

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you O God, my strength and my joy... Amen.

Today is an exciting day, as we will be welcoming new members later in this service.

A time that we have intentionally set aside to dwell together and to acknowledge both our diversity and our unity in Christ.

As we are united together through the incarnation of Christ... Through which life has been transformed.

As we heard Jesus say today, I am the way, and the truth, and the life...

Sacred words spoken by Jesus as he begins this statement with I AM... Which are the same sacred words God said to Moses... When Moses asked God what should we call you? ... God said ... I am...

And now Jesus takes I am and adds to it... Revealing that not only is Jesus, God by identifying as I am...

But Jesus, by becoming incarnated becomes something even more... Through living and dwelling among us, by dying and being resurrected for us, Jesus becomes the way, and the truth, and the life...

An invitation that is for all creation, because if Christ is life, then all are invited to dwell in him, because he already dwells in them.

Which may sound like I am talking in circles, but this cyclical way of thinking is all about dwelling... Dwelling in Christ and with one another.

Which, after all, is all about life.

Life that is complex and complicated. Life that always has a ton of moving parts.

Life that might not be what we think it is on first glance...

Life that requires patience and understanding, especially if we want to see the whole picture, or to understand things on a deeper level...

Life that we are called to live a certain way... Which is why Jesus also said that he is the way...

For example, my friend has a sticker that is of Jesus with a little blurb coming out of his mouth, saying... "I saw that!"

Because we are all human, we will make mistakes and we will fall short of how we are called to treat others...

But that doesn't mean that we should stop trying to live the way Jesus did... By following his teachings. By extending love and kindness to others. By welcoming others, and by living by Christ's example.

And since Christ is life and all life is lived in Christ... It then becomes up to us to make this truth known.

Which is why Jesus says that he is the truth... As there is no greater truth than life in Christ.

Life that we live with hope for the future and in the promise of what is yet to come.

Which is why Jesus paints us this beautiful picture of his Father's house. A place where there are many dwelling places... Where there is a place just for you...

And yet... so much of the focus of this passage is not on the afterlife, but it is on the life we are living now. Where Christ provides us encouragement through faith and hope.

For this passage is the start of the farewell discourse that Jesus has with his disciples...

As he is preparing the disciples for a time that we know very well...

A time when Jesus is no longer walking amongst us, but a time when Jesus still dwells with us.

Which then becomes an invitation for us to live and dwell with others... To live life together, to share this place with one another and to rejoice with God.

By coming together to welcome new members. By coming together to share in Christ's meal. By coming together by being in community.

Community where Christ is always at the center, and at the peripheries, and in every space in between... Because Christ's dwelling presence is here and is in each one of you.

God's love penetrates this planet and through the vastness of the cosmos.

Creating a place for you to dwell with God now and a place for you to dwell in God's kingdom, in the future, with all who have passed on before us.

As it is because of Christ that death no longer has the final word... Because Christ is life...

May you discover this good news of Christ over and over again.

May you live into His way, discover His truth and the goodness of life that God desires for you and for all of creation.

And may you share this truth through your words and actions. Where you will always find God's love to fill you and fuel you.

And if there are times you just can't seem to find God's dwelling presence... or during your times of struggle... Know that there are still tangible places where you can be in God's presence...

One for example, is this community...As there is always a place for you here.

Where you are held in my prayers and with one another...

Because this is a community of Christ... Where Christ is life and lives...

Amen.