

Worship Service

BY DEBRA DEAN MURPHY

I am struck by how sharing our weakness and difficulties is more nourishing to others than sharing our qualities and successes.

Jean Vanier¹

Power is made perfect in weakness.

2 Corinthians 12:9b

GOD'S PEOPLE GATHER

Prelude

Lighting of the Candles

Hymn

“God Has Spoken to All People” (verses 1-3)

God has spoken to all people
in each age, throughout the earth,
in creation and the Scriptures,
then through Jesus' human birth.
God who spoke at life's beginning
speaks again with each new day,
bidding us to hear and follow
words of life that mark Christ's way.

Triune God who never leaves us,
Maker, Savior, Light, and Guide,
through the water of baptism
our new life has been supplied.
Bound by water and the Spirit,
sealed and marked, empowered by grace,
known by name as Christ's disciples
we can now the world embrace.

Sovereign God of every person,
different tongues and cultures too,
many races, many talents,
many skins of varied hue,
you have called us to your service,
help us teach and preach and show
virtues, practices, and knowledge
so that seeds of faith will grow.

Mary Jackson Cathey (2005)²

Suggested Tunes: STUTTGART or BEECH SPRING

Greeting

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Opening Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Almighty and Everlasting God,

who has created each of us in your image

and through the crucified and resurrected body of a beloved Son

made of us one body:

give us hearts and minds, we pray,

to know the wisdom of human vulnerability;

to see the beauty in bodies differently-abled;

to dismantle the barriers erected by attitudes and architecture;

and to trust the Spirit's power to make us friends, make us whole, make us one.

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

Call to Confession (based on 1 Peter 2:24-25)

Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross,

so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness.

By his wounds we have been healed.

Therefore let us turn to the Lord with contrite hearts,

confessing our sins before God and one another.

Prayer of Confession

For the sin of silence, for the sin of indifference,

for the secret complicity of the neutral;

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

For the closing of doors,
for the closing of hearts and minds,
for the refusal to see with eyes wide open;

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

For all that's been done, for all that is left undone,
for our failure of nerve, courage, and will;

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Let there be remembrance, regret, and resolve, O Lord:
that we would know our sins,
be sorry for them,
and have the courage to live freely in the light of your grace.

And let there be forgiveness,
that all your children, at last, may know your peace.

We pray to the Lord.

Silence

Words of Assurance and Pardon

The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.
As we have confessed our sins, God has been faithful.
In the name of Jesus Christ, my sisters and brothers,
your sins are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

TO LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 45:9-12

Woe to you who strive with your Maker,
earthen vessels with the potter!
Does the clay say to the one who fashions it, 'What are you making?'
or 'Your work has no handles?'
Woe to anyone who says to a father, 'What are you begetting?'
or to a woman, 'With what are you in labor?'
Thus says the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker:
Will you question me about my children,
or command me concerning the work of my hands?
I made the earth,
and created humankind upon it;
it was my hands that stretched out the heavens,
and I commanded all their host.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Psalter Reading (responsively) Psalm 139:1-6; 13-18

O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
**You search out my path and my lying down,
and are acquainted with all my ways.
Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD,
you know it completely.**
You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand on upon me.
**Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

It was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
**I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.**
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
**Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.
In your book were written
all the days that were formed for me,
when none of them as yet existed.**
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
**I try to count them – they are more than the sand;
I come to the end – I am still with you.**

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:17-22

So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Hymn

“When Hands Reach Out”

When hands reach out and fingers trace
the beauty of a loved one’s face,
we thank you, God, that love relies
on gifts of grace not seen with eyes.

When fingers spell and signs express
our prayer and praise and thankfulness,
we thank you, God, that hands can sing;
you bless the silent songs we bring.

When broken bodies will not mend,
we thank you, God, for Christ our Friend.
In him, our healing can begin:
he welcomes all the wounded in.

And when the ways we learn and grow
are not the ways that others know,
we thank you, God, that we have learned
you love’s a gift, and never earned.

Your Spirit gives us differing ways
to serve you well and offer praise.
When all are joined as one, we’ll be
your able, strong community.

Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (2001)³

Suggested Tunes: O WALY WALY and TALLIS’ CANON

Gospel Reading: John 9:35-41

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered, “And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him.” Jesus said to him, “You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.” He said, “Lord, I believe.” And he worshiped him. Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ.

Sermon

AND TO RESPOND IN FAITH

Prayers of the People

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the blind and those who cannot see well;
and for those who have sight but little vision for God's good future;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the deaf and those who cannot hear well;
and for those of sound hearing who block out the cries of injustice;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the lame and those who cannot move well;
and for those whose haste and speed deny them the joys of creation;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who suffer in mind, body, or spirit;
and for those who think they have no woundedness, no need of healing;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For your Church: where it is faithful and where it is not;
where it perpetuates patterns of brokenness,
and where it glimpses the goodness of the kingdom of God;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the world and its people:
that a spirit of respect for all would triumph over conflict and violence;
that the dignity and worth of all persons might be acknowledged and
upheld;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all of creation, that groans as it awaits the fulfillment of your shalom;
and that we your people might wisely steward its gifts;
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

(Other petitions may be spoken.)

In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and of all the saints,
let us commend ourselves and one another to the living God
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Presenting Our Gifts

Monetary gifts are collected, if appropriate to the occasion, and are brought forward with the communion elements. A Doxology may be sung. The presider may offer a prayer of thanksgiving for these gifts: the fruit of our labor and the work of human hands.

Communion

The worshiping community's texts and traditions should guide this part of the service: the Invitation, the Peace, the Eucharistic Prayer (or Prayer of Thanksgiving), the Lord's Prayer and the distribution of the elements.

Communion Hymn

"The Twisted Form upon the Tree"

Terry W. York (2012)

Tune: GOD IN PAIN

(See pp. 43-45 of this volume.)

Prayer After Communion (unison)

For your body – blessed, broken, and shared – we give you thanks, O Lord; and for the cup of blessing that satisfies our thirst for you.

From this table of welcome and plenty may we go forth to bear witness to your goodness, and to be signs of hope and reconciliation in the world you have made and loved.

All glory is yours, we pray, now and forever. Amen.

THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW

Closing Hymn

"Let it Be Said of Us"

Steve Fry (1994)⁴

Dismissal with Blessing

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

May Almighty God bless us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We are sent in the name of Christ our Lord to love and to serve.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude and Meditation

Even when they call us mad,
when they call us subversives and communists
and all the epithets they put on us,
we know that we only preach
the subversive witness of the Beatitudes,
which have turned everything upside down
to proclaim blessed the poor,
blessed the thirsting for justice,
blessed the suffering.

Oscar Romero (1917-1980)⁵

NOTES

1 Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth*, second revised edition (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 185.

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5 Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, ed. by James R. Brockman, SJ. Copyright © 2011 by The Plough Publishing House. Used with permission. Available online at www.plough.com/ebooks/violenceoflove.html (accessed September 17, 2012).



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