

Gathering Together in Prayer Opening Devotion for CRE 2024



I Love to Tell the Story ELW #661

1 I love to tell the story
of unseen things above,
of Jesus and his glory,
of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story,
because I know it's true;
it satisfies my longings
as nothing else would do.

Refrain

I love to tell the story;
I'll sing this theme in glory
and tell the old, old story
of Jesus and his love.

2 I love to tell the story:
how pleasant to repeat
what seems, each time I tell it,
more wonderfully sweet!
I love to tell the story,
for some have never heard
the message of salvation
from God's own holy
word. *Refrain*

3 I love to tell the story,
for those who know it best
seem hungering and thirsting
to hear it like the rest.
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
I'll sing the old, old story
that I have loved so
long. *Refrain*

Opening Responses

Come in, feel your feet on the floor, settle your worries. Take a deep breath. Dust the cobwebs from your ears. Relax the tension in your jaw.

For Christ is here.

Silence for reflection

In the beginning before time, before people, before the world began.

God dwelled.

Here and now among us, beside us, enlisting the people of earth for the purposes of heaven.

God invites.

In the future, when we have turned to dust and all we know has found its fulfillment.

God remains.

Not denying the world, but delighting in it, not condemning the world, but redeeming it, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

God dwelled. God invites. God remain

Reading Colossians 3:14-17

Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Christ.

Biblical Reflection

1. Who are the people, or where in the world, do you feel need to be “clothed with love”?
2. What do you need to openly or confidently speak about your faith with others?

Prayer

As we wrap up our conversations, as we settle our hearts, we join in prayer together...

Let us pray.

Throughout this day, enliven our minds, inspire our conversation, inform our decisions, and protect those who love. And should today being what we neither anticipate nor desire, increase our faith and decrease our pride until we know that, when we face the unexpected, we do not stand alone. Receive these prayers made in the presence and in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.