

Service of Word and Prayer

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Week 5 in Lent

INTRODUCTION

God's word, proclaimed and reflected upon, and the prayer it calls forth from those gathered, are the heart of this service, which is prepared especially for contemplative settings. The Holy Spirit, who knows our needs, prays with and through us, and when we have no words, for us. Silence makes room to breathe deeply, time to still the heart and quiet restless thoughts, and, a place to listen and rest in the presence of God, "like a child upon its mother's breast" (Psalm 131:2). Some times of silence will last no longer than a deep breath; some will be more spacious. A handbell or singing bowl may be rung to mark them. Before worship begins, keeping silence or listening to meditative music invites the community into the unhurried pace of prayer.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us into a community of prayer.

GREETING

The love of God poured into our hearts, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, rich in mercy, full of kindness, out of your great love, you raise us up from sin and death and make us alive together with Christ. Write your word upon our hearts and restore in us the image of your love that, by your Spirit, our way of life may become the way of Christ, through whom we pray.
Amen.

SILENCE

SONG

O Christ the Same

1 O Christ the same, through all our sto - ry's pag - es—
2 O Christ the same, the friend of sin - ners, shar - ing
3 O Christ the same, se - cure with - in whose keep - ing

our loves and hopes, our fail - ures and our fears;
our in - most thoughts, the se - crets none can hide;
our lives and loves, our days and years re - main;

e - ter - nal Lord, the king of all the a - ges,
still as of old up - on your bod - y bear - ing
our work and rest, our wak - ing and our sleep - ing,

un - chang - ing still a - mid the pass - ing years:
the marks of love in tri - umph glo - ri - fied:
our calm and storm, our plea - sure and our pain:

O liv - ing Word, the source of all cre - a - tion,
O Son of Man, who stooped for us from heav - en—
O Lord of love, for all our joys and sor - rows,

who spread the skies and set the stars a - blaze;
O Prince of life, in all your sav - ing power;
for all our hopes when earth shall fade and flee;

O Christ the same, who wrought our whole sal - va - tion,
O Christ the same, to whom our hearts are giv - en:
O Christ the same, be - yond our brief to - mor - rows,

we bring our thanks for all our yes - ter - days.
we bring our thanks for this the pres - ent hour.
we bring our thanks for all that is to be.

Text: Timothy Dudley-Smith, b. 1926

Music: LONDONDERRY AIR, Irish tune

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WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, silence, reflection, and song.

READING: Numbers 21:4-9

⁴From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." ⁶Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." ⁹So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

REFLECTION

PRAYER

The Holy Spirit prays with us and through us.

INVITATION TO PRAYER

The leader invites the community into prayer.

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world.

Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

CONCLUDING PRAYER

Gathering our many prayers into one, let us pray.

God of all compassion, gather our prayers in your mercy and grant to us what you know we need, that we may walk in the life and peace of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our hope and our salvation. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer may be prayed. The leader may introduce the prayer.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

Our Father...

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SILENCE

SONG

Beautiful Savior

1 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, King of cre - a - tion,
2 Fair are the mead - ows, fair are the wood - lands,
3 Fair is the sun - shine, fair is the moon - light,
4 Beau - ti - ful Sav - ior, Lord of the na - tions,

Son of God and Son of Man!
robed in flow'rs of bloom - ing spring;
bright the spar - kling stars on high;
Son of God and Son of Man!

Tru - ly I'd love thee, tru - ly I'd serve thee,
Je - sus is fair - er, Je - sus is pur - er,
Je - sus shines bright - er, Je - sus shines pur - er
Glo - ry and hon - or, praise, ad - o - ra - tion,

light of my soul, my joy, my crown.
he makes our sor - rowing spir - it sing.
than all the an - gels in the sky.
now and for - ev - er - more be thine!

Text: *Gesangbuch*, Münster, 1677; tr. Joseph A. Seiss, 1823–1904
Music: SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU, Silesian folk tune, 19th cent.

BLESSING

Christ Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love, strengthened by the Spirit, and filled with all the fullness of God. **Amen.**