

Unsettled but Unafraid: A Liturgy for Worshipping at Home

Week of July 5, 2020

St. Simons Presbyterian Church

Although we are not able to gather in-person for worship, we are able to gather in spirit. This 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 by Nat Scott, Director of Congregational Life.



Opening Prayer

God all around us,
You made us and this day good.
So move your spirit within us once again.
Open our eyes and our hearts to your Word.
Amen.

Confession¹ *(included in video)*

As members of Christ's body, we confess the reality of sin and brokenness in personal and common life. Trusting in God's abundant grace, we approach God with confidence confessing together the sinful state of the world and our lives. Although today we may pray this prayer alone or only with our families, we pray this prayer together with our church in Spirit.

Merciful God, we fill our lives
with comfort and convenience,
distractions that consume our energy and time.
We chase after wealth and power
as if they could satisfy the hunger in our souls.
But you beckon us toward new life,
a life made rich through sabbath and service.
Free us from the yokes that bind us
and draw us near to you,
until we learn to walk with Christ.

¹ This week's confession comes from *Call to Worship, Lectionary Aids 2019-2020, Year A*, published by the Office of Theology and Worship of the PC(USA), p. 134.

In Jesus Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Friends, hear and read the Good News. Jesus Christ came into the world for us. Jesus ate with sinners for us. Jesus died on a cross for us. And he rose again for the forgiveness of sin-our sin. Rejoice! We are a forgiven people! Amen.

Scripture - Matthew 11:25-30 *(included in video)*

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Questions for Reflection

1. Why do you think God shows things to little children rather than to the wise and learned?
2. What does it mean to you to know God through Jesus? Who is Jesus to you?
3. What heavy burden are you carrying?
4. When we put on Jesus' yoke, what might Jesus want us to learn from him?

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

After each intercession, you are invited to pause for a moment and offer your own thanksgiving and prayer before proceeding to the next intercession.

Communion *(included in video)*

I. Invitation to the Table

II. Prayer of Thanksgiving

III. Words of Institution

On the night of his arrest

Jesus was at a table with his disciples. He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them, saying: Take, eat. This is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took and poured the cup, saying: Take, drink.
This is the new covenant sealed in my blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this in remembrance of me.
Now, whenever we eat and drink at this table,
we proclaim Christ's death and resurrection until he comes again.
And Come again he will. Amen.

The meal has been blessed. Friends, take and eat.
This is Christ's body broken for you and the blood of Christ shed for you. Amen.

IV. Prayers of the People & Lord's Prayer

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.

A Prayer for the Week:

With you, O God, to guide me,
I journey on my way.
I know you are beside me
all through the night and day.
Within your hand you hold me;
what do I have to fear?
Your loving arms enfold me,
your grace is always near.
Amen.

Based on a prayer of Columba (c. 521-597)

The Rest That Gives Life

A Reflection by Nat Scott, Director of Congregational Life

When looking at our scripture for the day, it is good to note that Matthew is sometimes referred to as the teacher's Gospel. As students of Christ our Rabbi, we, like the people of his day, often miss the message. In missing the message, the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus time had, over time, turned the ten commandments, which were intended to be words of love, into 613 laws. 365 of these laws were of the do this variety and 248 of the laws were of the don't do this variety. They believed that God demanded this kind of observance from his people. Can you imagine the pressure? But the law of love, brought by Jesus, said quite the contrary. What is important is not what we do for God, but rather what God, in his infinite love, does and has always done for us! Our job is quite simply, to open our arms and hearts, welcome his profound gift of grace and then live a life filled with gratitude and love. This looks very different than our desperate efforts to work our way into his good graces and live up to all those invisible, imagined expectations of our friends, families and selves.

My own experience at learning this lesson began some twenty-five years ago when I was working three jobs: Program Director at a small church in Waycross, Georgia, Computer Instructor at Waycross College in Continuing Education and Production Potter at my own small business on our family farm. For fun, I was coaching my young son's soccer team, though to be frank, we didn't win very often. Any of my three jobs were demanding, but together they were quite literally "eating my lunch." In fact, many days I skipped lunch because I simply couldn't spare the time.

I was at the end of my rope, when I was offered and then purchased a small kayak, secondhand, from a friend. This turned out to be one of my greatest gifts, ever. I had every Friday to myself and chose this day to practice Sabbath. Rain or shine, I would load my little yellow kayak on my car and drive four miles to the highway 158 boat landing on the Satilla River. I would pack a cooler with lunch, some cold drinks, my camera, journal, and Bible. God never failed to show up and offer me deep rest and re-creation. Week by week, God would show me new and beautiful lessons through his creation that nurtured my tired soul. To borrow a phrase from Craig Barnes, every week I was "born again" again. As I sat and drank in God's beautiful creation, I felt my strained body, tight shoulders and tense neck relax and the worries of my busy week slip away. Like the priest Brian Andrew says about this passage, "Jesus wanted to free us from the burdensome religious and legal

interpretations of the scribes and Pharisees, and our own. It is an act not of juggling balls on a stage, but of carrying eggs from a barn.”

Returning home from the river, I always felt renewed and refreshed. My burdens seemed somehow much lighter. I gained perspective to move through another busy week, hand in hand with Christ, ready to reach out to others whose lives were equally frazzled. Walking with Christ really does mean to become as a child. Babes and little children have the best understanding that they are utterly dependent upon others. May the God, who has given us the gift of rest and peace, go with us as we move through our busy lives. May we feel the healing love of God in our lives. May we bring the good news of God’s love to all we meet. Amen.