

Unsettled But Unafraid: A Liturgy For Worshipping At Home

Week of March 29, 2020

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 was compiled by Rev. Alan Dyer. Reflection by Rhonda Hambright, Director of Music.***

Opening Sentences:

Those who wait for the Lord
Shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Prayer of Confession

God of compassion, we are sick.
We have wrestled all night with worry instead of resting in you.
We have asserted our own goodness instead of awakening to yours.
We have turned away those hungry for your help instead of trusting you and feeding them from your limitless supply of blessings.
Forgive us, heal us, and help us to hold on to you.
We call upon you, for you will answer us, O God.

[Take a moment to offer your own confession in silent prayer]

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The God of steadfast love is our refuge and Savior. In Christ, we who are broken are healed, forgiven, filled, and transformed. **Alleluia! Amen.**

Scripture – Mark 6:34-44 (Jesus Feeds the 5,000)

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.”

Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Reflection Questions

- Who do you relate to more in this story? The hungry crowd? Or the cautious disciples?
- The disciples were amazed at Jesus’ feeding of the multitudes. How have you seen God make a way when there was no way?
- How does your relationship with God affect your view of overwhelming problems in the world, such as hunger, poverty, violence, or injustice?
- In today’s video devotional, we hear the story of a flight attendant who lives out the “Feeding of the 5,000” story. Are there any instances in your life where you have seen this story lived out? Share that story with someone else as a testament to God’s continuing work in the world.

Closing Prayer

God who hears us, holds us, and helps us, you are our eternal source of blessing. You are our endless source of provision. In your compassion, you see our need; you heal our sickness and satisfy our hunger. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and all in need: O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For our sisters and brothers called by your name throughout the world, O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

Bless your church and help us move forward in mission with you. O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For the healing of the sick and preservation of your creation in heaven and on earth, O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For the need of the nations— wisdom for leaders, vindication and relief for the oppressed — O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For those who are hungry, ill, vulnerable, or seeking refuge from adversaries and injustice, O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For all who need you, near and far, especially those we name now, aloud and in our hearts . . . O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

For the faithful who have preceded us and in whose steps we follow, O Lord, attend to our cry, **give ear to our prayer.**

Wondrously show us your steadfast love, that we may behold your face in righteousness and be satisfied, when we awake, beholding your likeness; through Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

A Blessing for the Week:

Christ himself, who holds you in his hands,
has blessed you, broken you, and given you as his gift to the world.
May the grace of Christ be multiplied to you
and through you, now and forever.

-Feasting on the Word Worship Companion

The Rhythm Is The Same, But The Tune Is Different

A Reflection by Rhonda Hambright

This week in my newsletter article, I shared a hymn text that a colleague of mine had written for these times. You can read the words of the hymn in the box to the right. The words can be sung to a number of tunes that meet the meter of 8.7.8.7. D. Hymn tunes to try are Love Divine, All Loves Excelling; Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing; Brethren, We Have Met to Worship; God is Here!; Hymn of Promise; Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee; Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us; and What a Friend We Have in Jesus are just a few in this very popular meter.

*In our homes, we meet to worship, far away from sacred space.
By the Spirit, Christ is with us, making this a holy place.
In these days of social distance, we are called to meet apart.
Still we pray for one another, hold each other in our heart.*

*If this time indeed is holy, we must keep it truly so.
Even in our isolation, God's rich blessings overflow.
We avoid the world's distractions, set our minds on things above:
Patience, kindness, goodness, mercy, faith, joy, peace, abiding love.*

-R. G. Huff – 03/17/2020 [Permission Granted for Use]

If you remember studying poetry, you will recall that rhythmic meters are very important in the understanding of the composition and the reading of each stanza. Our hymnbook is full of beautiful poetry. Here are some of the meters in English poetry: iambic meter (unstressed/stressed), Trochaic meter (stressed/unstressed), Spondaic meter, (stressed/stressed), Anapestic meter (unstressed/unstressed/ stressed), and Dactylic meter (stressed/unstressed/unstressed). Google it. Look it up and read some poetry. Understanding what 8.7.8.7 D means is fairly simple too. Eight syllables, Seven syllables, Eight syllables, Seven syllables. The letter D after the meter indicates that the meter is doubled-used twice in each verse.

It goes without saying that these are unprecedented times in which we are living and working. The creativity of all of us in weathering this storm is just beginning to bloom, just like all of the flowers around here. Nature is going through age-old rhythms, so familiar to us. We can take heart and give thanks that at least that is true.

The author's line in the second verse, "We avoid the world's distractions, set our minds on things above" is good advice. Turn it all off – devices, phones, TVs, etc. – and focus on God our creator. God created the rhythm of life for us, but sometimes asks us to sing different tunes. There are

verses throughout the Bible that cite “singing a new song” (Psalm 33:3, 40:3, 96:1, 98:1, 144:9, 149:1, Isaiah 42:10, and Revelation 5:9, 14:3).

Perhaps then the word “song” has more meaning than just music. God calls for our creativity to come forth and bless creation. I am sure that we have all found new and creative ways to do things and will get even more creative as time goes on. I pray that your efforts will be blessed in these days to come. “Patience, kindness, goodness, mercy, faith, joy, peace, abiding love” to you all.

Love & Gratitude,
Rhonda