

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: Show me forgiveness. My God, I am willing.

As you breathe in, pray, "Show me forgiveness."

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

* **Opening Praise** (based on *Spill the Beans*, iss. 15, © 2015 Spill the Beans Resources):

One: Let us bring what is bound to God –

Many: Within our minds, within our hearts.

One: Let us bring what is bound to God –

Many: By ordinary living and extraordinary circumstances.

One: We bring our lives to God

Many: To loose what binds us to all other masters,

One: To freely worship the God who releases us,

Many: The God who forgives, heals, and sets hope free

One: In our lives

Many: And in the world.

Lenten Reading

from "Stars for the Righteous" by Ann Weems

Scripture – Isaiah 42:5-9

Time for Unburdening – On your way into worship, you were encouraged to pick up a rock. During this time, you're invited to spent 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, your forgiveness knows no bounds. Your compassion never runs out. To the moon and back in how much you love us. To the depths of the ocean is how far you remove our sin from us. God, we know that in our heads. Today, may we feel it in our hearts. Teach us how to love others as you love us. Teach us how to forgive others as you forgive us. Forgive us when we fail to do that, God. Free us from all that holds us back. Convict us with our own forgiveness so that we can go and forgive others. Where we struggle with the burden of guilt, free us from the weight we insist on carrying, and help us, in our freedom, to convince

others to lay down their burdens, too. In our worship, may we know ourselves freed from all that holds us back and renewed in our call to go to love and forgive others in your name – the name of the God who loves, forgives, and frees. (*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 18:15-35 (from the *Common English Bible*, © 2011)

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins against you, go and correct them when you are alone together. If they listen to you, then you've won over your brother or sister. ¹⁶ But if they won't listen, take with you one or two others so that every word may be established by the mouth of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ But if they still won't pay attention, report it to the church. If they won't pay attention even to the church, treat them as you would a Gentile and tax collector. ¹⁸ I assure you that whatever you fasten on earth will be fastened in heaven. And whatever you loosen on earth will be loosened in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I assure you that if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, then my Father who is in heaven will do it for you. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, I'm there with them." ²¹ Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Should I forgive as many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said, "Not just seven times, but rather as many as seventy-seven times. ²³ Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle accounts, they brought to him a servant who owed him ten thousand bags of gold. ²⁵ Because the servant didn't have enough to pay it back, the master ordered that he should be sold, along with his wife and children and everything he had, and that the proceeds should be used as payment. ²⁶ But the servant fell down, knelt before him, and said, 'Please, be patient with me, and I'll pay you back.' ²⁷ The master had compassion on that servant, released him, and forgave the loan. ²⁸ "When that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him one hundred coins. He grabbed him around the throat and said, 'Pay me back what you owe me.' ²⁹ "Then his fellow servant fell down and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I'll pay you back.' ³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he threw him into prison until he paid back his debt. ³¹ "When his fellow servants saw what happened, they were deeply offended. They came and told their master all that happened. ³² His master called the first servant and said, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you appealed to me. ³³ Shouldn't you also have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ His master was furious and handed him over to the guard responsible for punishing prisoners, until he had paid the whole debt. ³⁵ "My heavenly Father will also do the same to you if you don't forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Sermon: "Willing to FORGIVE" – 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.

Why do we find forgiveness so difficult to give? To accept?

Hymn #445 – God, How Can We Forgive

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

God, how can we forgive when bonds of love are torn?
How can we rise and start anew, our trust reborn?
When human loving fails and every hope is gone,
Your love gives strength beyond our own to face the dawn.

When we have missed the mark, and tears of anguish flow,
How can you still release our guilt, the debt we owe?
The ocean depth of grace surpasses all our needs.
A priest who shares our human pain, Christ intercedes.

Who dares to throw the stone to damn another's sin,
When you, while knowing all our past, forgive again?
No more we play the judge, for by your grace to live.
As you, O God, forgive our sin, may we forgive.

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 #74 – When God Restored Our Common Life

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

When God restored our common life,
Our hope, our liberty;
At first it seemed a passing dream,
A waking fantasy;
A shock of joy swept over us,
For we had wept so long;
The seeds we watered once with tears
Sprang up into a song.

We went forth weeping, sowing seeds
In hard, unyielding soil;
With laughing heart we carry home
The fruit of all our toil.
We praise the One who gave the growth,
With voices full and strong.
The seeds we watered once with tears
Sprang up into a song.

Great liberating God, we pray
For all who are oppressed.
May those who long for what is right
With justice now be blest.
We pray for those who mourn this day,

And all who suffering wrong;
May seeds they water now with tears
Spring up into a song.

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*