

Chosen Journeys

My husband wonders why I make life hard for myself. He especially wonders this when, under the scorching sun, he watches me walk by the hose he bought — the one with the extra-long extension — choosing instead to lug sloshing buckets of water from the house to my out-of-the-way garden.

It is a bit odd. I sometimes question my own sanity, too. But I have chosen this garden journey as a spiritual discipline. For in the arduous act of carrying water buckets, I'm reminded of those who still walk miles for their water. It is a small, prayerful act that keeps my coddled heart conscious of the urgent need for clean, accessible water for all.

Last summer, though, I finally admitted that watering the garden this way was becoming too much for me. My husband smiled, thinking the prized hose he bought would finally be used. He was wrong. Rather, what arrived a few days later in the mail was a 19th-century wooden yoke from a farmer in Lithuania. Its well-worn patina featured ornate notches carved into the wood that kept the buckets from sliding.

I placed the arch of the yoke behind my neck and masterfully balanced the buckets. The yoke did help to distribute the weight of the water, lightening the load a bit, and making my task a bit easier. And it also deepened my spiritual gardening discipline, as feeling the buckets sway with my steps, I heard my Savior's invitation once again: Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.

I thought about the heavy burdens I carried that no one knew of — the worries that sloshed around in my spiritual buckets. I had grown weary by their weight. I had a tiredness in my bones that no sleep could cure. It was a tiredness that came from the constant buzz of stress keeping my nerves on high alert.

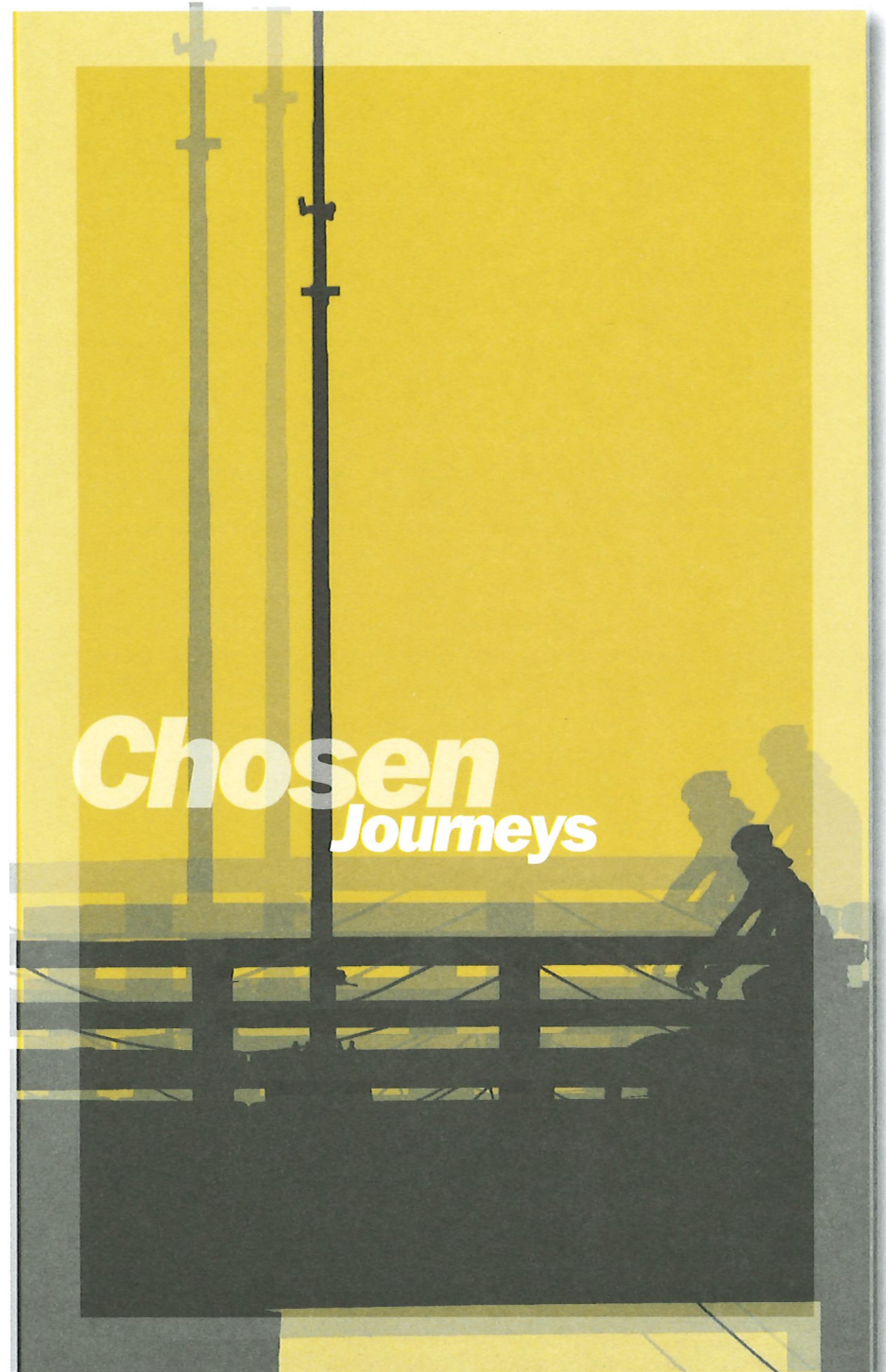
How many times would I ignore Jesus' help? Why did I insist on carrying all of life's burdens alone?

It is no wonder Jesus told the people of his time to take his yoke, for his was an easy one. Before modern machinery, farmers would use a wooden yoke on their animals. The frame that joined two beasts of burdens would mean they would share the weight of a load, making it easier to keep moving forward.

What a beautiful invitation we have as well. This is our opportunity, this day, to finally give our burdens to the one who will make them lighter. Will you embrace Jesus' yoke? I have. The garden hose, though? That I still ignore.

Patient God, how tiresome it must be to watch us struggling with the burdens and stresses and worries that we insist on carrying by ourselves. Help us to finally accept Jesus' invitation to take his yoke. May we stop being crushed by the weight of this world. May we know that all we struggle with is now in Jesus' capable and loving hands. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

(Rev. Donna Frischknecht Jackson is a communications specialist for the United Church of Christ and author of today's Sunday Bulletin.)



Bismarck-Mandan Area
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



1200 E Highland Acres Rd, Bismarck, ND 58501

701-223-2915 www.uccbismarck.org

July 5, 2026 at 10 AM Worship

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor: Rev. Gretchen Deeg | Liturgist: Carrie Mandigo

Music: Darcy Avery | Video: James Mandigo



NO MATTER

Sing! 35

No matter who, no matter what
No matter where you are on the journey of life;
You're welcome, welcome in this place.
Accepted and welcomed by God's grace.

***CALL TO WORSHIP¹**

All: We find rest in God.

***OPENING PRAYER**

***HYMN** Let There Be Light, O God of Hosts NCH 589

SCRIPTURE Psalm 145:8-14, 17

TIME WITH CHILDREN

Children are invited to remain in worship Sunday School will resume in the fall.

OFFERING

***DOXOLOGY**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, our heavenly host;
Creator, Savior, Holy Ghost. Amen.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION²**

God, forgive us when we reduce your warmth and welcome, your compassion and wholeness, to cold religion. Teach us to be people of true holiness; of compassion and loving obedience, of hospitality and healing. May we be those through whom the world becomes more friendly and flexible, more accepting and inviting, more caring and generous; and may holiness—your whole-iness—flood the world. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

***GLORIA**

Glory be to the Creator, and to the Christ, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen. Amen.

SCRIPTURE Zechariah 9:9-12 & Matthew 11:16-20, 25-30

SERMON

HYMN Be Still and Know Sing! 111

COMMUNION Let Us Break Bread Together NCH 330

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, we give thanks for the fruits of the vine and the grains of the earth which sustain us. May this meal we have shared nourish and strengthen us to grow in communion with you and one another. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

HYMN How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies NCH 594

CARRY GOD'S LOVE

Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from [ONE LICENSE](https://www.onelicense.com), License #732302-A.
¹ Adapted. Venner, Rosie. "I Am Making All Things New." ² Adapted. John van de Laar. Sacredise.



Thank You for Worshiping with Us!

Your offerings are essential for the ongoing ministry of this congregation. Donations can be made using this QR code, online at www.uccbismarck.org/donate, mailed to the church, or placed in the offering box.

Sponsored in Memory of Roxann Sauter



In loving memory of John's mother, Roxann Sauter, who died on July 4, 2019. Roxann was dedicated to serving struggling families in her working life, donating her time to the wider community in her retirement, and living life to the fullest.

Sponsored by John Sauter & Gretchen Deeg

July 19 and all of August is available. If you would like to sponsor a future Sunday, contact the church office at 223-2915 or visit uccbismarck.org/donate. Sponsorships are \$500.



Mayflower Circle Tea Party

As the first gathering of our reorganized Mayflower Circle group, everyone is invited to a tea party on **Friday, July 17 at 2pm** on the church lawn. Fancy hats are encouraged! Help us plan by RSVPing by the bulletin board.



Family Fun at the Splash Pad

We're kicking off a new families group at the New Generations Park Splash Pad on **Saturday, July 18 at 3:30pm**. Bring the kids and gather with other parents for a fun afternoon out.



Welcoming New Members

Have you been enjoying this church family? Are you interested in membership? Contact Pastor Gretchen to learn more and to discuss possible dates to officially join Bismarck UCC!



Outdoor Worship

Our next outdoor worship of the season **Sunday, July 26 at 10am**. We'll gather beneath the canopy of trees on the Bismarck UCC grounds for a relaxed, spirit-filled time of prayer, music, and community. Bring a **lawn chair or blanket**.

Help Pull Weeds

We need help weeding at church. Pull weeds with others on Wednesday, July 8 at 5:30pm at church. People are welcome to come anytime to weed around the church.



THIS WEEK'S OPPORTUNITIES: July 5 - 12

Sunday:	11 AM Fellowship 12 Noon Online Fellowship
Tuesday:	1 PM Quilting/Knitting
Wednesday:	5:30 PM Weeding the Yard
Friday:	9 AM Bible Study (in-person & online)
Sunday:	10 AM Sunday Worship 11 AM Fellowship & 12 Noon Online Fellowship

Send a Text

If you need to send a text to the administrative assistant concerning church business, please send the text to (701)707-9127 rather than Autum's personal cell phone number. This new church number with a text option is checked on a regular basis.



Block Party Quilt Raffle

We are having a quilt raffle at our annual block party. The \$10 raffle tickets are available to purchase or check out if you would like to take some to sell. Contact the church office for tickets!



NPC Food Collection for 250th Anniversary

Northern Plains Conference invites us to celebrate independence by collecting food and toiletries to donate to our local food pantries during the month of July. We consistently fill the cart and send it to Adopt-a-Block. Let's go above and beyond this month and send even more than we usually do to those who need it!



OUR PRAYER LIST

Oliver Gagner, Family of Tony Demaree (Bill & Maggie's nephew), Molly Peterson (Autum's sister), Louise Zuern, Ivan Sadlier (Autum's uncle), Jody Miller, Kayla Bruning, Bella Bruning, Gellsia (Oliver Gagner's daughter), Matthew Nitschke, Hayes & Cooper (Brandon & Tasha Domagala's sons), Amanda Wilson, Frank Picard, Carla Christenson (Monica Klein's mother), Fredrick Krause (Kerri Kraft's grandfather), Robyn Richter (Kyle Eisenbraun's aunt), Doretta Reule, Howard Etson, Camille Grothier, East Timor, Refugees

*Contact the church office to be added to our weekly prayer list.

Let There Be Light, O God of Hosts

William M. Vories, 1908; alt.

1 Let there be light, O God of hosts!
 2 With - in our pas - sioned hearts in - still
 3 Give us the peace of sens - es clear
 4 Let woe and waste of war - fare cease,

Let there be wis - dom on the earth!
 the calm that ends all strain and strife;
 to know our neigh - bors' good our own;
 that use - ful la - bor yet may build

Let broad hu - man - i - ty have birth!
 Make us your min - is - ters of life;
 To hope and suf - fer not a - lone,
 Its homes with love and laugh - ter filled!

Let there be deeds, in - stead of boasts!
 purge us from lusts that curse and kill!
 bond - ed in love that con - quers fear!
 God, give your way - ward chil - dren peace!

Be Still and Know

111

♩=108

Be still and know that I am God. Be still and
 Cal - ma tu ser, que soy tú; Dios. Cal - ma tu

know that I am God. Be still and know
 ser, que soy tú; Dios. Cal - ma tu ser,

that I am God. Be still and
 que soy tú; Dios. Cal - ma tu

know that I am God.
 ser, que soy tú; Dios.

**May be sung as a round beginning at measure two.*

Words and Music: John L. Bell Copyright ©1988, 1998 Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community, Scotland. GIA Publications Inc. exclusive North American agent. All rights reserved. Used by permission. Spanish paraphrase: Anthony Cabrera, 2009.

1 Let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees;
 * 2 Let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees;
 3 Let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees;

let us break bread to - geth - er on our knees.
 let us drink wine to - geth - er on our knees.
 let us praise God to - geth - er on our knees.

When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,

My God, have mer - cy on me.

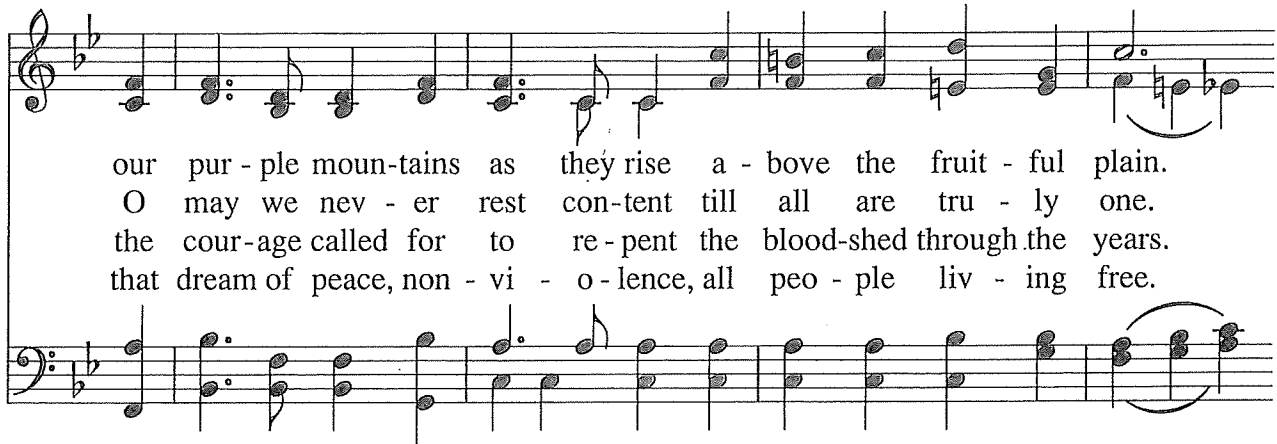
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How Beautiful, Our Spacious Skies

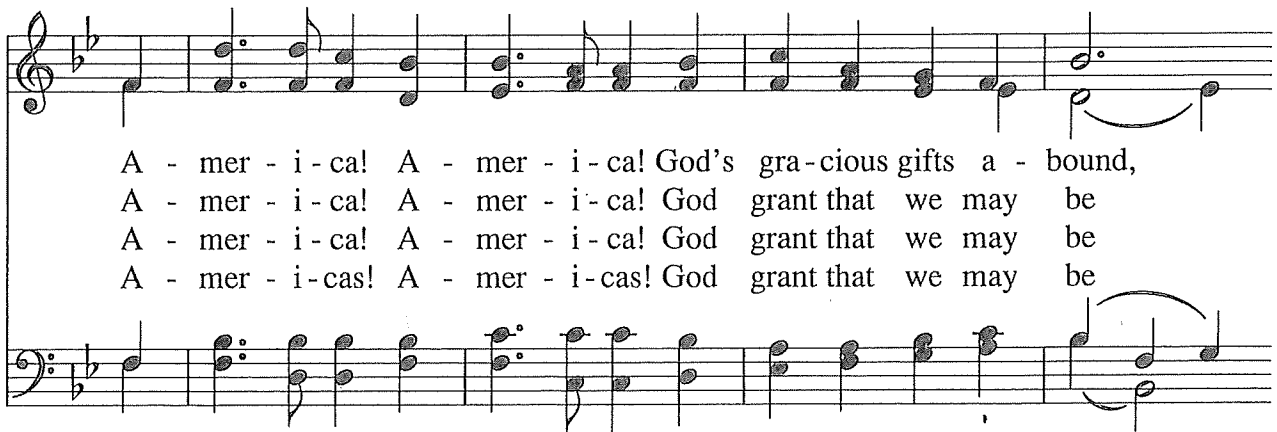
Miriam Therese Winter, 1993; Adapted from
"America the Beautiful" by Katharine Lee Bates, 1893



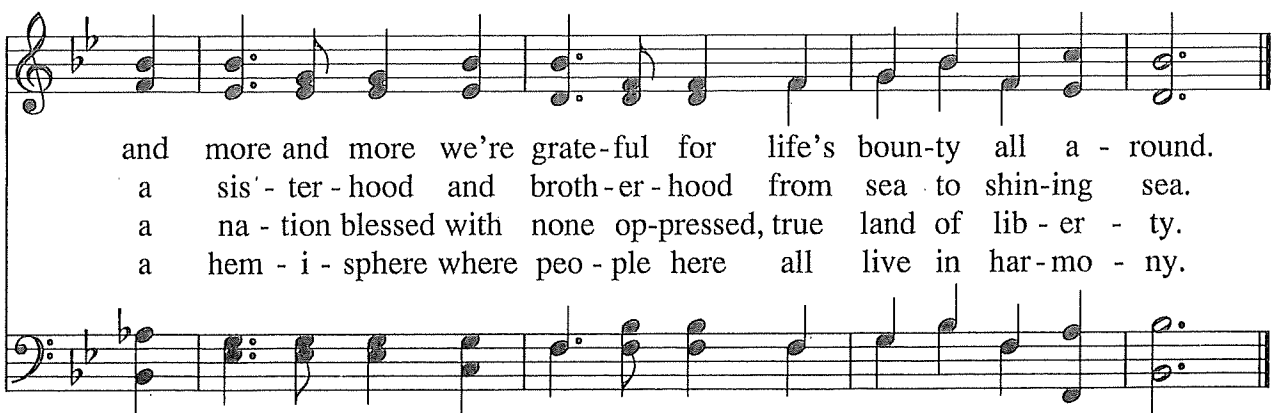
1 How beau-ti-ful, our spa-cious skies, our am-ber waves of grain;
2 In-dig-e-nous and im-mi-grant, our daugh-ters and our sons:
3 How beau-ti-ful, sin-cere la-ment, the wis-dom born of tears,
4 How beau-ti-ful, two con-ti-nents, and is-lands in the sea



our pur-ple moun-tains as they rise a-bove the fruit-ful plain.
O may we nev-er rest con-tent till all are tru-ly one.
the cour-age called for to re-pent the blood-shed through the years.
that dream of peace, non-vi-o-ence, all peo-ple liv-ing free.



A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God's gra-cious gifts a-bound,
A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God grant that we may be
A-mer-i-ca! A-mer-i-ca! God grant that we may be
A-mer-i-cas! A-mer-i-cas! God grant that we may be



and more and more we're grate-ful for life's boun-ty all a-round.
a sis-ter-hood and broth-er-hood from sea to shin-ing sea.
a na-tion blessed with none op-pressed, true land of lib-er-ty.
a hem-i-sphere where peo-ple here all live in har-mo-ny.