

Worship Service
Chinese New Year 2018 (closest Sunday): LOYALTY

Helpful Elements:

Chinese decorations: banners, lanterns, Chinese knots
Oranges for scent

Welcome: Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is ____ and I'll be leading our worship time today. Yesterday was the beginning of the Chinese New Year, the Year of the Dog, so today we'll be drawing from Chinese history and tradition in our service, particularly the emphasis on **loyalty, or faithfulness**, in this particular year.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

Opening Prayer: Great and loving God, we invite you today to be in our minds and in our hearts and to be among us in our time of worship. We ask that your Holy Spirit bless our time together and to refresh us with your presence. In the midst of a world full of trouble and strife, we thank you for watching over us, guiding us, and especially forgiving us. Enable us to enter your presence joyfully and reverently, and let us depart today with the assurance that our sins are forgiven. Fill us, O God, with the peace which passes understanding. Amen.

Opening Hymn: Doxology, p. 1

Statement of Faith: Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Hymns:

For the Beauty of the Earth, p. 2

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us, p. 3

Amazing Grace, p. 4

First reading: Ruth 1:6ff

⁶ Then Naomi [a widow whose two sons have also died] arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab ⁸ But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹ The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰ And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." ¹¹ But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? ... ¹² Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear [more] sons, ¹³ would you therefore wait till they were grown? ... ¹⁴ Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her... and said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." ¹⁸ And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Holy, Holy, Holy, p. 5

Jesus Loves Me, p. 6

Second reading: 2 Timothy 2:10-13

¹⁰ Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. ¹¹ The saying is trustworthy, for:

If we have died with him, we will also live with him;

¹² if we endure, we will also reign with him;

if we deny him, he also will deny us;
¹³ if we are faithless, he remains faithful—
for he cannot deny himself.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

Hymns:

Softy and Tenderly, p. 7

Leaning on the Everlasting Arms, p. 8

Interactive Homily: As I mentioned, in the Chinese Zodiac we've just begun the Year of the Dog. What are dogs typically like? [encourage recollections here]

Appropriately, the Dog in the Chinese zodiac represents loyalty, honesty, and integrity. Red is a color of good luck, and Chinese knots like this one [show knot and other decorations] are a traditional Chinese craft used in decorations all year long.

- What is loyalty?
 - Being true to something – a person, principle, actions; allegiance, faithfulness, steadfast devotion
- Why is a dog called “man’s best friend”?
 - Dogs love you no matter what ...
- Who has been the most loyal person in your life? Tell me more about that person – what made him or her loyal to you?
- What about loyalty in the military service?
 - Marine Corps motto: “semper fidelis,” always faithful. What does that involve? loyalty to your fellow service men and women no matter what.
 - Movie: *Hacksaw Ridge*, about conscientious objector Desmond Doss, who saved 75 men without firing a single shot during the bloodiest battle of WWII, on Okinawa
- What does it mean that we are loyal to God? that God is loyal to us?

Let’s pray silently in thanks to God for loyalty in each other and especially God’s faithfulness to us.

(Silent Prayer) ... Now let us say the Lord’s prayer together:

Lord's 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

Hymns:

This is My Father's World, p. 9

It is Well with My Soul, p. 10

Standing on the Promises, p. 11

Third Reading: Quotes on Loyalty and Honesty

It takes three years to learn to be a man of integrity; it only takes three days to degrade. (Chinese proverb)

Slander cannot destroy an honest man; when the flood recedes the rock is still there. (Chinese proverb)

You cannot buy loyalty; you cannot buy the devotion of hearts, minds, and souls. You have to earn these things. –Clarence Francis

Loyalty to the country always. Loyalty to the government when it deserves it. – Mark Twain

Loyalty and devotion lead to bravery. Bravery leads to the spirit of self-sacrifice. The spirit of self-sacrifice creates trust in the power of love. –Morihei Ueshiba, Japanese founder of Aikido (martial art)

Hymns:

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing, p. 12

Shall We Gather at the River, p. 13

Fourth Reading: Prayer for Peace by Chinese philosopher Lao-Tse (a title which roughly translates "Old Master"), from the 6th Century B.C.

If there is to be peace in the world,
There must be peace in the nations.

If there is to be peace in the nations,
There must be peace in the cities.
If there is to be peace in the cities,
There must be peace between neighbors.
If there is to be peace between neighbors,
There must be peace in the home.
If there is to be peace in the home,
There must be peace in the heart.

Hymns:

Blest Be the Tie that Binds, p. 14

I Need Thee Every Hour, p. 15

Closing Blessing: (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. Amen.

Closing Hymn: Doxology, p. 23

[score an orange peel with a knife or fingernails; while collecting hymnbooks and giving blessing, allow people to smell the orange peel]