

Unsettled but Unafraid: A Liturgy for Worshipping at Home

Week of August 16, 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. Alan Dyer with a reflection written by church member, Ann Nermoe.



Psalm 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us—
so that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.
May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Prayer of 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.

God of all people, we come before you this day keenly aware of the ways we fall short of your vision for us and for our life together. You tell us how good and pleasant it is when

¹ This week's confession, assurance of pardon, and prayers of the people are adapted from liturgy written created by Rev. Dr. Jill Duffield, pres-outlook.org.

we dwell together in unity, and yet we create division and cultivate disdain. You command us to care for each other, but we send away those crying out for help. You call us and put us together in community, but we want to pick and choose those with whom we associate. Forgive us for thinking we are self-sufficient and independent, rather than utterly dependent upon you and in need of each other. Help us to see ourselves and others as the beloved reflections of the divine we are and give us the grace to treat each other as such. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

God does not reject God's people. God is merciful to all.
Friends, believe the good news and be at peace: Through Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

Scripture - Genesis 45:1-15 (*included in video*)

Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

"You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

Prayers of the People and Lord's Prayer

Good and gracious God, so many of your people are hurting. There seems no end in sight to the uncertainty and pain of this season. Parents and caregivers are worried about children's well-being as the school year approaches and the pandemic persists. Those living in group care facilities yearn to be able to have visitors again and the loneliness of those already isolated grows. The economic fallout from this virus gets deeper and wider as many scramble to find work and put food on the table. And so we call out to you now, Lord Christ, trusting that you hear and respond. Have mercy on us, O God. Hear our cries. Help us.

We call out for mercy for those on the frontlines of fighting for justice. We call out for mercy for those on the frontlines of fighting this pandemic. We call out for mercy for those grieving the death of loved ones. We call out for mercy for the sick and those who tend them. We call out for mercy for the scared and those who comfort them. We call out for mercy for those without food or housing, medical care or community. We call out for mercy on behalf of those who do not have the strength to raise their own voices. We call out for mercy for ourselves, trusting you know our deepest needs even if we do not have the wisdom to name them.

Hear us, Lord. Heal us, Lord. Help us, Lord.

When we fear you have walked away from us in our desperation, send your Holy Spirit to remind us yet again that God does not reject God's people, that the call and gifts of God are irrevocable. Embed in us the biblical stories that teach us that even that which we intend for evil, you, Lord God, use for good. Grant us the faith and courage to persist in advocating for the vulnerable and hurting no matter how long it takes for our world to be made well.

Give us faith, Almighty God, to keep focused on our Savior, following the Way, loving you and our neighbors, until the One we worship comes again and come again he will. We make our prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to say when we pray:

**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.**

A Prayer for the Week:

Merciful God,
this week is full of your possibilities
for healing and reconciliation,
for new beginnings and restored relationships.
Unite my heart with your will
so that your abundant anointing will flow through me.
Send me now with your promised blessings
to preserve the lives of those in need. **Amen.**

Amen.

Seeing God's Reflection

A Reflection by Ann Nermoe, Church Member and Bluegrass Sunday Musician

I decided to look up the definition of "reflection" and found two very interesting definitions:

1. The throwing back by a body or surface of light, heat or sound without absorbing it; or
2. Serious thought or consideration

To me, these are two definitions that are almost opposites but in essence, they describe reflection and how one interprets it.

When I was asked to provide the Reflection this week, I immediately thought of the experience that we've all been going through this year since March. But my journey began last November with major health issues and surgeries that I have experienced. The reflection in the mirror of either all of us or just of me does not show the depth of what we have gone through or are experiencing now.

Just as Joseph's appearance to his brothers in Genesis 45 did not register with them at first, he told them who he was and they were terrified by his appearance. But once they saw that he had forgiven them and that God had sent him there to help them through the famine, they threw their arms around him and went to tell their father.

This reflection allows us to look back, push aside the bad or difficult times and concentrate on the good that came from the experience and use it going forward to make a better life for ourselves and for others. My faith tells me that this is how God is in our lives by helping us "see" the reflection AND absorb it.