

GATHERING IN GOD'S WORD

Prelude

Rocky Nisbit, accompanist

Sharing Our Lives in Prayer

Prayer Requests

Silent Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Welcome

Letting God In

During this time, we invite you to prepare your heart and your mind for worship. We want you to be able to use this quiet time to settle your thoughts, set aside any distractions that may be troubling you, and focus your whole self on God. Open your heart, your mind, and your spirit, and let God into your life.

Centering Prayer: Truly, God, we find happiness in you.

As you breathe in, pray, "Truly, God."

As you breathe out, pray, "We find happiness in you."

* Opening Praise (from *Spill the Beans*, iss. 14, © 2014 Spill the Beans Resources):

One: As we gather to worship God this day,

Many: We prepare a way for the Lord.

One: As we answer God's call to repent,

Many: We seek to make a straight path for the Lord.

One: As we come before God this day,

Many: May we know ourselves to be God's own children.

One: As we come before God this day,

Many: May we be ones with whom God may be well pleased.

* Invitation to Confession

* Joining in Prayer (based on *Spill the Beans*, iss. 14, © 2014 Spill the Beans Resources):

Holy One, we praise you as the God who gets your feet wet! It sounds strange to say it, but you did it. You got your feet wet in the Jordan precisely to show you are God and the tide of your love will not be held back. We praise you as the God who gets your feet wet and dusty and soiled. For you are no aloof maker, refusing to be as we are. Instead, you precisely shared our life that we might somehow share yours: daring to dip our toes in the waves on the shores of heaven's ways. Still, forgive us our timidity, God. When you draw us to streams of faith, yet we draw back from drinking for fear of facing the truth, forgive us. When you call us to rivers of renewal and yet we will not bathe for fear of commitment, forgive us. When you shower us with a flood of blessings yet we shield ourselves from them for fear we need to change, forgive us. Forgive us our timidity, God. Encourage us to face our flaws and failings and find faith overflowing.

(Please take a moment for silent reflection and confession.)

In the name of Jesus, whom we dearly love, we pray.

Amen.

* God's Promise of Grace

* Sharing the Peace of Christ

* Song of Peace: "Let There Be Peace on Earth"

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Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God our Creator, we are family.

Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.

With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.

To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer to Open Minds and Hearts

Scripture reading – Matthew 3:1-17 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

¹ In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, ² “Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!” ³ He was the one of whom Isaiah the prophet spoke when he said: The voice of one shouting in the wilderness, “Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight.” ⁴ John wore clothes made of camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People from Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and all around the Jordan River came to him. ⁶ As they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. ⁷ Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. He said to them, “You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? ⁸ Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. ⁹ And don’t even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham is our father. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham’s children from these stones. ¹⁰ The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn’t produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire. ¹¹ I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I’m not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. ¹² The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can’t be put out.” ¹³ At that time Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River so that John would baptize him. ¹⁴ John tried to stop him and said, “I need to be baptized by you, yet you come to me?” ¹⁵ Jesus answered, “Allow me to be baptized now. This is necessary to fulfill all righteousness.” So John agreed to baptize Jesus. ¹⁶ When Jesus was baptized, he immediately came up out of the water. Heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and resting on him. ¹⁷ A voice from heaven said, “This is my Son whom I dearly love; I find happiness in him.”

Sermon: “Thirsty Roots” – Rev. Lisa Johnson

Exploring the Word Together

This is a time for us to process our faith and our hearing of God’s word together – a time to be the word of God for one another. It’s also a time to build community with one another – a time to share elements of our faith and our understanding of that faith with each other. Feel free to participate in conversation with those around you or sit and ponder this question on your own.

What can you do to prepare the way for God out in the world?

Hymn #95 – Prepare the Way of the Lord (sing through four times, last time as a round)

(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Prepare the way of the Lord.

Prepare the way of the Lord,

And all people will see

The salvation of our God.

RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Coming Together in Prayer

Pastoral Prayer

Lord’s Prayer: **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Holding Sacred Space for our Own Baptisms
(by Rev. Christine Sobania Johnson, Freshly Squeezed Liturgy)

Renewing Our Covenant

One: Every day we journey on this earth is a day in which we make choices: left or right, up or down, in or out, yes or no? Some choices are simple, and some are very complex, but one choice informs all the others: Who will be our God? Who will we trust to see us through this journey?

Many: Who has been with us from before the beginning, bringing us into existence?

Who has loved us and blessed us and sent us on our way?

Who has pointed us toward the path and posted the signs we need to find our way?

Who has been at our side when the road has been smooth and gently curving?

Who has kept with us through hairpin turns and construction zones and potholes and detours?

Who will celebrate with us when we complete our course and seek the comfort of eternity?

One: Only One. The One and Only.

Many: Holy One. The One and Holy.

One: Will you choose this day to stay faithful to the One who is faithful to us?

ALL: Count us in.

One: Will you choose this day to place your whole trust in the One who is trustworthy?

ALL: Count us in.

One: Will you choose this day to commit your talents and your resources to the One who first endowed them?

ALL: Count us in.

One: Will you choose this day to love the One who loved us first?

ALL: Count us in.

Coming Again to the Water

Prayer (unison): **We devote ourselves to you by renewing the covenant—the promise you made to humanity so long ago. Because you are our God, we will be your people. Enlarge our faithfulness, our trust, our commitment and our love so that we may graciously uphold our side of the deal. Help us always to recognize your presence and your blessings throughout our journey. Keep us in your care. Amen.**

Prayer of Gratitude and Blessing

Our offering plates are located at the entrance to the sanctuary. This offering allows us to continue our outreach and mission both here in the community of Oronoco and beyond – in the greater Rochester area, in Minnesota, and even around the world. We are grateful for your willingness to join us in this mission and thank you for your generosity.

Hymn #479 – Ho, All Who Thirst
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And all whose souls are parched
And weary, come and drink!
Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And from your heart will flow
A never-failing spring!

Why forsake the Lord,
The fount of living water,
Choosing broken cups
That cannot be filled?

Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And all whose souls are parched
And weary, come and drink!
Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And from your heart will flow
A never-failing spring!

For the Lamb will be
Our shepherd and will guide us
To the wellsprings of
The water of life?

Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And all whose souls are parched
And weary, come and drink!
Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And from your heart will flow
A never-failing spring!

All who come may take
This gift of living water.
They will thirst no more,
For they shall be filled.

Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And all whose souls are parched
And weary, come and drink!
Ho, all who thirst,
Come now to the water,
And from your heart will flow
A never-failing spring!

Announcements

BEING SENT OUT IN GOD'S WORD

* Blessing

* Claiming Our Faith Identity

This is a chance for us to remind one another of both who we are and whose we are before we head back out in the world. The hope is that, as we grow more and more familiar with the words and the claim and call that they place on our hearts, we'll be able to recall them throughout the week in those moments when we need to tap into our faith. The words and phrases are also aimed at helping us connect with our congregation's own mission statement: "We are a community of believers whose mission is to share God's Word, show God's Love, serve God's World, and strive for God's Peace."

One: We are the Church –

ALL: God's beloved children today, tomorrow, and always.

One: Here, in this worship, through prayer, word, and fellowship,

ALL: God has embraced us yet again, and our spirits have been made new.

One: Suffused with God's grace,

ALL: We claim new strength, new purpose, and new hope in our call.

One: With spirits reaffirmed and renewed,

ALL: We are called to SHARE God's Word. We are called to SHOW God's Love. We are called to SERVE God's World. We are called to STRIVE for God's Peace.

One: We are the Church

ALL: Because God binds us together in sacred companionship and blessed connectedness.

One: And now, as the Church, God calls us out

ALL: To do and be God's extravagant love in the world.

One: This service has ended.

ALL: Now our service can begin.

Postlude

** indicates please rise in body or spirit as you feel led*