

Let Go: Leaving Behind What We Don't Need

Thursday Morning Worship
9:30 am - 10:30 am

Green Highlight (M) = Music

Purple Highlight (LS) = Lighting/Sound

Red Highlight (D) = Design

Orange Highlight (SD) = Stage Direction

Blue Lettering (B) = Text projected on screen

**** = People are asked to rise as they able**

SETTING THE SCENE

Video Announcements / Countdown Clock (LS)

Sounds/Music as people enter the space, imagery on screen (LS)

Chrysalis/butterfly development (D)

The outer green covering will have come off the chrysalis -
can't quite see what is underneath yet

There is a bowl of water on a stand in the center of the center aisle under the chrysalis

Introduction

"Moving Forward"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tvngl_8fpCQ

What a moment You have brought me to
Such a freedom I have found in You
You're a healer who makes all things new
Yeah, yeah, yeah
I'm not going back, moving ahead
I'm here to declare to you
My past is over
In You, all things are made new
Surrendered my life to Christ
I'm moving, moving forward
Oh

You have risen with all power in Your hands
You have given me a second chance

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Yeah, Yeah, Yeah
Yeah, Yeah, Yeah

[choir moves during this next congregational singing into position SD]

I'm not going back, moving ahead
I'm here to declare to you
My past is over
In You, all things are made new
Surrendered my life to Christ
I'm moving, moving forward
You make all things new
Yes, You make all things new
And I will follow you forward
(repeat 3 times) (B)

ACT ONE

Opening Prayer

Julius Kaggwa, Velma Garcia, Mario Bonfanti

*[Congregation begins to repeat these words softly as they are projected on the screen
echoing several leaders -
need translations in other languages] (SD / LS)*

Unfold me...
unfurl me...
untether me...
uncurl me...
uncrease me...
unwrap me...(B)

Velma Garcia:

*This Leader voice is strong and bold... memorized... embodied...
ends with arms stretched upward... percussion rhythm begins (SD)*

“God of ever-expanding love and possibilities
release us from all that holds us back from the creation you intend us to be!
Invite us to stretch our wings beyond our capacity to crawl back into limited lives.
For there is yearning we cannot deny!
There is a movement afoot!
There is a mighty hungerin’ in our souls!”

Opening Song**

"Hungerin' in My Soul"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XmJcKP2iKw>

Imagery of paint ... stripping/peeling back away to reveal something new (LS)

CHORUS: O Lord, There's a hungerin' in my soul (3x)
Fill it up, Lord, and make me whole.

As the deer pants for water,
So my soul pants for You.
Sometimes I'm feelin' so cast down
I don't know what to do.

In the day, let me feel Your love, Lord
In the night, let me hear Your song.
I will put my hope and faith in You to
Praise You my whole life long.
But now I'm singin':

CHORUS

You prepare a table before me
In the presence of my foes
When You pour Your blessings all over me,
My cup will overflow.

Surely goodness and mercy
Shall follow me all my days.
Then I will dwell in the house of the Lord
And forever sing God's praise.
But now I'm singin':

Chorus

(choir goes to seats as they sing reprise vamp;
Two soloists go to band area for next song)

Welcome
Marcia McFee & Jordan Decker:

Greetings, friends! I am Marcia McFee -

and I am Jordan Decker.

[Jordan] Although we are listed as the “preachers” for this service, we are really your Guides as we move forward with a hungering in our souls toward a promised land.

We have both experienced MCC as a place where it was safe to truly become who we are and stretch to the fullness of new potential - just like the butterfly begins to sense its calling. Expansion of its wings, however, means something profound—it cannot ever go back into the cocoon [*pic(s) of Jordan pre-transition*]. Not that we want to!

["I Will Change Your Name" piano begins under] (M)

[Marcia] Letting go of the past requires deep trust in the God who has promised to be with us always. Our scripture this morning joins the Israelites crossing over the Jordan river into the promised land. There are those among us who know deeply and personally about crossing over - our transgender siblings. And they know that once the crossing over begins, there is a letting go that needs to happen in order to move forward. They are Joshua for us. They are living testaments and can help us all know what it means to cross over into deeper authenticity and life.

"I Will Change Your Name/How Could Anyone Ever Tell You" mash-up (M)

I will change your name
You shall no longer be called
Wounded, outcast
Lonely or afraid
I will change your name
Your new name shall be
Confidence, joyfulness
Overcoming one
Faithfulness, friend of God
One who seeks my face.

How could anyone ever tell you
you were anything less than beautiful
How could anyone ever tell you
you were less than whole
How could anyone fail to notice

that your loving is a miracle
How deeply you're connected to my soul (B)

ACT TWO

Ancient and Contemporary Proclamation of the Word

Joshua 3

[woven between testimonies]

Narrator

Lee Faelnar:

[soft drums under scripture readings]

“Early in the morning Joshua rose and set out from Shittim with all the Israelites, and they came to the Jordan. They camped there before crossing over. At the end of three days the officers went through the camp and commanded the people, “When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being carried by the levitical priests, then you shall set out from your place. Follow it, so that you may know the way you should go, for you have not passed this way before. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, a distance of about two thousand cubits; do not come any nearer to it.” Then Joshua said to the people, “Sanctify yourselves; for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you.”

[drums fade]

Story of Crossing Over - *Beth Kind*

As a biologist for many years, too many to mention, I've had the wonderful opportunity to study organisms with diverse traits, adaptation abilities that allow for incredible survival in harsh, stressful environments, and some with vulnerabilities that have resulted in their demise. Spending most of my lifetime not sure where I belonged on the gender spectrum made me feel like one of those vulnerable ones. Living in secret, hiding in shadows, living a life of lies to myself and those close to me, wondering if my demise was just waiting around the corner. When I realized that the DNA I have been woven with is so unique, and comes from a higher place, a place I call God, I began to explore what amazing opportunities I have to be a positive influence on those in my family, my community and our world. I have emerged. Indeed, God has done wonders among us.

“Beautiful Things” (chorus)

You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of us. (B)

Narrator:

To the priests Joshua said, “Take up the ark of the covenant, and pass on in front of the people.” So they took up the ark of the covenant and went in front of the people. The Lord said to Joshua, “This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, so that they may know that I will be with you as I was with Moses. You are the one who shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, ‘When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, you shall stand still in the Jordan.’”

**Story of Crossing Over -
Jordan Decker**

Take up the truth. There came a time where I had to bear the truth of who I was—not just in my mind and soul—but in my body as well. There came a point when the pain of staying who I was on the outside became greater than the pain of losing everything to live authentically. I remember that I used to say “My name is [insert old, dead name here].” But authenticity brought me to say “I AM Jordan.” There were many revelations like that along the way, holy moments of standing still in the waters of authenticity, of giving birth to new life. I invite you to think about having the “audacity of authenticity”—whatever that is for you. And when you come to the edge of crossing over, in that moment of birthing, stand still in the waters and know by Divine Grace you are not alone.

“Beautiful Things” (chorus)

You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of us. (B)

Narrator: Joshua then said to the Israelites, “Draw near and hear the words of the Lord your God.” Joshua said, “By this you shall know that among you is the living God who without fail will drive out from before you the [opposition]: the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth is going to pass before you into the Jordan. So now select twelve from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. When the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, rest in the waters of the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan flowing from above shall be cut off; they shall stand in a single heap.”

**Story of Crossing Over -
Marcia McFee**

“So many transgender persons are cut off. From the love of family, from jobs, from safety. In this story, the waters are cut off so that the people can pass through safely... But even in this story, the crossing over implies loss. Loss of familiarity, loss of what they knew. Even though you know the promised land is going to be good stuff, the crossing over is hard. As the spouse of a trans person, besides joy at witnessing new life, it is also a death. We as family and friends have a different journey to take, one that includes grief, unknowing, deep and profound uncertainty. There was nothing in me that didn't want him to walk into that promised land of true authenticity. But there was some letting go that had to happen. So be prepared. Crossing over means also letting go. But in the end I can tell you that letting go, painful as it can be, is nothing compared to the jubilee of deep truth and love without boundaries.”

“Beautiful Things” (chorus)

You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of us. (B)

Narrator:

When the people set out from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests bearing the ark of the covenant were in front of the people. Now the Jordan overflows all its banks throughout the time of harvest. So when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the edge of the water, the waters flowing from above stood still, rising up in a single heap far off at Adam, the city that is beside Zarethan, while those flowing toward the sea of the Arabah, the Dead Sea, were wholly cut off. Then the people crossed over opposite Jericho. While all Israel were crossing over on dry ground, the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, until the entire nation finished crossing over the Jordan.

**Story of Crossing Over -
Person TBC**

[to be replaced by Person reading]

I had already started my transition journey when I arrived... My feet were wet and I was standing in the River wading around. In a quiet room hunkered down on my phone with my counselor in the midst of a church at battle I chose authenticity. The realization of

loss was gradual and sometimes overwhelming but this group and a few progressive Christians all over the globe have made that loss less painful and have opened doors so I could cross on dry land. We carry the Covenant of Truth and the precious quality of that truth must be honored, lifted up, exalted AND held close. And for this task we have been made beautiful... let go and let the beauty unfold.

“Beautiful Things” (*full song*)

Verse 1:

All this pain,
I wonder if I'll ever find my way;
I wonder if my life could really change at all.

Verse 2:

All this earth,
Could all that is lost ever be found?
Could a garden come up from this ground at all?

Chorus:

You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of the dust.
You make beautiful things,
You make beautiful things out of us. **(B)**

*Continue musical underscore as the invitation is made,
then continue with song as people come **(M)***

ACT THREE

Invitation to the Journey

Marcia & Jordan:

Marcia: Transitions take many forms. High profile gender transitions of late have perhaps given the impression that the only transition is from one expression of gender to another. But we all know that the complexity of humanity is a much more beautifully-arrayed story. The transitions we honor this morning are diverse. Crossing over doesn't need to mean from one polarity to another. It most powerfully means overcoming a kind of colonization of the authentic self by beliefs and/or appearances, often stereotyped, that are not truly OF us.

Jordan: I invite any here who are willing to publicly be thanked for being willing to stand in the river of authenticity, identifying as transgender, gender-fluid, gender-free, gender-queer, non-binary or pan-gender, transitioned or not, or any other trans-identifier - to come to the center under this chrysalis - this symbol of transformation.

Marcia: And know that if you are not comfortable being recognized at this moment or are struggling to understand where you are on the journey, the Spirit knows... and the Spirit blesses right where you are." *[people come, song continues]*.

“Beautiful Things” (full song)

Verse 3

All around,
Hope is springing up from this old ground;
Out of chaos life is being found in You.

Chorus
Chorus

Bridge:

You make me new, You are making me new.
You make me new, You are making me new.

Chorus
Chorus

Marcia:

“I invite everyone to extend their hands in blessing towards these persons.

Holy and Living God,
you of no name and many names,
we praise you for we were all formed in your womb!
Indeed, we know we are complex and intricate beings
awesomely and wonderfully made!
Today, we celebrate, acknowledge and embrace our transgender siblings!
And we remember our transgender siblings who have lost their lives living as the
Creator intended for them to live!*

For the transphobia of the church, and indeed our own,
in this silence, we confess.”

[pause]

“Turn us toward greater understanding, fervant advocacy
and heartfelt joy at the full spectrum of our diversity.

Amen!”

“My friends, your response to this next question is the word “beloved!”
“What name is given to these children of God?”
Beloved!”

Marcia & Jordan:

Jordan: The invitation to journey in the river, to let go into God’s future, comes back to the whole body because in addition to the complexity of gender-related transitions, the people in this room represent other transitions as well.

What needs to be left behind in *your* life so that you might cross over into fuller authenticity of love, of life, of relationship?

Marcia: Who are you REALLY? Are you ready to leave fear and a wide variety of phobias and ism’s behind? I invite you to stand in body and/or spirit. And as you stand there, begin to feel the current, the flow, of the living water around you. If it helps to close your eyes, I invite you to do that. What is being washed away? What is being replenished?

Intro to song begins

As the next song begins, stand in body or spirit as long as you need to in that image, and sit when you are ready.”

“Come To The Water”

by Kristian Stanfill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9X0fBn8-SwY> (shorter than this video)

[idea: have bowls of water and branch sprigs and invite the trans-identified persons to go around the room sprinkling people during the song]

Verse 1:

Oh, come, come to the water all who are thirsty, come and be filled.
Oh, come, come to the river, brothers and sisters, Come and be healed.

Verse 1:

Chorus:

We believe in the kingdom come, we believe in the risen Son.
You bring our hearts to life.
Lord, we come with our hands up high. We believe You will satisfy.
You bring our hearts to life. You bring our hearts to life.
We are alive. We are alive.

Verse 2:

Oh, see, the people returning, the love of the Maker drawing us in.
Oh, sing: Salvation coming, Jesus our Savior,
Light of the world. Light of the world.

Chorus

Bridge:

Let revival come, let the people sing the glory of Your name.
Let revival come, let the people sing the glory of Your name.

Bridge

Bridge

Offering

Rainbow Railroad

Shelly Morris:

[Shelly has not quite finished this yet - but will adapt the below keeping within the time limit]

Rainbow Railroad was formed in 2006 by a group of grass roots activists. Their purpose is simple – help LGBT people escape the persecution they face in their home countries. They set up local networks in countries all over the world and they provide LGBT people with three things:

1. Information on the routes to safety and the resources available.
2. Moral support and, when funds permit, short-term financial support to LGBT people living in hiding before travel.
3. The means to travel to safe countries in North America and Europe and then a connection to settlement agencies once they arrive.

MCC Toronto is the only charitable organization in Canada to be a formal Sponsorship Agreement Holder with the federal government exclusively focused on settling LGBT refugees. We work very closely with Rainbow Railroad and we know firsthand, the incredible impact they have. They receive hundreds of requests for help every year. Unfortunately, due to their limited resources, their focus has to be on assisting LGBT people in the most dire situations. To date, they've save over 70 lives but there are so many more lives to save. Please give generously to this organization – together, we truly can save lives.

Video about Rainbow Railroad

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BxXr7A3lyXA> (LS)

Offering Song

"I Am Free"

<http://youtu.be/OggJ1pIPxUE>

Verse:

Through You the blind will see; Through You the mute will sing;
Through You the dead will rise; Through You all hearts will praise;
Through You the darkness flees;
Through You my heart screams I am free.

Chorus:

I am free to run. (I am free to run.)
I am free to dance. (I am free to dance.)
I am free to live for You. (I am free to live for You.)
I am free. (I am free.)
I am free. (I am free.)

Chorus

Verse

Chorus

Instrumental section

Chorus

Chorus (B)

Instrumental ending

Announcements -

Roland Stringfellow

Closing Song**

[just reprise "I Am Free" as people go]