

Worship Service

BY AMBER INSCORE ESSICK

*Call to Worship*¹

Listen, listen, my children! Incline your ears to hear.

Show us your ways, O Lord.

Attend to the advice of the one who loves you.

Teach us your paths, O God.

There is a path to follow, a work to do,

if you would return to him from whom you have strayed.

Good and upright are you, O Lord, for you instruct sinners in the way.

Let us awake, then, for this is the hour to rise from our sleep.

We open our eyes to the light of God.

Hear now the sweetest sound, the holy invitation.

We wait for the voice of the Lord.

See how the loving God shows us the way of salvation.

To You, O Lord, we lift up our souls.

(All) **Show us your ways, O Lord. Amen.**

Chiming of the Hour

Silent Meditation

When the path needs clearing come away;

when a call needs hearing, come away.

Come away with me, to a place where you'll receive

a wisdom that will guide you,

a truth that lives inside you.

Come away with me and rest now, come away.

*Burt L. Burlison*²

Introit Hymn

“Come, All Who Bear the Name of Christ”

Come, all who bear the name of Christ,
the work of prayer is ours to do;
God’s image borne in each of us
shines brighter, working to renew.

We praise the Holy Three in One,
our God, who sits enthroned on high;
the Lord draws near to hear our praise,
and moves our hearts t’ward unity.

Amber Inscore Essick (2010)

Tune: OLD 100TH

Prayers of the People

O God, we are your people. You made us in love, and you sustain us with every good word that comes from your lips. You know our struggles because you have walked in our midst. We are children of weakness, and we need your strength. We stumble through this life until we learn to live by the light of your law. We wander from the path until your discipline calls us back and shows us the way. You know us, and you give us the strength we need to stand, the light for us to walk the path, and the gift of your presence to guide us in the way.

Teach us, O Lord, what the psalmist knows so well: that your law does not restrain, but enlivens. Give us hearts that pant for your commandments, ears that strain for every word from you. We are simple people, Lord; grant us understanding. We are your people, O God; help us to be found in you.

This world is a place of your activity, a place where your light shines. But there are barren places, too, O Lord. There are places where your image, which once shined like the sun, is obscured and eclipsed by those you created. War, hatred, and fear make deserts in your world; but so do our neglect, ignorance, and complacency. Though you came to bring light, we often sit in darkness; though you came to give life, we often walk in the shadow of death.

We hear your call to the deserts of this world. Help us to answer. Show us how to seek you in the forgotten places. Lead us to those the world has neglected, and connect us to them in friendship. You have burned your image deep into every human; teach us to see it. May we learn to love you by loving one another, and may we receive your love at the hands of those around us.

We pray to you, Father, through Jesus the Christ, in the power of your Spirit. Amen.

Unison Reponse: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

You shall love the LORD your God

with all your heart,

and with all your soul,

and with all your might.

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart.

Recite them to your children

**and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away,
when you lie down and when you rise.**

Bind them as a sign on your hand,

fix them as an emblem on your forehead,

and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Children's Sermon

When we use the word "monasticism," we are talking about monks and nuns. However, we are also talking about other Christians who have chosen to live in community by some sort of rule of life, or agreed Christian practices.

An important practice of the monastic life is prayer. Monks, nuns, and other monastics order their lives by prayer. Often they chant prayers from the Bible, the psalms. Can you imagine praying or chanting all one-hundred-fifty psalms every week of your life? Many monastics do that!

Psalms help us praise and thank God. They also help us say difficult things to God. When we need to confess sin, ask for help, or express anger, psalms help us say things we may be afraid for God to know about us. We may need to say, "Lord, I feel forgotten! I look, but I cannot see your love anywhere. I come to you and ask you to help me. I keep calling you and lift my hands up to you. Please help me." No one likes to think about sad things. But when we are sad, we can use the psalms as our own prayers to God—just like the monastics!

The psalmist reminds us that God really listens to us. Let us pray together like the psalmist prays:

**I love the LORD,
because he heard my prayers.
God listened to me and delivered me,
so I will pray to God as long as I live.
Praise the LORD!**

Now, stand with me while the whole congregation reads together from the Book of Psalms.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 119:161-168

Princes persecute me without cause,
but my heart stands in awe of your words.
I rejoice at your word
like one who finds great spoil.
I hate and abhor falsehood,
but I love your law.
Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous ordinances.
Great peace have those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.
I hope for your salvation, O LORD,
and I fulfill your commandments.
My soul keeps your decrees;
I love them exceedingly.
I keep your precepts and decrees,
for all my ways are before you.

Hymn of Petition

“Break Now the Bread of Life” (v. 1)

Break now the bread of life, dear Lord, to me,
as you did break the bread beside the sea;
beyond the sacred page I seek you, Lord;
my spirit pants for you, O Living Word.

Mary A. Lathbury (1877), alt.

Tune: BREAD OF LIFE

Gospel Reading: Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

The Word of the Lord for God’s people.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn of Preparation

“Gather Now around His Teachings”

Gather now around his teachings,
gather now around the Word.
Hear him calling from the margin,
drawing us to be his own.

Hear the Master’s hillside sermon:
peace and justice, mercy, love.
Will we let his teachings shape us?
Will his way become our prayer?

Quiet call heard through the shouting,
straight his path through culture’s maze;
rule of life, to all, life giving:
Christ – the truth, the life, the way.

Common bread and wine and water,
common brother, savior, hope
bring uncommon transformation,
changing church to Christ on earth.

Terry W. York, ASCAP (2010)
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Sermon

Silent Meditation

I beg you to keep me in this silence so that I may learn from it the word of your peace and the word of your mercy and the word of your gentleness to the world: and that through me perhaps your word of peace may make itself heard where it has not been possible for anyone to hear it for a long time.

*Thomas Merton (1915-1968)*³

Hymn of Response

“Master, We Your Footsteps Follow” (vv. 1, 2, and 3)

Master, we your footsteps follow,
we your word obey;
hear us, your dear name confessing,
while we pray.

Now into your death baptizèd,
we ourselves would be
dead to all the sin that made
your Calvary.

Rising with you, make us like you,
in your love and care,
in your zeal, and in your labor,
and your prayer.

Frederick A. Jackson (1867-1942)
Tune: STEPHANOS

Litany of Confession

Most Holy God, who created us to love and serve you,
we bow before you with broken hearts.

We have sinned against you, O Lord.
Though your love for us is perfect,
our love for you has been half-hearted and self-serving.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy.

We have sinned against our neighbors, O Lord.
Though you have loved us,
we have shown no eagerness to love our neighbors as ourselves.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy.

Thus, we, your beloved creatures,
have left your work in the world undone.
(silent prayers of confession)

Yet your love calls out to us even now,
drawing us into repentance.
(silent prayers of contrition)

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we pray.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, through the love of God our
Father, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we are forgiven our sins.
May the Lord who walks before us, beside us, and among us keep us
on the path that leads to life and cheer us along the way.

Words of Institution: Luke 22:14-23

When the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles
with him. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover
with you before I suffer; for I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled
in the kingdom of God." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he
said, "Take this and divide it among yourselves; for I tell you that from
now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God
comes." Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he
broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given
for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the
cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new
covenant in my blood."

Prayer for the Bread and Cup

Now, O Lord, who walked among us,
consecrate this bread and this cup, your body and blood,
that we may dine with you as your guests.
May your body, though broken and scattered,
be made one in the sharing of this meal.
May your blood, though poured out for many,
be the spiritual drink that nourishes us, your children. Amen.

Christ has sacrificed himself for us.
Come let us feast together with him.

(The congregation will come forward to partake of the Lord's Supper by intinction.)

Passing the Peace of Christ

Benediction: 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. Amen.

NOTES

1 The leader's words are drawn from St. Benedict's *Regula* or *Rule of Life* (seventh century), and the responses are based on words from the Psalms which have been central to the worship of both classic and new monastics.

2 Burt L. Burlinson, "Come Away," verse 3 (2003). Used with permission. This text was written for DaySpring Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, on the occasion of its moving to a new campus. The congregation sings it to a tune written by Kurt Kaiser.

3 Thomas Merton, *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (New York: Image Books, 1965, 1989), 178.



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