

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: Today I respond. My God, I am willing.

As you breathe in, pray, "Today I respond."

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 55:1-7

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):

God, let us make our excuses. May we list the ways we find to convince us to turn from the loving way. The excuses of the late night ... the excuses of busy lives ... the family problems ... the desire not to be hypocritical. God, let us make our excuses as to why we travel so lightly with you. We do not reject your invitation; we just leave it on the mantelpiece, willing to pick it up one day when we're ready ... when we have time ... when it's convenient for us. Until then, there it will wait. God, let us make our excuses as to why we are not eagerly and excitedly lining up for the feast but finding reason to delay and avoid. God, let us make our excuses, and in every excuse, may we hear your compassion. May we recognize your grace, ever calling, inviting, waiting, longing for us to enjoy the abundance you have set for us. In this journey through Lent, may we refine our immediate response from excuses to acceptance – from "Not today!" to "Yes!" May we meet you in the place where you make no excuses but simply give yourself in the name of love. So be it. (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 22:1-14 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

¹ Jesus responded by speaking again in parables: ² “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding party for his son. ³ He sent his servants to call those invited to the wedding party. But they didn't want to come. ⁴ Again he sent other servants and said to them, “Tell those who have been invited, “Look, the meal is all prepared. I've butchered the oxen and the fattened cattle. Now everything's ready. Come to the wedding party!” ⁵ But they paid no attention and went away—some to their fields, others to their businesses. ⁶ The rest of them grabbed his servants, abused them, and killed them. ⁷ “The king was angry. He sent his soldiers to destroy those murderers and set their city on fire. ⁸ Then he said to his servants, “The wedding party is prepared, but those who were invited weren't worthy. ⁹ Therefore, go to the roads on the edge of town and invite everyone you find to the wedding party.’ ¹⁰ “Then those servants went to the roads and gathered everyone they found, both evil and good. The wedding party was full of guests. ¹¹ Now when the king came in and saw the guests, he spotted a man who wasn't wearing wedding clothes. ¹² He said to him, ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ But he was speechless. ¹³ Then the king said to his servants, ‘Tie his hands and feet and throw him out into the farthest darkness. People there will be weeping and grinding their teeth.’ ¹⁴ “Many people are invited, but few people are chosen.”

Sermon: “Willing to RESPOND” – 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 did you last respond to God's invitation?

Hymn #427 – Jesus Knows the Inmost Heart
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.
Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.

This our sinful hearts require:

Flame of God's refining fire,
Working in us day by day
Till the dross is burned away.

Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.
Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.

Jesus knows our deepest fears,
Knows the pain of hidden tears.
By his words of love and peace
Every heart can find release.

Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.
Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.

When our lives are in his hand
Nothing can his work withstand;
His forgiveness sets us free,
Saves us for eternity.

Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.
Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.

So our faith will be restored
By the word of Christ our Lord;
For the warmth his love imparts
Melts the very hardest hearts.

Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.
Jesus knows the inmost heart:
Nothing can be hidden.

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 #286 – Breathe on Me, Breath of God
(from *Glory to God*, © 2013 Westminster John Knox Press)

Breathe on me, Breath of God;
Fill me with life anew,
That I may love what thou dost love,
And do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Until my heart is pure,
Until with thee I will one will,
To do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
Till I am wholly thine,
Until this earthly part of me
Glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
So shall I never die,
But live with thee the perfect life
Of thine eternity.

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*