

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

“Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers”
Romans 12:13, NRSV

Call to worship

Leader: We gather in this place to reaffirm that all humans are part of a lovely tapestry woven in the image of a multicolored God.

Men: Each of us is different, unique and priceless. However, the sacred bond that unites us is far greater: We are children of the same God!

Women: As sisters and brothers of diverse backgrounds, God calls us to love and serve one another. Jesus shows us the way!

Leader: Yet, we close our home to “strangers” and “the-have-nots,” refusing to welcome them with a big smile and open arms.

Men and Women: Forgive us, God, and help us to be kind to pilgrims, always remembering that by doing so, we might be entertaining “angels.”

All: As we worship you this day, may we hear afresh the news that you are the God who embraces all humans and expects the same from us. May today’s “great fiesta” be a time to celebrate your infinite goodness.

Litany

Leader: God rescues us from the power of sin, pain and death so we can invite people from all races and cultures to sing, dance and dine with us. We belong together and need each other.

People: As we affirm our unity and seek to reach out to those whom society has excluded, may God’s Spirit enable us gladly to receive those who are not like us, develop their potential for growth and walk with them, hand in hand, to create a world filled with peace and justice.

Prayer

God, throughout the ages, you have taught us to be welcoming and generous. In every culture, you have provided sanctuary for the homeless, manna for the hungry, water for the thirsty, clothing for the naked, parenting for the orphan, home for the immigrant and friendship for the lonely. You have dignified those sojourners and rejuvenated them for their long walk. Abraham, Lot, Rahab, the Shulammitte woman, Jesus and Lydia followed in your footsteps, opening their homes to worn-out travelers. In your grace, we have been your guest of honor.

Yet, we have been unfaithful, selfish hosts. Fear, insecurity, hatred, bigotry and ignorance have guided our actions. By neglecting to hear the cry of those needing companionship and justice along the way, we have dishonored your likeness in them.

Host of hosts, give us a new heart to extend a caring hand to those who wander and suffer, as you destroy the barriers that keep us apart and hurt us deeply. At the end of our pilgrimage, may our only reward be the knowledge that here on earth, we were loyal heralds of your overflowing mercy. Only then will we be ready to see you and glorify your name. Amen.

Suggested Hymns

- “Righteous and Just Is the Word of Our Lord,” *UMH* 107
- “Walk On, O People of God,” *UMH* 305
- “Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore,” *UMH* 344
- “When the Poor Ones,” *UMH* 434
- “What Does the Lord Require,” *UMH* 441
- “We Are One in Christ Jesus,” 273 (*Mil Voices para Celebrar*)

Suggested Scriptural Readings (Revised Common Lectionary)

- Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
- 1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20); Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
- Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11

Benediction

May the God who welcomes all creation grant us the courage to hold all peoples in our arms as we serve them, until we all return to the source of our being and unity beyond the sun and the stars. Amen.

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