

Taizé Worship
First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
August 30, 2026
Rev. Jill Cameron Michel

Today's service is different than most. There is not a traditional sermon. What is included here is the text from the Introduction to Taizé which sets the stage for this type of worship as well as the outline for the Time of Reflection which in addition to this text includes three periods of extended silence.

Introduction to Taizé

Introduction to Taizé used <https://www.taize.fr/en/> and *Worship Feast* (published by Abingdon Press) as sources.

"On a hill in southern France, you'll find a community of brothers that has opened its door to the world as an act of hospitality" ("The Spirit of Taizé" in *Worship Feast*, Abingdon Press, 2004).

"The Taizé Community is made up of around eighty brothers from different church backgrounds – Catholic, Anglican, Protestant – and from nearly thirty countries. By its very existence, it is a 'parable of community': a tangible sign of reconciliation between divided Christians and separated peoples" ([The Community – Taizé](#)).

"Throughout the year, the community welcomes tens of thousands of young adults [as well as older adults] from Europe and other continents. They come for week-long meetings, during which they experience prayer and life together with time for biblical reflection and sharings, in an environment where they can ask questions about their lives and their future" ([The Community – Taizé](#)).

"...people from around the world flock to Taizé to be near the brothers, to pray, to be silent, to be simple, to be faithful.

"[People] come seeking the space - external and internal - in which to meet God. Their lives (and ours) are so wrapped up in to-do lists that we seldom find the space or the clarity to simply listen to the voice of God speaking deep into our hearts. That's what goes on at Taizé - the freedom and space to hear God's voice.

"Time in Taizé is more like a melodic, holy rhythm than the frenzied pace of everyday life. Three times a day visitors are called to prayer by the chiming of bells. The prayers are not like ordinary prayer meetings or worship services. Instead of coming together to talk *to* God, the community gathers to *listen*. Instead of talking about the Scripture, the Scripture is read and left to speak for itself in the silence. By singing simple songs of prayer over and over again, the mind calms and the soul opens up: God speaks and the heart hears ("The Spirit of Taizé" in *Worship Feast*, Abingdon Press, 2004).

Today our worship service is modeled after the style of worship which takes place in the Taizé community.

- This means we will be singing songs from Taizé. These are all songs that are brief and easy to learn, sung multiple times over in order that we move from learning the words to allowing these songs to become our prayers. As it says in the Introduction to the Taizé Songbook *Worship Feast*, "These songs are prayers for the heart to sing. Sing them. Memorize them. Let them play in your head and heart all day long. Let God speak deep into your heart through these songs."

- Worshiping in the style of Taizé also means that there will be more silence than we are used to. And the reality is that silence isn't something we are very comfortable with. So, I simply ask you to be gentle with yourself and with the others worshiping around you. You might feel challenged by the silence, but I invite you to give it a chance. Our periods of silence won't be as long as you would experience if you were at Taizé, but they might feel long. We will also give you more spoken prompts for periods of silent reflection than you might get there.

While we have kept many of the usual parts of our worship, we have worked to shape it into a form that helps give us a taste of the gift of Taizé...of space for listening, for seeking, and for finding God.

A Time of Reflection

During this part of the service we are invited to receive three different scripture readings. After each reading, there will be a short word of reflection as well as some questions to ponder. Then the scripture will be read again. After reading a scripture a second time there will be a period of silence for you to listen and to hear what is speaking to you. A chime will sound as that period of silence nears its end to allow you to prepare to hear another piece of scripture.

Scripture 1

I Kings, chapter 19, verses 11 through 13 reads:

[God] said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Questions to Ponder

Elijah looked for God in the wind and the earthquake and fire, but that was not where God was found. Perhaps we are like Elijah, looking for God in our busyness, in the catastrophic or sometimes in our success.

But where might we find God if we slow down? What might God have to say to us in the silence?

Let's hear the scripture reading again.

[God] said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind, and after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake, and after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire, and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Silence, ends with chime

Scripture 2

Hear these words from John, chapter 1 verses 35 through 39a: (Pause on video)

The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day.

Questions to Ponder

Jesus' ministry began with a simple question asked to two people who were following him: What are you looking for? Perhaps it is a question worth asking ourselves.

When we follow Jesus, what are we looking for? When we gather with community, what are we looking for? What are we seeking?

Let's hear the scripture reading again.

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Silence, ends with chime

Scripture 3

Our final reading comes from the Gospel of John, chapter 19, verses 19 through 22. It is a post-resurrection encounter between Jesus and the disciples. (Pause on video)

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

Questions to Ponder

Time and time again Jesus met the disciples with the words, "Peace be with you." They longed for peace and yet it was difficult to find. Perhaps we know that truth as well. And yet, in the midst of their fear and wondering, Jesus came and offered peace. Not only did he offer it to them, but he sent them out as agents of peace.

Where is God offering us peace? How can we hold onto that? How can we carry peace even into a hurting and broken world?

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Silence, ends with chime