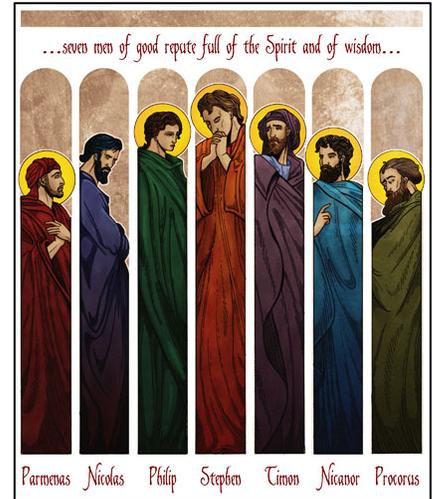


Unsettled but Unafraid: A Liturgy for Worshipping at Home  
Week of May 17, 2020 (Sixth Sunday of Easter)  
St. Simons Presbyterian Church

*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. No matter how you worship, God will show up. Liturgy this week was compiled by Rev. Annie Franklin Arvin with a reflection written by Nat Scott, Director of Congregational Life.*



### Opening Prayer

Calm our heart.  
Quiet our minds.  
Lead us near to you.  
Amen.

### Scripture - Acts 6:1-7 (included in video)

About that time, while the number of disciples continued to increase, a complaint arose. Greek-speaking disciples accused the Aramaic-speaking disciples because their widows were being overlooked in the daily food service. The Twelve called a meeting of all the disciples and said, "It isn't right for us to set aside proclamation of God's word in order to serve tables. Brothers and sisters, carefully choose seven well-respected men from among you. They must be well-respected and endowed by the Spirit with exceptional wisdom. We will put them in charge of this concern. As for us, we will devote ourselves to prayer and the service of proclaiming the word." This proposal pleased the entire community. They selected Stephen, a man endowed by the Holy Spirit with exceptional faith, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. The community presented these seven to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. God's word continued to grow. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased significantly. Even a large group of priests embraced the faith.

## Questions for Reflection

1. Think about a time when a problem occurred-when you thought something wasn't quite right. What did you do? How was God present?
2. The apostles tell the disciples to choose 7 well respected people to serve the tables. Who are the people that serve you? Who are the people who nurture your faith?
3. The apostles did not take on the task of serving the tables-that wasn't their gift. They delegated that task to members of the community who were endowed by the Spirit. The Spirit continues to endow us with Spiritual gifts. What gifts has the Spirit endowed you with?
4. After the apostles selected the seven leaders, they laid hands and prayed over them. Take a minute to think about the leaders in your your life. The people who lead you day to day, the leaders in your community, the leaders in your church, the leaders in our government, and our world leaders. Close your eyes and take a moment to pray over them.

## Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

God of compassion,  
we come to you with anxious hearts,  
nervous minds,  
and hesitant hands.  
You tell us to trust you,  
to follow your leadership,  
yet we choose ourselves.  
We choose the ways of this world.  
Forgive us and lead us down your path once more.  
Help us to show compassion for your people;  
teach us to act with love for one another.

Remind us once more that you are  
revealing the way;  
the way of comforting those who grieve,  
the way of healing the sick,  
the way of considering the needs of others before our own,  
and the way of acting the kindness you write on our hearts.

On this day in the middle of graduation season  
we celebrate the graduates who mark this milestone  
without sitting next to their closest friends,

and without singing along to their alma mater together one last time,

Although there's no big graduation ceremonies this month,  
we name the grief as the traditions are missed.

Continue to be a light to their path  
as the answer to that "What's next" question becomes clear.  
Remind Graham, Victoria, Michael, Caroline,  
AnnMarie, Brooke, Hart, Samuel, Sarah,  
Isabel, Jonathan, and Lucy that they are loved and celebrated  
by you and their church.

God we give you these prayers trusting in your Spirit that flows in the world as we say  
together the prayer your son 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.*

## **Unchanged Vision**

A Reflection by Nat Scott

*So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly,  
and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.*

I have found myself pondering things as of late. There is something about spending  
lots of time alone that lends itself to this pondering. In addition, there are many  
challenges to church work as we have always done it. Like so many others, we have  
had to retool everything that we have been doing in order to meet the current needs.  
Worship, Christian education, community and missions all look very different, but are  
still working towards the same ends! The fact that we are not at church does not  
mean that we cannot *BE* the church.

I see some really neat things happening within our faith community. Many of our  
members that consider themselves newbies when it comes to technology, have taken  
on the difficult task of learning new software in order to find connection in this time  
of isolation. Our people are calling one another spontaneously just to check in and to  
pray with one another. Folks are sending sweet and uplifting cards and notes of

encouragement. Bible studies, book studies, Sunday school and other offerings have renewed energy. Our Hunger Action Team jumped quickly into action to provide food for the most vulnerable in our community. Through the generosity of members from around our community, our COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund is helping people that have been financially impacted as a result of the virus.

In the Acts passage, our scripture for this Sunday, several people are called to the continued ministry of taking care of those living in the margins. Since the very beginning, the Church has been doing this good work of taking care of one another. In other words, the vision remains unchanged, but the methods have adapted.

And yet I still find myself struggling with lament. In a New York Times article, Kerry Dearborn hit the nail on the head when she stated, “We lament, not because of the false belief that God is punishing us through this pandemic, but because our ways of life have left so many vulnerable and with so few resources to deal with an epidemic like this. And we lament knowing that God laments with us, and in Jesus lived in solidarity with our pain, and died to heal and liberate us from all brokenness, shame, guilt and self-centeredness.” Knowing that Christ weeps with us in our grief helps.

But our God is the God of resurrection and new beginnings. It is our great hope that we will be back together in the near future. In the meantime, let’s continue to be the church to one another and to the world. We have a beautiful history, being imbued with the power of Christ through the Holy Spirit to love and serve and heal and restore that which has been broken. *O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, O be our guard while troubles last, and our eternal home.*

-Nat Scott