ever too late to begin again?

prayer: Holy God, this is one of the questions I ask myself—is it too late? Have I missed the window? Is it really possible for me to unlearn and relearn new habits? When I begin to doubt, I remember that you called Sarah and Abraham to be parents and start a new generation at an old age. Surely, there is new life for me as well. Give me the courage to laugh with joy when opportunities for new beginnings walk my way.

monday

03.06.23

prompt: Where did you see God today?

prayer: God, sometimes we play Marco Polo. Sometimes you leave breadcrumbs on the path for me. Other times you tap me on the shoulder and we start to dance. No matter how I find you, I know you're always there. Give me a spirit to see you. Help me pay attention. Amen.

tuesday

03.07.23

prompt: What is something you are learning right now?

prayer: Creator God, sometimes I have to stop and think about it—what am I learning these days? What is my body trying to teach me? What is my soul yearning for? If I'm not careful, I could ignore life's lessons and simply carry on, but I want to do more than carry on. I want to grow. I want to learn. Help me learn. Amen.

wednesday

03.08.23

prompt: When was the last time you did something new?

prayer: God of new life, when was the last time I did something new? Was it when I learned to knit? When I tried latkes for the first time? When I ran a different running route? Like a child with eyes of wonder help me look for the new opportunities in my life. May those glimpses of newness remind me that you are always creating, and always inviting me to begin again. There is holiness in that. Amen.

thursday

03.09.23

prompt: What prevents you from starting over or beginning again?

prayer: Holy God, whenever I think about beginning again there is a fear that climbs up on top of my chest and hunkers down. It is scary to think about trying new things, starting over, going in a new direction. Remove the weight from my chest and help me see that beginning again does not *have* to be a scary thing. It can be a joyful, hopeful thing. It can feel like resurrection. And when I say to myself that there are no new beginnings in my life, remind me that I am wrong. You start each day anew. Every day is a chance to begin again. Amen.

friday

03.10.23

prompt: Where are you trying to grow?

prayer: Oh holy God, the list is long. I'm terrible with Excel sheets. I'm not very patient. I am quick to keep score. I think I'm right most of the time. And if someone embarrasses me, it can take days to recover. Where am I *not* trying to grow? Give me a humble heart that I might embrace change with hope. Remind me that we are all works in progress, and that even in my shortcomings I am loved and claimed by you. Amen.

saturday

03.11.23

prompt: How is God calling you in this season of life?

prayer: Gracious God, sometimes your call is a tug to pay attention. Other times it comes as an invitation. No matter how it arrives, I don't want to miss it! In the midst of a busy world, open my heart to you. Help me not only hear your call, but like Abraham and Sarah, give me the courage to follow your call. Amen.



A Reconciling Congregation in the Heart of the Brick District
719 Court Street | Fulton, MO 65251 | 573 . 642 . 5721
www.courtumc.org | UMCCourtStreet@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/courtstreetunitedmethodist