

Unsettled but Unafraid: A Liturgy for Worshipping at Home
Week of May 10, 2020 (Fifth Sunday of Easter)
St. Simons Presbyterian Church

Although we are not able to gather in-person for worship, we are able to gather in spirit. This week's liturgy is designed to be used alongside the worship video, although it can be used on its own. Use it individually or as a family. If you are using it in a family setting, consider giving each person one part to "lead". If using individually, try to carve out 10-minutes to quietly read, reflect, and pray through. **Liturgy this week was compiled by Rev. Annie Franklin Arvin. Reflection by Rhonda Hambright, Director of Music.**



Call to Worship *(included in video)*

God,
We are waiting.
We are asking.
We are expecting.
Grasp us in your hand.
Say to us, "Rise up, walk,"
as we worship you
Amen.

Scripture - Acts 3:1-10 *(included in video)*

Peter and John were going up to the temple at three o'clock in the afternoon, the established prayer time. Meanwhile, a man crippled since birth was being carried in. Every day, people would place him at the temple gate known as the Beautiful Gate so he could ask for money from those entering the temple. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he began to ask them for a gift. Peter and John stared at him. Peter said, "Look at us!" So the man gazed at them, expecting to receive something from them. Peter said, "I don't have any money, but I will give you what I do have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, rise up and walk!" Then he grasped the man's right hand and raised him up. At once his feet and ankles became strong. Jumping up, he began to walk around. He entered the temple with them, walking, leaping, and praising God. All the people saw him walking and praising God. They recognized him as the same one who used to sit at the temple's Beautiful Gate asking for money. They were filled with amazement and surprise at what had happened to him.

Questions for Reflection

1. Think about a time when you were placed somewhere by someone else. What did it feel like? How do you think the man crippled since birth feel when he was placed at the Temple gate?
2. What do you think Peter meant when he responded to the man's asking by saying "Look at us!"?
3. Who are the people in your life who grasp your hand and raise you up?

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer *(included in video)*

God who holds us in your arms,
breathe your Spirit upon us once more.
Reach out to us;
grasp onto our shaking hands.
Touch our hearts.

In a time when there is no holding hands with our neighbor,
help your people be present for one another.
Remind us that we aren't alone.
Connect us to each other,
for we are all yours,
and you are among us.

Pour your justice out into the world like a waterfall,
and pull us into a time when our humanity
is not ascribed by the preconceived notions of another..
Empower your people to speak love,
to proclaim justice,
and fill us with hope that a better world is possible.

On this day we lift up our mothers.
We give you thanks our moms and those that act like our moms,
those that have cared for us,
and those nurtured us into who we are.
We pray too for those who Mother's Day is a sharp reminder
of a relationship lost,
a child gone too soon,
or a dream that won't come true the way we thought.
O God, be a place of comfort.

Trusting in your ever present Spirit we give you these prayers as we pray the prayer
Jesus Christ taught us praying...

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.

Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Family Stories

A Reflection by Rhonda Hambright

I love the stories that my mother tells me about the family.

Her memories of growing up on the farm are of a life that doesn't exist much anymore. The big farmhouse on the hill on Mount Holly Road in Belmont/Mount Holly, North Carolina no longer stands, but looking at the property, I can picture just exactly where it was. The big horse barn; the cow barn; the huge shed that was for storing hay, the truck, the combine, and the tractor (pictured at right); and the chicken house surrounded the back of the yard behind the house. Beyond that, there were rolling fields as far as you could see that used to be full of wheat, alfalfa hay, corn, and oats mainly to feed the animals. Peach, apple, pear, black walnut and pecan trees grew on the land. The vegetable garden had strawberries, green beans, corn and tomatoes.



The original family king's land grant in the 1700's was south of this land which was part of a 650-acre purchase from the Catawba Indians in 1837 and passed down from son to son. My six cousins and I were the last to inherit. It was sold in its entirety to a church that is still very active. The proceeds provided a college education for all of us. Before the farmhouse was built, everybody lived in a log cabin that was built by my great-great grandparents. The cabin became overcrowded and timber from the land itself was cut and stacked ready to build a new farmhouse. When the First Baptist Church was in need of wood for building the sanctuary, my great-great grands decided to give it to them to build a sanctuary and never built their home. The farmhouse was actually built by my great grands.

My mother was born on this farm and grew up just before and during World War II up until about the mid-fifties. She had an older sister and a brother who died at birth. Because there was no son, she became the one to learn how to drive the Farm-All tractor. The farm was large enough to provide for the war effort, so they were provided with plenty of ration tickets for gas and supplies to grow the food. They also raised cows, pigs, and chickens. It was a rare treat to have chicken for dinner. Imagine having one chicken (they were smaller back then) for six people. My great grandmother and great grandpa lived with them. My grandmother (MawMaw) always said that her favorite part of the chicken was the back. As you know, the back of the chicken doesn't have much meat. My mother didn't realize until she was grown up that her mother had sacrificed for them all by not only giving away the choice pieces of chicken, but the best of what she had in the world. Mom grew up in a world of sacrifice and did the same for us. We never knew that we weren't all that well off because we had everything we needed.

The small, daily sacrifices that mothers and families make build character in their children if they are paying attention. All this gets passed down just like plots of land – anchors on which to live. The children are watching how we are handling our current situation. I have been so impressed with the home schooling that has been going on. Some parents are sharing the load of schoolwork, but I'm hearing more about the mothers becoming instant teachers. Imagine being a teacher in the school system working at home and a being a mother trying to teach her own children and juggling all of that.

Mother's Day evokes legacy and memory in all of us. Each has a story, be it sorrowful, joyous, or sentimental. It's important to tell the stories of your family to your loved ones. I spent time on the phone with my mother getting the facts straight about family history. It was interesting and I learned some new things that she had never told me before.

The stories of Jesus have been passed down through the ages and still teach us today. Here are two verses of an old song that was probably one of the first songs besides "Jesus Loves Me" that I learned in Sunday School:

Tell me the stories of Jesus, I long to hear;
Things I would ask him to tell me if he were here.
Scenes by the wayside, tales of the sea,
Stories of Jesus, tell them to me.

First let me hear how the children stood round His knee,
And I shall fancy His blessing resting on me;
Words full of kindness, deeds full of grace,
All in the love light of Jesus' face.

– *William H. Parker*

What is your story? "This is my story, this is my song, praising my savior all the day long."