

# Bethel United Church of Christ

*No matter who you are  
or where you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here*

September 8, 2019

13<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Pentecost

Homecoming Sunday

"Home - to the Potter's House"

*Please use the music of the prelude  
to quietly prepare yourself  
for worship in this sacred space.*



## Call to Worship – Responsive

Leader: To take the clay of our lives,  
and shape disciples:

**People: God calls us to the Potter's House**

Leader: To receive and mend those who are  
broken from life experiences:

**People: God calls us to the Potter's House**

Leader: To love and heal those who are wounded  
from war:

**People: God calls us to the Potter's House**

Leader: To shelter all who are outcast and  
heavily burdened:

**People: God calls us to the Potter's House**

Leader: Let us enter this place of  
transformation:

**People: And worship our God!**



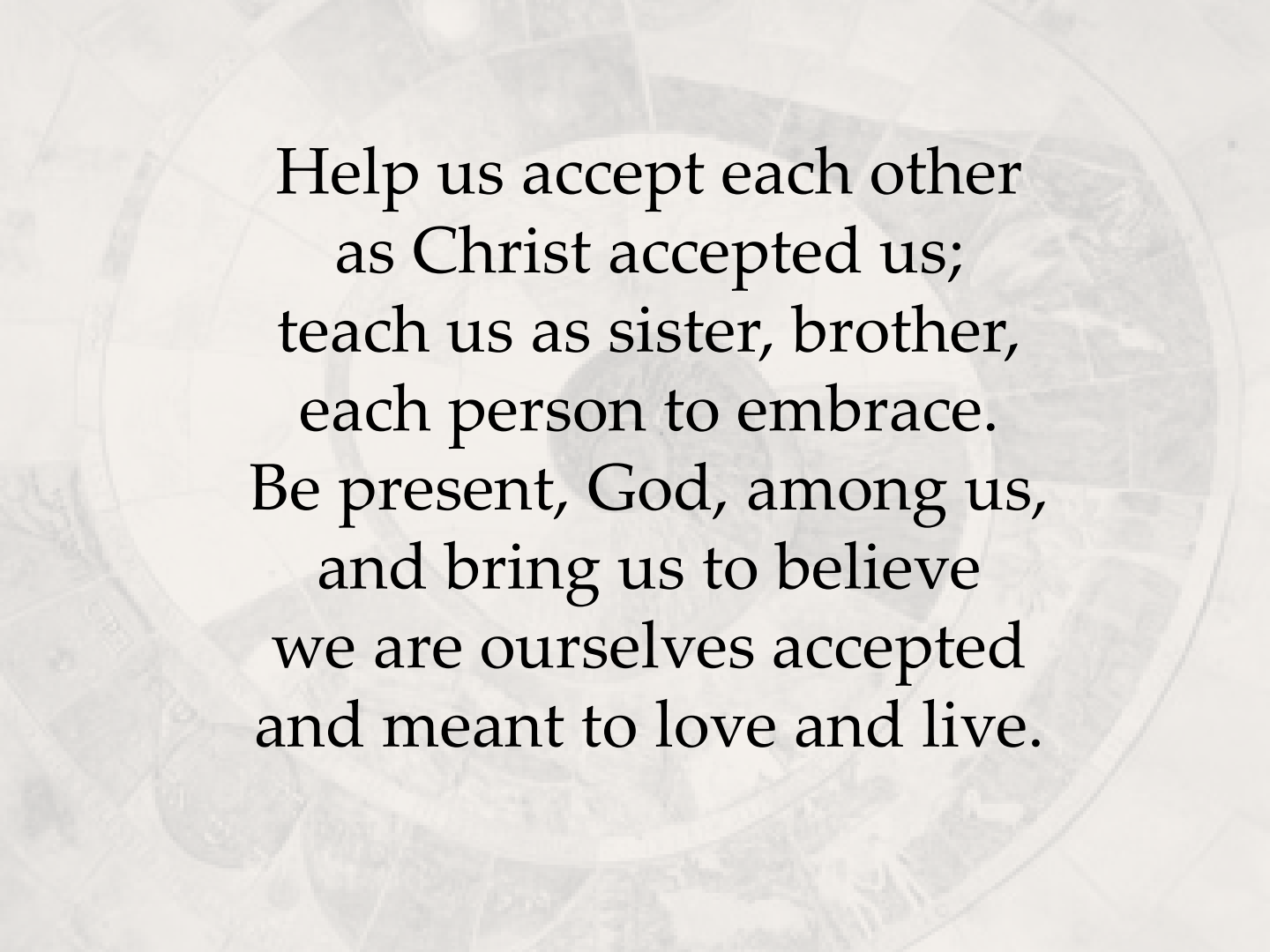
# INVOCATION

# Gathering Hymn

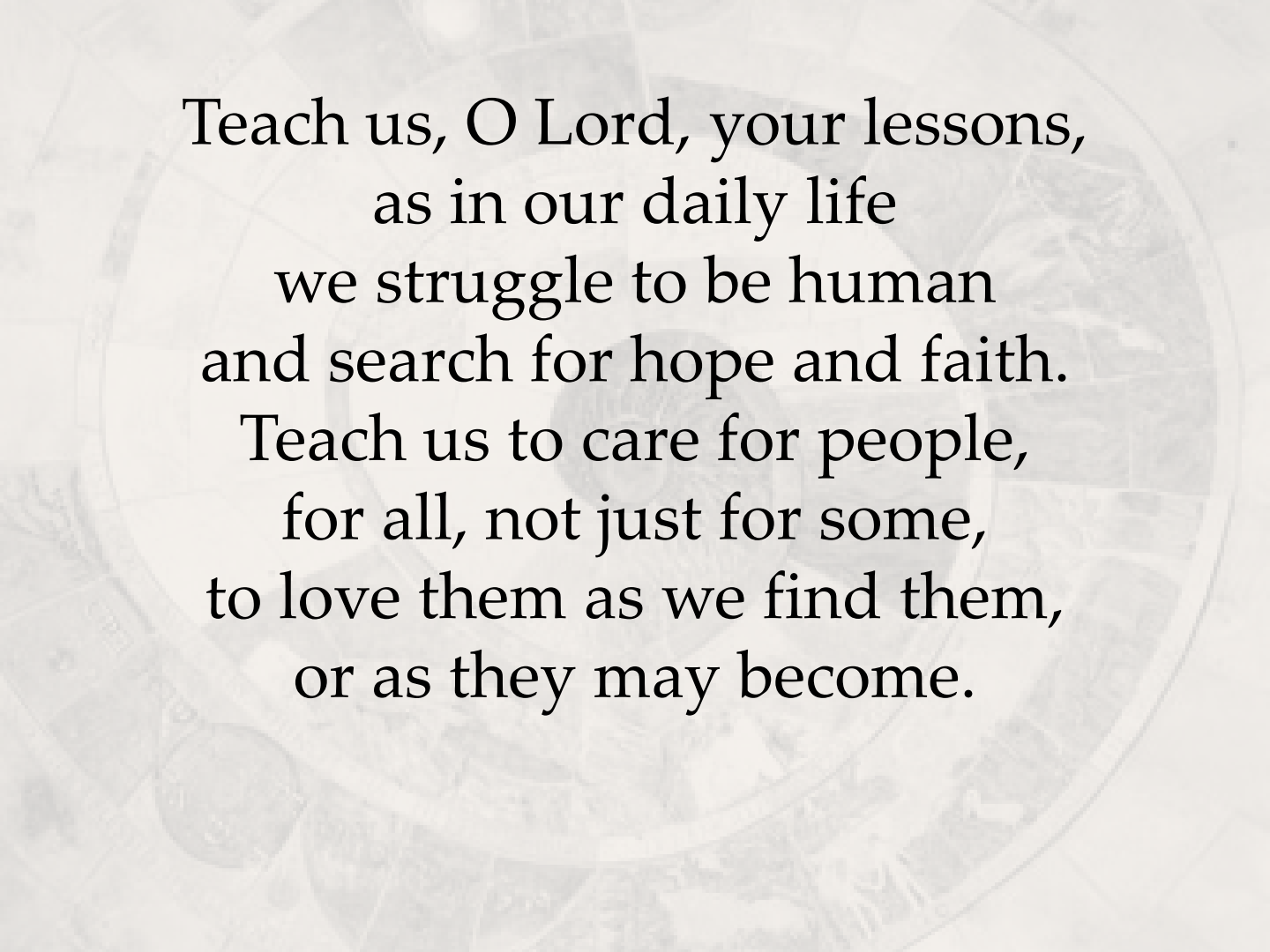
*Help Us Accept Each Other*

*NCH #388*

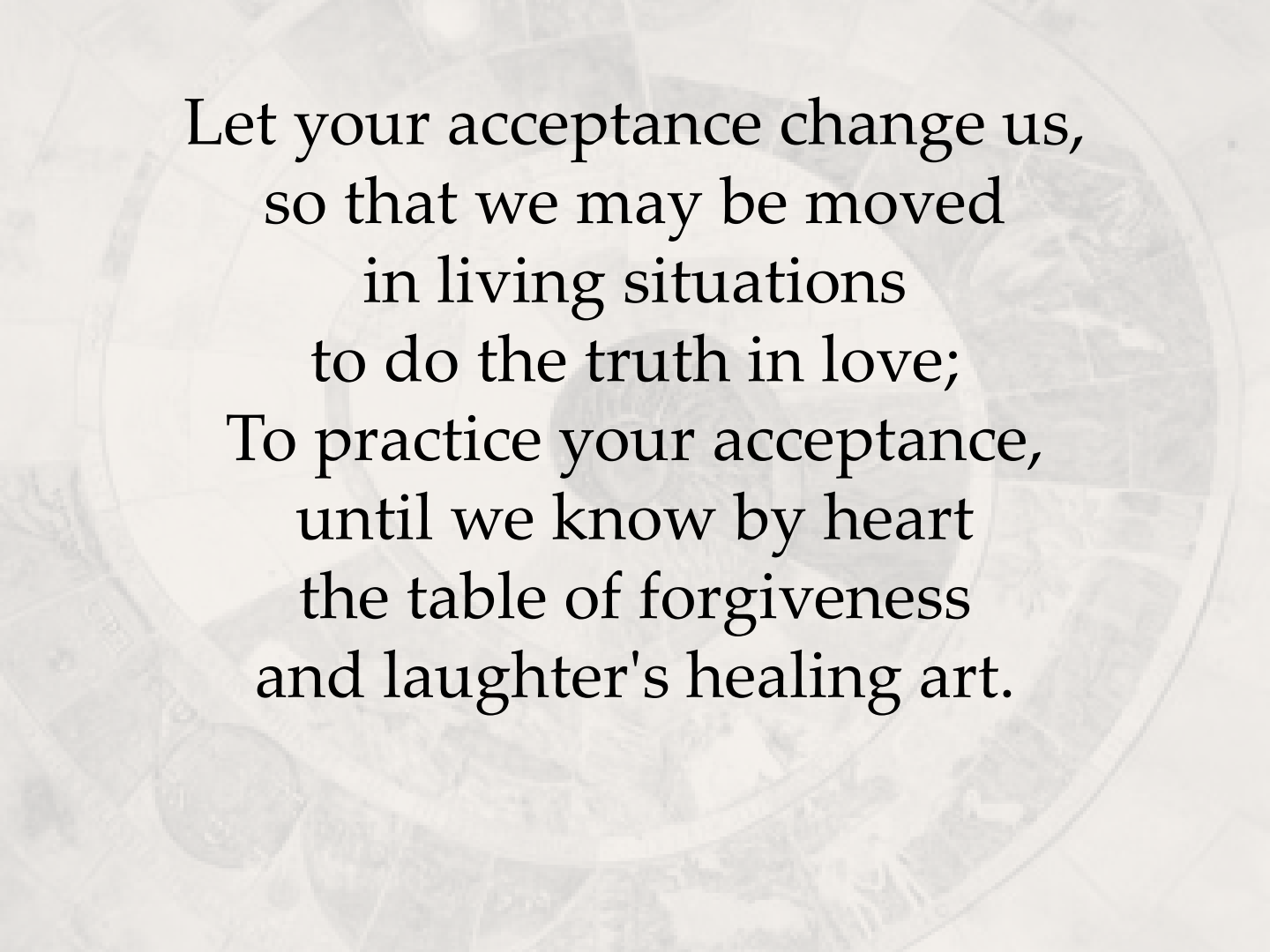
*(tune – NCH #386)*



Help us accept each other  
as Christ accepted us;  
teach us as sister, brother,  
each person to embrace.  
Be present, God, among us,  
and bring us to believe  
we are ourselves accepted  
and meant to love and live.



Teach us, O Lord, your lessons,  
as in our daily life  
we struggle to be human  
and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people,  
for all, not just for some,  
to love them as we find them,  
or as they may become.



Let your acceptance change us,  
so that we may be moved  
in living situations  
to do the truth in love;  
To practice your acceptance,  
until we know by heart  
the table of forgiveness  
and laughter's healing art.



God, for today's encounters  
with all who are in need,  
who hunger for acceptance,  
for righteousness and bread,  
Bring us new eyes for seeing,  
new hands for holding on:  
renew us with your Spirit;  
God! Free us, make us one!



# Passing the Peace



Bethel United Church of Christ

**Welcome & Greetings!**

No matter who you are or where you are on  
life's journey, you are welcome here

The background of the slide is a large, circular mosaic. The mosaic is composed of many small, irregular tiles in various shades of beige, tan, and light brown. In the center of the mosaic is a prominent spiral design, which appears to be a stylized representation of a nautilus shell or a similar natural form. The spiral starts from a small circle in the middle and winds outwards, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall effect is that of an ancient or classical architectural detail, possibly a floor or a wall relief.

# **Special Music**

# Children's Time



# Gloria

(#759, NCH)

Glory to the Creator  
the Christ, the Holy Spirit,  
Three in One

As it was in the beginning  
Is now and ever shall be,  
World without end, Amen, Amen

# Hebrew Scripture Reading

**Jeremiah 18:1-11**

*Wayne Howell*

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Come, go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him.

Then the word of the Lord came to me: Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? says the Lord. Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.



At one moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, but if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will change my mind about the disaster that I intended to bring on it. And at another moment I may declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, but if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will change my mind about the good that I had intended to do to it.

Now, therefore, say to the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: Thus says the Lord: Look, I am a potter shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Turn now, all of you from your evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.

# Epistle Reading

**Philemon 1:1-21**

*Virginia Shannon*

Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and co-worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. When I remember you in my prayers, I always thank my God because I hear of your love for all the saints and your faith toward the Lord Jesus. I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

I have indeed received much joy and encouragement from your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

For this reason, though I am bold enough in Christ to command you to do your duty, yet I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—and I, Paul, do this as an old man, and now also as a prisoner of Christ Jesus. I am appealing to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I have become during my imprisonment.

Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful both to you and to me. I am sending him, that is, my own heart, back to you. I wanted to keep him with me, so that he might be of service to me in your place during my imprisonment for the gospel; but I preferred to do nothing without your consent, in order that your good deed might be voluntary and not something forced. Perhaps this is the reason he was separated from you for a while, so that you might have him back forever, no longer as a slave but more than a slave, a beloved brother—especially to me but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

So if you consider me your partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account. I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand: I will repay it. I say nothing about your owing me even your own self. Yes, brother, let me have this benefit from you in the Lord! Refresh my heart in Christ. Confident of your obedience, I am writing to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say.



# **Gospel Reading**

**Luke 14:25-33**

**Dr. Mann**



Now large crowds were traveling with him; and he turned and said to them, "Whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost, to see whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it will begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.'

Or what king, going out to wage war against another king, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to oppose the one who comes against him with twenty thousand? If he cannot, then, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for the terms of peace. So therefore, none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions."



"...AS THE CLAY  
IS IN THE  
POTTER'S HAND,  
SO ARE YOU IN  
MY HAND."

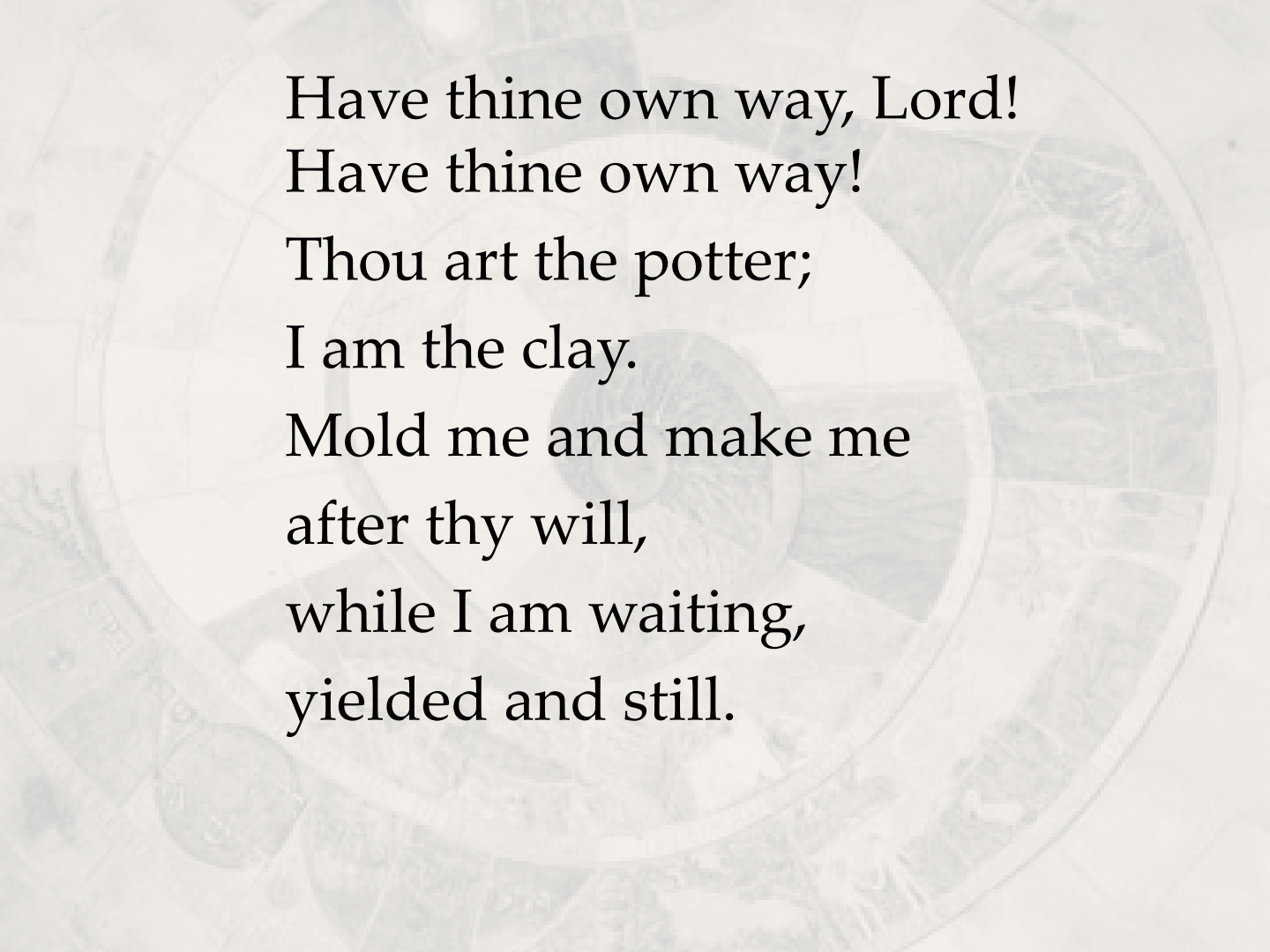
JEREMIAH 18:6

"Home - to the Potter's House"  
Rev. Dr. Sylvia Lee Mann

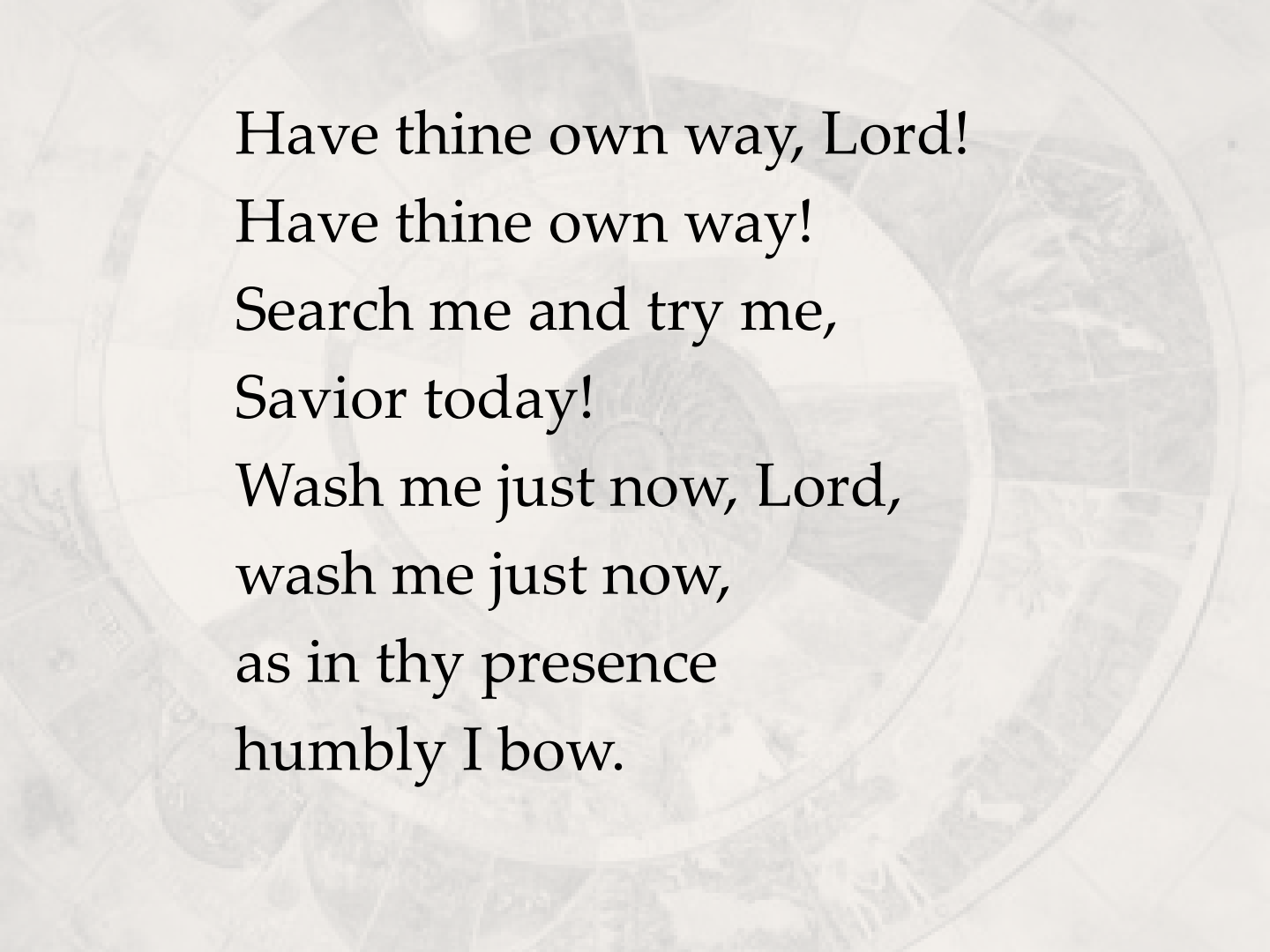


**Responding Hymn**

*Have Thine Own Way, Lord*



Have thine own way, Lord!  
Have thine own way!  
Thou art the potter;  
I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me  
after thy will,  
while I am waiting,  
yielded and still.



Have thine own way, Lord!  
Have thine own way!  
Search me and try me,  
Savior today!  
Wash me just now, Lord,  
wash me just now,  
as in thy presence  
humbly I bow.



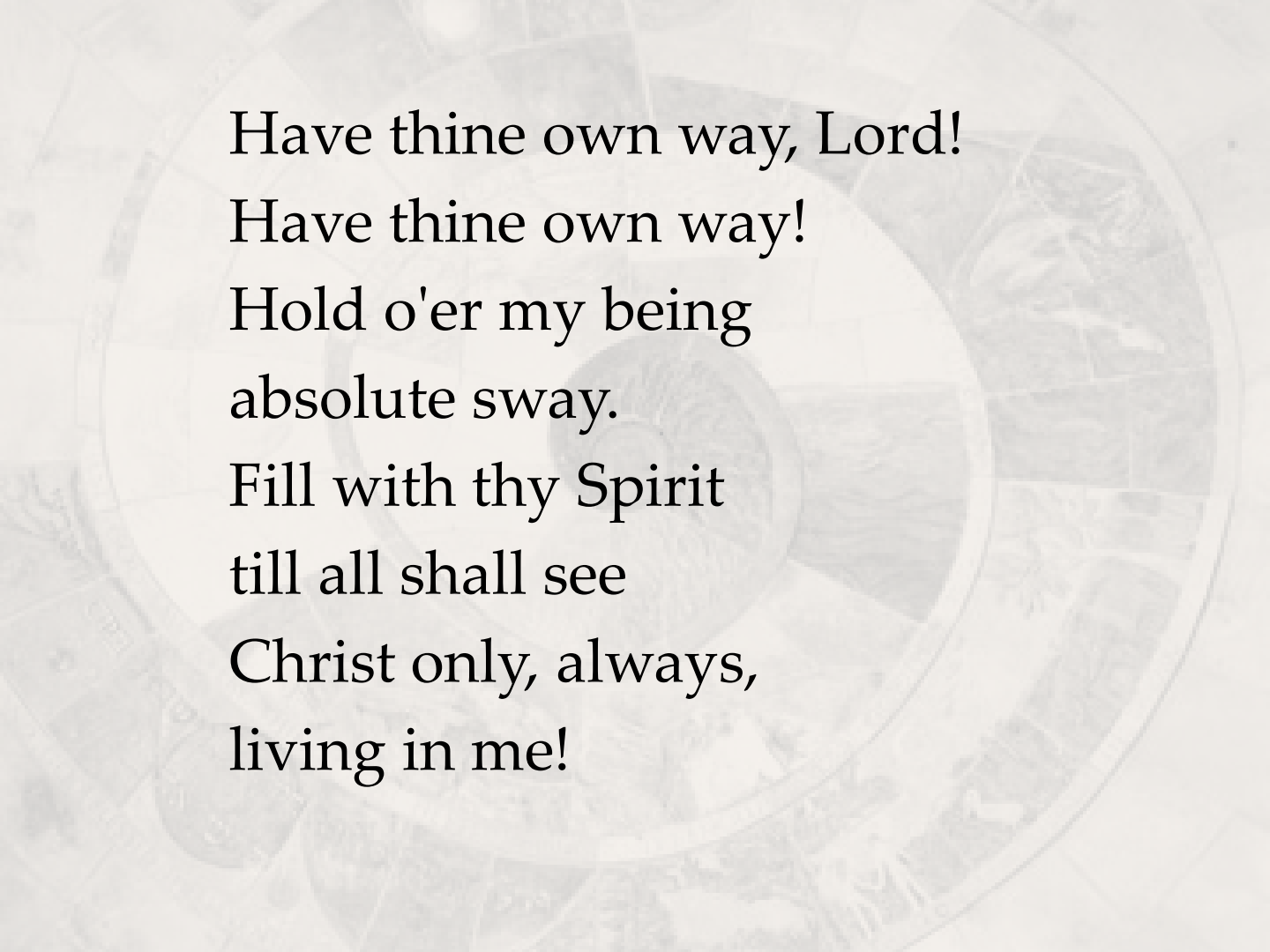
Have thine own way, Lord!

Have thine own way!

Wounded and weary,  
help me I pray!

Power, all power,  
surely is thine!

Touch me and heal me,  
Savior divine!



Have thine own way, Lord!  
Have thine own way!  
Hold o'er my being  
absolute sway.  
Fill with thy Spirit  
till all shall see  
Christ only, always,  
living in me!



# Responsive Prayer of Confession

Leader: We have watched those broken from life and war suffer before us.

**People: We confess that you are a God of love and peace**

Leader: Too often we have stood around returning veterans without extending a helping hand.

**People: We confess that you are a God of love and peace**

Leader: Sometimes we have looked down upon them because they labored in war.

**People: We confess that you are a God of love and peace**

Leader: Let us confess: O God, You call us to live in a Just Peace Church, to work for justice for all and to seek pathways to peace so that we may end war's destruction of human life and of creation. Yet we are part of a war that has gone on for too long. We have not found the words or the wisdom to guide our leaders into the ways of healing and peace.

**People: Forgive us.**

Leader: O God, you call us to minister to all your children, including soldiers fighting this war, and their families. We confess that we have not developed ministries to touch those who return from combat broken in mind and soul.

**People: Forgive us.**

Leader: Mold us into the people you need to heal returning warriors, military families, and societies battered from the war in the Middle East.

**People: We confess that we need to be put on your Potter's wheel, so that we might minister love and healing in your holy name.**

**Amen.**



**Words of Assurance**

# Prayers of the People - Joys and Concerns

As we share, conclude with *“Lord in Your Mercy”*

Congregational response: *“Hear our prayer”*

## *The Lords 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 and ever. Amen

# Invitation to the Offering

The wooden plate is for our regular tithes and offerings.

The “Bandana Bucket” is for our Children’s Offering, which is used to help with some of our mission projects (Pet Food Bank, 5<sup>th</sup> Friday Desserts, etc.)



# Music for Offering

Sandy Gunn



# Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow  
Praise God all creatures here below  
Praise God above the heavenly hosts  
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost  
Amen**

# Prayer of Dedication

Gracious God we thank you for the opportunity to give our time, talent, and treasure for the building of your Kingdom on earth.

Bless every gift, tithe, and offering that's deposited into your Kingdom today; we offer this prayer in your mighty name. Amen

# Singing into Mission

*This is a Day of New  
Beginnings*

*NCH #417*

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.

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.

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.

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.



# Benediction



# **Carillon Postlude**