

GETTING TO KNOW YOU - The music minister and I, decided that some of the Rodgers and Hammerstein songs we chose for this morning would be tough and perhaps inappropriate to sing in the spirit they were intended, in light of the news of the violence at a Trump Rally last night. Getting to Know You from "The King and I" is one of them. (Based on a true story, Anna is the teacher or tutor for the children of the King of Siam, and she sings the song to the children.) "Getting to know you" is actually one of the central goals of Christian fellowship, as Paul states in Ephesians 2:19 (we are "no longer strangers"). We have been combining churches and enjoying getting to know folks from the next town. However, rather than feeling "light and breezy," getting to know "all about you," our thoughts turn naturally to the divisive and once more violent conflicts within our country. Ephesians 2:19 refers to breaking down walls between strangers and enemies through the reconciling love of Christ. So we will begin worship today with GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY, using the words of Harry Emerson Fosdick to focus our thoughts on grace during a time of great conflict.

MY FAVORITE THINGS and I WHISTLE A HAPPY TUNE are also postponed; Everything about them is lighthearted, and while God and Jesus' intent for us is Joy, (Jesus said "I have come that your Joy may be full") this is a time with much sadness for our divided country, a time of prayer and dedication to the way of Jesus, that will always be a way of peacemaking amidst conflict. So we will now sing EDELWEISS, which can be interpreted as a song for peace; Captain VonTrapp sang it in the midst of the turmoil of Hitler taking over Austria. It reminds me of the song we often sing on national holidays... "other nations also have skies as blue as mine" ... people in other nations (and other political

persuasions!) also ponder the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. Edelweiss, as in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, about flowers and birds, is a song meant to connect people through awe for the beauty of nature, the beauty of the handiwork of a Creator God.

And now we chose to sing YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN. We are reminded in John 14 that the Peace Jesus gives is not "as the world gives." It is not peace forged with violent domination, but persistent proclamation of Jesus' way of love and grace. We cannot give in to the ways of retaliation and revenge, of striking others in fear. Jesus says clearly, "My peace is *not* as the world gives peace." As followers of Jesus, we are meant to model our lives after him, and the word Christian came about because it means "little Christs." His peace is "Peace through understanding," or in the case of politics, peace through negotiations and compromises. In the words oft used by a mentor of mine, we have to learn "to disagree without being disagreeable" (and certainly without being violent!).

Finally, we will sing Rodgers and Hammerstein's YOU'LL NEVER WALK ALONE. It reminds me of the words of the Risen Christ at the end of the gospel of Matthew, that he "will be with us until the close of the age." This promise is made real by the gift of the Holy Spirit, that reminds us of Jesus' teachings and Jesus' way in this world. The world was violent then and the "Pax Romana" was a Peace forged by force. Jesus taught another way to peace and harmony in society, and we can do the same. Let's face our current conflict and cries for retaliation and vengeance with the same peacemaking resolve that Jesus had, knowing that he walks with us to guide and strengthen us! Amen. (All Sing)