

GATHERING IN GOD'S WORD

Prelude

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: **God, reveal your righteousness in unexpected places.***

As you breathe in, pray, "God, reveal your righteousness."

As you breathe out, pray, "In unexpected places."

* Opening Praise (based on Psalm 92):

One: The righteous will spring up and grow in the Lord's house.

Many: There is nothing unrighteous in God.

One: The righteous will spring up and grow –

Many: Spring up and grow in the Lord's house.

One: But if the whole world is God's kingdom,

Many: Is there any place where the righteous cannot be found?

One: The righteous will spring up and grow in the places we fear:

Many: The supposed "bad neighborhoods" and the wrong parts of town.

One: The righteous will spring up and grow in the places we ignore:

Many: The cracks in our education system, our communities, and our society.

One: The righteous will spring up and grow in the places we dismiss:

Many: Halfway houses and treatment centers, homeless shelters and temporary camps.

One: But truly, the righteous will spring up and grow in the Lord's house,

Many: In all places of the Lord's house,

ALL: And truly, there is nothing and no one unrighteous in God.

* Invitation to Confession

* Joining in Prayer:

God, too often we decide for ourselves who's in and who's out. We decide who's deserving of both blessing and condemnation. We decide where your righteousness must be springing up in the world and where it must be absent. Or at least, we think we decide. And yet in those moments, we are too often blinded by our own pre-judgments and biases. We are too often blinded by misinformation or false narratives – ones that we have concocted or ones that we have willingly been fed. Forgive our haste and the harm that it causes to our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Forgive our presupposed righteousness as we claim for ourselves what we deny to others. Forgive all the ways in which we turn a blind eye to shining examples of your righteousness in unexpected places. *(Please take a moment for silent reflection and confession.)*

Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Savior.

Amen.

* God's Promise of Grace

* The Peace of Christ

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

Many: And also with you.

* 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 – Genesis 38 (from the *Common English Bible*)

¹ At that time, Judah moved away from his brothers and settled near an Adullamite named Hirah. ² There Judah saw the daughter of a Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he married her. After he slept with her, ³ she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, whom she named Er. ⁴ She became pregnant again, gave birth to a son, and named him Onan. ⁵ Then she gave birth to one more son and named him Shelah. She was in Chezib when she gave birth to him. ⁶ Judah married his oldest son Er to a woman named Tamar. ⁷ But the LORD considered Judah's oldest son Er immoral, and the LORD put him to death. ⁸ Judah said to Onan, "Go to your brother's wife, do your duty as her brother-in-law, and provide children for your brother." ⁹ Onan knew the children wouldn't be his so when he slept with his brother's wife, he wasted his seed on the ground, so he wouldn't give his brother children. ¹⁰ The LORD considered what he did as wrong and put him to death too. ¹¹ Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, "Stay as a widow in your father's household until my son Shelah grows up." He thought Shelah would die like his brothers had. So Tamar went and lived in her father's household. ¹² After a long time, Judah's wife the daughter of Shua died. Then, after a period of mourning, he and his neighbor Hirah the Adullamite went up to Timnah, to those who were shearing his sheep. ¹³ Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is now on his way up to Timnah to shear his sheep." ¹⁴ So Tamar took off the clothing she wore as a widow, covered herself with a veil, put on makeup, and sat down at the entrance to Enaim on the road to Timnah, since she realized that although Shelah had already grown up, she hadn't been given to him as a wife. ¹⁵ Judah saw her and thought she was a prostitute because she had covered her face. ¹⁶ He turned to her beside the road and said, "Let me sleep with you," because he didn't know she was his daughter-in-law. She said, "What will you give me for sleeping with you?" ¹⁷ He said, "I will give you a kid goat from my flock." She said, "Only if you give me some deposit, as security to guarantee that you will send it." ¹⁸ He said, "What kind of deposit should I give you?" And she said, "Your seal, its cord, and the staff in your hand." He gave these to her, slept with her, and she became pregnant by him. ¹⁹ Then she got up, left, and took off her veil, dressing once again in the clothing she wore as a widow. ²⁰ Judah sent the kid goat with his neighbor the Adullamite so he could take back the deposits from the woman, but he couldn't find her. ²¹ He asked the locals of that place, "Where's the consecrated worker who was at Enaim on the road?" But they said, "There's no consecrated worker here." ²² So he went back to Judah and said, "I couldn't find her. The locals even said, 'There's no holy woman here.'" ²³ Judah said, "Let her keep everything so we aren't laughed at. I did send this kid goat, but you couldn't find her." ²⁴ About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has become a prostitute and is now pregnant because of it." And Judah said, "Bring her out so that she may be burned." ²⁵ When she was brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, "I'm pregnant by the man who owns these things. See if you recognize whose seal, cord, and staff these are." ²⁶ Judah recognized them and said, "She's more righteous than I am, because I didn't allow her to marry my son Shelah." Judah never knew her intimately again. ²⁷ When she gave birth, she discovered she had twins in her womb. ²⁸ At birth, one boy put out his hand, and the midwife took it and tied a red thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." ²⁹ As soon as he pulled his hand back, his brother came out, and she said, "You've burst out on your own." So he was named Perez. ³⁰ Afterward, his brother with the red thread on his hand came out, and he was named Zerah.

Sermon: "Tamar: Woman of Misplaced Degradation" – Rev. Lisa Johnson

Hymn #773 – Heaven Shall Not Wait

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

Heaven shall not wait for the poor to lose their patience,
The scorned to smile, the despised to find a friend:
Jesus is Lord; he has championed the unwanted;
In him injustice confronts its timely end.

Heaven shall not wait for the rich to share their fortunes,
The proud to fall, the elite to tend the least:
Jesus is Lord; he has shown the master's privilege:
To kneel and wash servants' feet before they feast.

Heaven shall not wait for the dawn of great ideas,
Thoughts of compassion divorced from cries of pain:
Jesus is Lord; he has married word and action;
His cross and company make his purpose plain.

Heaven shall how wait for triumphant Hallelujahs,
When earth has passed and we reach another shore:
Jesus is Lord; in our present imperfection;
His power and love are for now and then forevermore.

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, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn #320 – The Church of Christ in Every Age

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

The church of Christ in every age,
Beset by change but Spirit-led,
Must claim and test its heritage
And keep on rising from the dead.

Across the world, across the street,
The victims of injustice cry
For shelter and for bread to eat,
And never live before they die.

Then let the servant church arise,
A caring church that long to be
A partner in Christ's sacrifice,
And clothed in Christ's humanity.

For Christ alone, whose blood was shed,
Can cure the fever in our blood,
And teach us how to share our bread
And feed the starving multitude.

We have no mission but to serve
In full obedience to our Lord:
To care for all, without reserve,
And spread Christ's liberating word.

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

* Charge & Blessing

Postlude

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