

# SAMITEE

SACRED ALTARS  
AND  
**HOLY OFFERINGS**

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## THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

*AME Discipline*

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SAMPLE



# Cain and Abel Offer Sacrifice

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 4:1-25

Focus Scripture: Genesis 4:1-16

**KEY VERSES:** The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?” Genesis 4:6-7a

## WORDS TO KNOW

**COUNTENANCE** – a person’s facial expression.

**FUGITIVE** – a person who has escaped from a place or is in hiding, especially to avoid arrest or persecution.

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 4:1-16*

- 1 Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the Lord."
- 2 Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground.
- 3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground,
- 4 and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering,
- 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.
- 6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?"
- 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."
- 8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.
- 9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"
- 10 And the Lord said, "What have you done? Listen, your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!
- 11 And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.
- 12 When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."
- 13 Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!
- 14 Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me."
- 15 Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him.
- 16 Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever started off trying to do something that was good and somehow ended up angry or feeling other emotions that caused you to do something just the opposite instead? What were you trying to do? What changed? What was the result? In today's lesson, we encounter the story of two brothers and what happened to them after they both began by doing the seemingly good thing of making offerings to God. As we go through the story, keep track of your own memories and feelings. Try to put yourself in the place of each of these brothers.

## BIBLE STORY

The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, become the parents of two sons, Cain and Abel. They both grow up and begin their work in life, Cain as a farmer and Abel as a shepherd, keeping sheep. These are perhaps two of the oldest professions. In early agricultural societies, these were different but both important for the survival of the family and community. Just as God had a relationship with their parents, God sought to be in a relationship with these brothers.

It seems that the brothers wanted to be in relationship with God since both brought offerings to God. They brought offerings from the work that they did. Cain as a farmer brought "fruits of the soil" and Abel, as a shepherd, brought "firstlings of his flock."

The problem begins when God likes Abel's offering better than Cain's. Cain becomes angry and jealous, so much so until it is "written all over his face." God asks him what is the matter. Cain allows his anger to grow until he plots and kills his brother, Abel. God, knowing what Cain has done, asks him where Abel is. Cain responds, "Am I my brother's keeper?" *What do you think motivates Cain's answer to God? How would you answer Cain's question?*

God tells Cain that there are consequences to his actions. He will be banished from his family and community. Cain fears that if he is outside of his family and community, he will be a target for



the very violence that he has committed on his brother—others might kill him. God marks him with protection so that no one will harm him. Cain is sent away but with protection. Unchecked feelings led to violence and caused death, pain, and a split in the family. It all started from actions of sacrifice that solely should have been done to the glory of God.

## SANKOFA

This quarter looks at the theme of sacrifice. In the AME Church, there is a long history of sacrifices made to ensure that AMEs and other people in the African diaspora especially were able to pursue the highest levels of education. This quarter we will take an AMEC higher education tour across the USA and Africa.

### Stop 1: Wilberforce University



**WILBERFORCE**  
UNIVERSITY

Wilberforce University is the nation's oldest private, historically black university owned and operated by African Americans. Its roots trace back to its founding in 1856, a period of American history marred by the physical bondage of people of African descent. It was also a period when the education of African Americans was not only socially prohibited but was illegal. There was nothing about the prevailing social and cultural ethos of the era that suggested that African Americans might or should be taught or could learn. Yet a powerful idea assumed life and Wilberforce University was born. The founding of Wilberforce University represented a bold, audacious, and visionary example of what could happen when men and women of goodwill transcended race and the prevailing social and cultural constructs and norms to pursue a noble purpose.

Wilberforce University was named for the great eighteenth century abolitionist William Wilberforce, who said, "We are too young to realize that certain things are impossible... So, we will do them anyway." It was this can-do spirit that infused Wilberforce University with strength to persevere, and the institution met with early success through 1862. The outbreak



of the Civil War forced the school to temporarily close its doors. This short setback did not deter the institution for long. In March 1863, Daniel A. Payne, a bishop in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, negotiated to purchase the buildings, and the university was re-incorporated on July 10, 1863. Bishop Payne opened the doors of the university with six students and a debt of \$10,000 and became the first person of African descent to be the president of an American institution of higher learning. Wilberforce University prospered as young African Americans sought to educate themselves after the ending of the Civil War promised a new social order. On April 21, 1865, a headline in the *New York Times* announced that Wilberforce University was destroyed by fire. Yet, Wilberforce recovered, endured, and continued to grow. Throughout its history, Wilberforce University has demonstrated a formidable spirit of resilience and triumph and has never wavered from its sacred duty to educate and enrich its students.

Learn more at: <https://wilberforce.edu>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

The attitude and where your heart is matters as much as the kind of gift or sacrifice that you make. Motive matters. How you respond even to negative feelings says a lot about how mature you are as a person and how mature you are in your faith walk. We cannot control how others will always react to actions we take. We cannot even control how we feel because of their reactions. However, we do have control over what actions we take.

Some will tell us that difference and diversity are bad things and things we do not need. It depends on how we view difference and the attitudes and actions we take when faced with difference. God made us all to be different. Diversity in our family, our church, our community, our world, and even nature should be seen as a gift from God.

### Family but Different

In the chart on the next page, list ways that these brothers were different from each other. Then do the same for you and

your sibling or friend.

CAIN	ABEL
ME	

If you have siblings, how are you alike? How is your relationship with other family members compared to your sibling's relationship with them? Have these differences ever caused conflict?

## SUMMARY

Our lesson today is proof that family drama has existed since the very first family on earth. Difference can be a gift given by God; but, if our attitudes toward difference lead to negative feelings, even the act of offering gifts to God can lead to pain, suffering, and separation.

Questions:

- ❖ What does the story of Cain and Abel teach us about the importance and consequences of our actions and attitudes?
- ❖ What does the story of Cain and Abel teach us about the importance of sacrifice? In what way(s) are you being called to make a sacrifice to/for God?
- ❖ Who has made sacrifices for you and in what ways did they do so? How have you or how can you respond to the sacrifices made for you?
- ❖ What does this lesson teach us about God?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

Hymn: "Give of Your Best to the Master"  
(AMEC Hymnal # 551)

Tune: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/182023>

**Prayer:** *Gracious God, as others have built altars and made sacrifices to you because of your goodness and faithfulness, help us make altars in our hearts and give us courage to make the necessary sacrifices that will give praise and witness to you. We pray in the name of Jesus, the perfect sacrifice. Amen.*

# Noah Builds an Altar

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 6:1–9:17

Focus Scripture: Genesis 8:13-22; 9:11-13

**KEY VERSE:** [God said,] “I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”  
Genesis 9:13

## WORDS TO KNOW

**ALTAR** – a table or flat-topped block used as the focus for a religious ritual, especially for making sacrifices or offerings to a deity.

**COVENANT** – an agreement; a legal contract.

*GENESIS 8:13-22; 9:11-13***GENESIS 8:13-22** .....

- 13** In the six hundred first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked and saw that the face of the ground was drying.
- 14** In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry.
- 15** Then God said to Noah,
- 16** “Go out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and your sons’ wives with you.
- 17** Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.”
- 18** So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives.
- 19** And every animal, every creeping thing, and every bird, everything that moves on the earth, went out of the ark by families.
- 20** Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.
- 21** And when the Lord smelled the pleasing odor, the Lord said in his heart, “I will never again curse the ground because of humans, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.
- 22** As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease.”

**9:11-13** .....

- 11** “I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”
- 12** God said, “This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations:
- 13** I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.”

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever heard the expression, “an attitude of gratitude”? When you have an attitude of gratitude you are thankful for things, people, and situations. They may be small or life changing. Gratitude causes you to act in certain ways and do certain things. Have you ever gone through something that was major, perhaps horrifying, or even exciting and thrilling? What did you do after that? Did you do something that would help you remember that thing? Did you do something to show how grateful you were because of it? After the great flood, Noah was grateful and found a way to show his gratitude.

## BIBLE STORY

God was so upset with the evilness and disobedience in the world until God sent a great flood. Only Noah, Noah’s family, and the living things that were in the ark were saved. Our lesson picks up when the floodwaters receded. At that point, Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw that the earth was dry. When he went onto dry ground, Noah built an altar and offered sacrifices to the Lord. This act of gratitude and worship so pleased God until God promised never again to curse the ground or destroy all living things with a flood. God established the seasons as a sign of this covenant.

*Does gratitude matter to you? Why do you think gratitude and worship matter to God?*

God was moved; and, God remembered. Our scripture passage emphasizes God’s faithfulness and remembrance of Noah and his family, even after the flood.

God established a covenant with Noah and all living things, promising never to destroy the earth with water again. God even gave a sign, the rainbow in the sky. Whenever we see a rainbow in the sky, we can be reminded of God’s promise to us and all creation.

The rainbow serves as a symbol of God’s faithfulness and a reminder that God has promised never to destroy the earth with

a flood again. God's promises are true. We can trust and depend on them even when we face difficulties and challenges?

*Have you had something to happen to you that proved to you that God's promises are true and trustworthy?*

## SANKOFA

This quarter looks at the theme of sacrifice. In the AME Church, there is a long history of sacrifices made to ensure that AMEs and other people in the African diaspora especially were able to pursue the highest levels of education. This quarter we will take an AMEC higher education tour across the USA and Africa.

### Stop 2: Edward Waters University



Edward Waters University is a private Christian historically black university in Jacksonville, Florida. It was founded in 1866 by members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) as a school to educate freedmen and their children.

It was the first independent institution of higher education and the first historically black college in the state of Florida. It continues to be affiliated with the AME Church and is a member of the Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida. It is named for the third bishop in the AME Church.

The original Edward Waters University campus was destroyed by the Great Fire of 1901. By 1904, the college obtained new land, and work was started on the new facility. Edward Waters was accredited as a junior college in 1955 under President William B. Stewart and five years later had a restored four-year curriculum. Beginning in 1979, the school was accredited as a four-year institution by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and started awarding bachelor's degrees.

Learn more at: <https://www.ew.edu>



## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Today is Pentecost. Just like God made a covenant, a promise, with Noah and the people to not destroy the world with water again, Jesus promised his disciples when he was about to physically leave the earth that he would send the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. God keeps God's promises because God loves us and desires what is best for us and to give us what is best.

Many call Pentecost the "Birthday of the Church" because the Holy Spirit came down and fell upon the apostles and all of those gathered from many different places.

*Why do you think it mattered that these people from different places were gathered together?*

Up until this point, the good news of Jesus had been kept really close.

But on the day of Pentecost, all these people were gathered from all over in Jerusalem.

After experiencing the Holy Spirit, nothing is the same because you are not the same.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote in his journal these words: "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

The Holy Spirit is the very spirit of God. When this Spirit comes, amazing things happen.

People are changed.

Remember Peter denied Jesus three times and then the rooster crowed?

Peter walked out to Jesus on the water, but then got scared and began to sink. Read what happened to Peter after he experienced the Holy Spirit.

**Read Acts 2:14-31**

## **SUMMARY**

We may not ever build an ark or an altar; but, our worship should be inspired because of our gratitude for all of who God is and all of what God does. Gratitude matters. It inspires others to respond favorably to us. Showing gratitude makes others feel good and appreciated. Gratitude that inspires sincere and selfless worship has the power to move God. God made a promise to not destroy the earth, giving the rainbow as a sign of the covenant.

*Can you think of a promise that God has kept to you? Write a thank you note to God for keeping that promise.*

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## **CLOSING DEVOTIONS**

Hymn: "Spirit of the Living God"  
(AMEC Hymnal #619)

***Prayer:** Gracious God, just as your rainbow was a sign of your covenant with and promise to your children, we thank you for your promised Holy Spirit which gives us power to be Christ's disciples. We thank you for the birthday of the church, your witness in the world. Amen.*

# Abraham Makes an Offering

Lesson Scripture: Genesis 22:1-19

Focus Scripture: Genesis 22:1-14

**KEY VERSE:** Abraham called that place “The Lord will provide,” as it is said to this day, “On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” Genesis 22:14

## WORDS TO KNOW

**JIREH** – Hebrew word that means “to see,” “to provide,” or “to foresee.” “Jehovah Jireh,” which is often translated as “the LORD will provide” and, when used as a name, “the LORD my provider.”

**TRUST** – to have confidence in, to feel that you can rely on or believe in.

*FOCUS SCRIPTURE: GENESIS 22:1-14*

- 1 After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."
- 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you."
- 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt offering and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him.
- 4 On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away.
- 5 Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you."
- 6 Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. And the two of them walked on together.
- 7 Isaac said to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"
- 8 Abraham said, "God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.
- 9 When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.
- 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son.
- 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am."
- 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."
- 13 And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son.
- 14 So Abraham called that place "The Lord will provide," as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

## INTRODUCTION

What do you love? Is it something that you thought you would never have or something that it took a long time to get? Who do you really love? What would you do for them? What if God required you to sacrifice that beloved thing? Could you do it? Would you do it?

Before we dive into the scripture, we should play a game to help us think about trust. Let's pair up with a partner and have one person wear a blindfold. The other person will guide their blindfolded partner around the room using only their voice. If time permits, everyone can have a turn, then we gather back together and discuss:

- ❖ How did it feel to be the blindfolded person?
- ❖ How did it feel to be the guide?
- ❖ What does this activity teach us about trust?

## BIBLE STORY

Abraham and Sarah waited so long for a child together. For a long time, they thought that this would be impossible. However, God answered their prayers; and, Isaac was born. The impossible was now real and living and growing. Imagine how Abraham must have felt when God asks him to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. God was essentially asking Abraham to murder the son that he had waited so long for and whom he loved dearly. God's request seems impossible to understand, but Abraham still set out and prepares to obey it down to the last horrible step.

Despite the difficulty of God's request, Abraham shows his obedience by immediately preparing for the terrible journey. Perhaps since God had kept God's promises to Abraham before, Abraham shows faith in God's promise again, telling his servants that they will both return after worshiping. Even the boy Isaac questions where the lamb for the sacrifice is, and once again Abraham expresses his trust in God's provision, "The Lord will provide." At perhaps the last possible moment, God stops Abraham and provides a ram for the sacrifice, showing God's faithfulness to provide.

## SANKOFA

This quarter looks at the theme of sacrifice. In the AME Church, there is a long history of sacrifices made to ensure that AMEs and other people in the African diaspora especially were able to pursue the highest levels of education. This quarter we will take an AMEC higher education tour across the USA and Africa.

### Stop 3: Allen University



Founded in 1870 in Cokesbury, Allen University is now celebrating its 154 years. It is a comparatively small, faith-based institution that makes a

huge impact not only on the lives of the students it serves, but their families, society, and the community where the university operates. The university has been doing so from its home in Columbia since 1880 where its estimated financial impact exceeds \$30 million per year. The key facet of the journey for students is an education that teaches the mind to think, the hands to work, and the heart to love. What sets the university apart is that from the very outset, it has provided a quality education for students who may not have had the traditional preparation and means to afford one. From only one of three law schools among HBCUs at the turn of the 20th century, the university has graduated legions of educators, clergymen, and elected officials.

The university enrolls a population with varying levels of academic preparation that is primarily first generation, and Pell Grant eligible. The largest areas of study are business, social sciences, and biology. Graduate programs are also offered in religion. Traditionally, 90% of the student body originates from the southeastern United States, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia. All South Carolina counties and thirty-four states are represented in the student body, as well as international students from eight countries.

The core of the campus is comprised of buildings listed on the register of historic places. They add to the high aesthetic quotient of the campus along with other facilities that are more than fifty

years old. The Carver Theater and the Good Samaritan-Waverly Hospital are also a part of the university's historic facilities. A mainstay over the history of the institution has been educational programs for persons pursuing careers of service to the greater good. Today, it continues to produce graduates who regularly achieve "All That Can Be Imagined."

Learn more at: <https://allenniversity.edu/>

## REAL TALK, FAITH WALK

Our God is so big and great until we cannot always understand everything that God does or even asks of us. People often describe God as a mystery, someone that we cannot fully know or understand. In many of our churches, we celebrate one of the biggest mysteries of God—the Holy Trinity. We believe that God is ONE in THREE—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.

*What does it mean to create something or someone? How does God create (examples)?*

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*What does it mean to redeem something or someone? How does God redeem (examples)?*

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*What does it mean to sustain something or someone? How does God sustain (examples)?*

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While we may not fully understand the Holy Trinity or other very wonderful and mysterious things about God, we do believe that we can trust God, even if God asks us to sacrifice or asks us to trust in order to do what we might believe initially is impossible.



## SUMMARY

Abraham trusted God so much so until he was willing to do what for so many would be the unthinkable. He trusted God and God proved Abraham to be correct and justified in his trusting. God provided what was needed right when it was needed—a sacrifice instead of Isaac. God may call us to make some sacrifices that are less extreme but may feel major and big to us. Can we trust God?

Questions:

- ❖ What is the evidence from our experiences that we can trust God?
- ❖ In what ways has God provided for you—maybe doing it just at the right time?
- ❖ Are there things that God may be calling you to sacrifice right now? If so, what?

## CLOSING DEVOTIONS

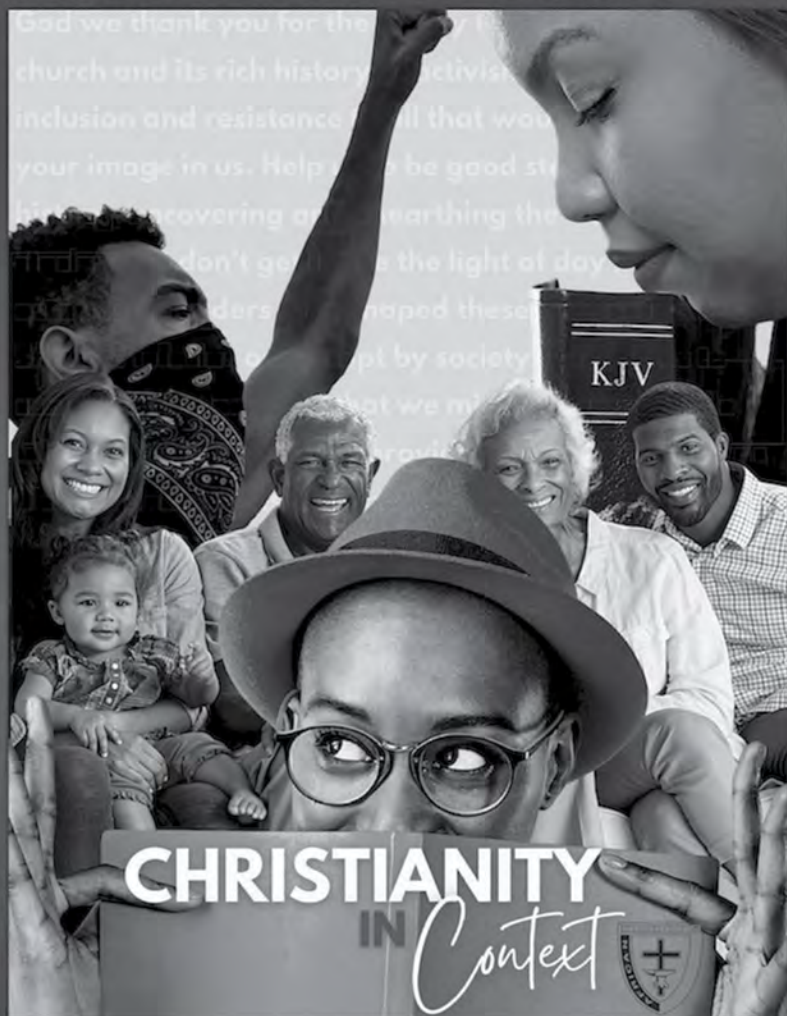
Hymn: “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”  
(AMEC Hymnal #25)

Tune: <https://hymnary.org/media/fetch/182023>

**Prayer:** *Holy God, we study to know you better. Help us to be willing to make the necessary sacrifices for you. You are God, our Father and Creator, Son, our Redeemer, and Holy Spirit, our Keeper. We praise you as Three in One and all that you are to us. Amen.*



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