

Unsettled But Unafraid: A Liturgy For Worshipping At Home

Week of April 12, 2020 (Easter Sunday)

St. Simons Presbyterian Church

Although we are not able to gather in-person for worship, we are able to gather in spirit. This simple resource is designed to help us worship together around a common liturgy and theme during this time of disruption from our normal routines and places. Use this liturgy individually or as a family. If you are using it in a family setting, consider giving each person one part to “lead”. Take some time to consider the reflection questions. If using individually, try to carve out 10-minutes to quietly read, reflect, and pray through. Liturgy this week written by Kate Buckley, Parish Associate for Visitation and Congregational Care. Reflection by Rev. Annie Franklin Arvin.

Opening Sentences

Can these bones live?

○ Lord God, you alone know.

- Ezekiel 37:3

Psalm 130:1, 5-8

Out of the depths I cry to you, ○ Lord. .

**I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;**

my soul waits for the Lord

**more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.**

○ Israel, hope in the Lord!

**For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.**

It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Scripture – Luke 24:13-25

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles¹⁴ from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one

to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” ²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection Questions

- What conversations are you having in these days as we walk this unfamiliar road? When you sense Jesus drawing near?
- Where has your heart burned within you and tugged at you for you to open your eyes to what God is doing in the world?
- The disciples on the road urge Jesus strongly to stay with them. Is their hospitality to a stranger the precursor to their eyes being opened to recognize Jesus?
- Jesus is with the disciples all along the road. He “draws near” to them. He speaks with them. He interprets Scripture with them. He stays with them (at their invitation). He shares table with them; blessing, breaking bread, and feeding them. And then he is gone.
- How can we invite Jesus in? Is there a circle we keep too secure and too close that our Lord can’t show up? How do we show hospitality in this time and in this day?

Closing Prayer

God of the empty tomb,

We give you such praise and thanks for your immense love. We trust your timing and your good will for all of your complex and beautiful Creation. Even on days when we wake up to fog, confusion, and fear, help us to remember that you draw near to us. Open our eyes to you on the road with us. Help us to see that we never walk alone. Incite in us a security that comes from knowing that though our glimpses of you are

fleeting, you know us and you sustain us. Even when we are huddled, gossiping and panicky, in our isolated bubbles of doubt. You are on this journey with us. In front of our very eyes. We thank you for the sacrificial love of your only Son. We thank you for an empty tomb. We thank you for glimpses of your presence. We thank you for the Holy Spirit in her brilliant timing and creative breezes of clarity. May we be your Easter people. This day and always, Amen.

A Prayer for the Week:

God, You are not the mystery for me to understand,
but the mystery that seems to best understand all the mysteries in me.
You do not make sense to me but rather make sense of me.

When we step out into the waters of faith,
or travel along a wilderness road,
help us to sense not certainty, but stability that comes from You.

When we feel in danger of being duped
and when we desire control, draw near to us, draw us near to you,
that we might participate in your intentions of joy and delight.
Help us to respond to daily events not with cynicism, but instead with wonder.

God, save us from our realism that seeks to understand.
Stir in us instead the foolish, courageous, and tender commitment to hope.
To hope in what we cannot grasp or own, your good plans for our future.

In Christ's name, Amen.

-Adapted from Austin Fischer's *Faith in the Shadows*

“He is risen.”

A Reflection by Rev. Annie Franklin Arvin

“He is risen!
He is risen indeed!”

When I think of Easter, it is this call to worship that I think of: “He is risen. He is risen indeed!”

I've been mourning all the things this Easter Sunday won't have: sunrise at the pier, the flowering cross, the Easter bunny, a church potluck, and singing “Jesus Christ Has Risen Today”

at the top of my lungs and praying I remembered to turn the microphone off. But then I think, “He is risen. He is risen INDEED!”

This Easter, the word “indeed” seems to have taken on a whole new meaning as we spend Easter morning under a stay at home order rather than gathered together.

I remember one of the first Holy Weeks after I felt called to ministry. I was stressing over all the things the church had to do in order for Jesus to rise on Easter. After naming off my long to-do list, a very wise pastor reminded me that Jesus is going to rise whether or not that to-do list gets crossed off. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary will find that tomb empty with or without that church potluck, the Easter bunny, sunrise at the pier, or singing that hymn with the backing of the chancel ensemble. He is risen indeed! Of course, Jesus has risen and we had nothing to do with it. Jesus rises no matter what.

In the verses just before our reading in today’s liturgy, Luke 24:1-12, is the story of the women finding their friend’s body missing from the grave. They went to the tomb with perfume and oils, but they found the stone rolled away. They wonder where their friend’s body is until they find two men were standing there dressed in bright clothing. These two men remind the women what they’ve known all along—that Jesus was always going to be raised, just like he told them in Galilee. He is risen indeed!

This year we are celebrating Easter without traditions that we know and LOVE, yet Jesus is still raised from the dead conquering sin and death and bringing a people unworthy into eternal life. A global pandemic cannot stop Jesus being raised because Jesus was always going to be raised. God is more powerful than death and Jesus brings us into new life in Christ.

Friends, Jesus Christ is risen today and the resurrected Lord continues to be at work in the world teaching the way of love and hope this day and forevermore. He is risen. He is risen, indeed! Alleluia! Amen.