

## 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: Inspire my welcome. My God, I am willing.**

*As you breathe in, pray, "Inspire my welcome."*

*As you breathe out, pray, "My God, I am willing."*

Glimpses of God

*With the authentic stories of our lives and our days, we call each other into this time of worship together by sharing the glimpses of God that have captured our attention throughout the last week or two. If you have a way that you've noticed God – God's work, God's love, God's leading, God's presence – we invite you to come up and share it. Your story doesn't have to be eloquent. It doesn't have to be long. Your experience of God is yours to share in whatever way is most comfortable for you. We hold space for your story, and we listen with our ears and our hearts.*

Lenten Reading

from "Stars for the Righteous" by Ann Weems

Scripture – Isaiah 40:9-11

*Time for Unburdening – On your way into worship, you were encouraged to pick up a rock. During this time, you're invited to spend a few moments contemplating – pressing whatever concerns and burdens you carry into that rock. When you're ready, you're invited to come forward and lay that rock down – that rock and all the burdens it carries.*

Hymn #469 – Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

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

Lord, listen to your children praying.

Lord, send your Spirit in this place.

Lord, listen to your children praying.

Send us love; send us power; send us grace.

\* Invitation to Confession

\* Joining in Prayer (based on *Spill the Beans*, iss. 15, © 2015 Spill the Beans Resources):

**Loving God, Creator of all, we gather to praise you because we are part of your amazing creation. There is so much complexity and boundless variety at every turn. Lord, this world is so diverse. Lord, we are all so different. Yet we all are made one in your image. We confess that sometimes we focus solely on our differences rather than our commonalities. We ask your mercy for times when we are suspicious of others ... for times when we are hesitant of others ... for times when we are neglectful of others simply because they are not "one of us." All people are your children. Thank you that we are part of such a wonderful human family, and thank you for our church family, with whom we are blessed to gather again today.** *(Please take a moment for silent reflection and confession.)*

In the name of Jesus, the blessed Christ, we pray.

**Amen.**

\* God's Promise of Grace

\* Sharing the Peace of Christ

\* Song of Peace – Hymn #824 – There Is a Place of Quiet Rest, verse 3  
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

There is a place of quiet rest,  
Near to the heart of God,  
A place where all is joy and peace,  
Near to the heart of God.  
O Jesus, blest Redeemer,  
Sent from the heart of God,  
Hold us, who wait before thee,  
Near to the heart of God.

### HEARING GOD'S WORD

Prayer to Open Minds and Hearts

Scripture reading – Matthew 25:31-46 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

<sup>31</sup> "Now when the Human One comes in his majesty and all his angels are with him, he will sit on his majestic throne. <sup>32</sup> All the nations will be gathered in front of him. He will separate them from each other, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. <sup>33</sup> He will put the sheep on his right side. But the goats he will put on his left. <sup>34</sup> "Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who will receive good things from my Father. Inherit the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world began. <sup>35</sup> I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.' <sup>37</sup> "Then those who are righteous will reply to him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you a drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and give you clothes to wear? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' <sup>40</sup> "Then the king will reply to them, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.' <sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Get away from me, you who will receive terrible things. Go into the unending fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels. <sup>42</sup> I was hungry and you didn't give me food to eat. I was thirsty and you didn't give me anything to drink. <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you didn't welcome me. I was naked and you didn't give me clothes to wear. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.' <sup>44</sup> "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and didn't do anything to help you?' <sup>45</sup> Then he will answer, 'I assure you that when you haven't done it for one of the least of these, you haven't done it for me.' <sup>46</sup> And they will go away into eternal punishment. But the righteous ones will go into eternal life."

Sermon: "Willing to WELCOME" – 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.*

### When have you experienced extravagant welcome?

Hymn #769 – For Everyone Born (verses 1-3, 5)  
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
For everyone born, clean water and bread,  
A shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,  
For everyone born, a star overhead.  
And God will delight

When we are creators of justice  
And joy, compassion, and peace:  
Yes, God will delight  
When we are creators of justice,  
Justice and joy!

For woman and man, a place at the table,  
Revising the roles, deciding the share,  
With wisdom and grace, dividing the power,  
For woman and man, a system that's fair,  
And God will delight  
When we are creators of justice  
And joy, compassion, and peace:  
Yes, God will delight  
When we are creators of justice,  
Justice and joy!

For young and for old, a place at the table,  
A voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
The hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,  
For young and for old, the right to belong,  
And God will delight  
When we are creators of justice  
And joy, compassion, and peace:  
Yes, God will delight  
When we are creators of justice,  
Justice and joy!

For everyone born, a place at the table,  
To live without fear, and simply to be,  
To work, to speak out, to witness and worship,  
For everyone born, the right to be free,  
And God will delight  
When we are creators of justice  
And joy, compassion, and peace:  
Yes, God will delight  
When we are creators of justice,  
Justice and joy!

### 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.**

Hymn #301 – Let Us Build a House

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

Let us build a house where love can dwell  
And all can safely live,  
A place where saints and children tell  
How hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
Rock of faith and vault of grace;

Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:  
All are welcome; all are welcome;  
All are welcome in this place!

Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
And words are strong and true,  
Where all God's children dare to seek  
To dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
And a symbol of God's grace;  
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:  
All are welcome; all are welcome;  
All are welcome in this place!

Let us build a house where love is found  
In water, wine, and wheat;  
A banquet hall on holy ground  
Where peace and justice meet.  
Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
Is revealed in time and space;  
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:  
All are welcome; all are welcome;  
All are welcome in this place!

Let us build a house where hands will reach  
Beyond the wood and stone  
To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
And live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
Bear the image of God's face;  
Let us bring an end to fear and danger:  
All are welcome; all are welcome;  
All are welcome in this place!

Let us build a house where all are named,  
Their songs and visions heard  
And loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
As words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
Prayers of faith and songs of grace;  
Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:  
All are welcome; all are welcome;  
All are welcome in this place!

#### 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.*

#### 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*