

Before we get started, I'd like to call your attention to something. In your worship guide, right after the call to worship, you'll find the chiming of the hour followed by something called the "ministry of silence." Every Sunday in this sanctuary we have a short time of silence. It's right there, intentionally included, every single week. But we've gotten so accustomed to having this quiet moment week after week, that we may need to remind ourselves why it's there. I like to think that it's a time to rest in God's presence, but if you're like me, your mind may wander during these times of silence. You're silently looking at your shoes and you notice some markings on the floor. Pretty soon you're remembering how the sanctuary used to be smaller and how the wall was here and the chancel used to be over there. And from there you start thinking about the good old days and feeling a little anxious about all this change going on. But if we're intentional about resting in God's presence, we can practice using this silence as a prayer – a prayer of abandonment. Not "abandonment" as in you feel like God has abandoned you, but more like throwing yourself into Love with great abandon...as in abandoning your soul into God's hands...surrendering yourself completely into Love's great embrace. We do this in silence by putting a stick in the spokes of the wheel of thinking. When we are silent, we intentionally consent to NOT do something; we stop trying to make sense of things and we look into the mystery. Silence asks us to stand still. It asks us to stop our busy-ness, our frantic activity, our self-absorbed thinking and doing. We surrender control, we enter the unknown and we wait. In silence we choose to abandon ourselves.