Order of worship

June 20, 2021

4th Sunday after Pentecost

Call to worship *(Psalm 9:9-12)*

The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.

**And those who know your name put their trust in you,
for you, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek you.**

Sing praises to the Lord, who dwells in Zion.
Declare God's deeds among the peoples.

**For the one who avenges blood is mindful of them;
God does not forget the cry of the afflicted.**

Call to confession

We come before God "just as we are, though tossed about," as the hymn writer says. Let us now name our conflicts, our doubts and our sins before one another and before God.

Prayer of confession

O Lord, we confess that we come to you in the midst of clutter: we have cluttered desks, cluttered schedules, cluttered minds, cluttered lives and a cluttered planet. The clutter can be like a storm that overwhelms us and distracts us from knowing your presence and hearing your strong voice. We pray for the will to put aside the clutter of life and to listen to your voice stilling the storm and calming the wind and waves. Help us to let go of our fear, and our desire to be in control of all manner of things. Lead us to place you in the center of our lives, where, if we do, we will also see neighbor, stranger and enemy. Then help us to cross the boundary waters with you, the One who has broken every barrier down, and will lead us to the other side.

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Declaration of forgiveness *(Romans 8:1-2)*

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Friends, believe this astounding good news, through Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Prayer for illumination

Come to us this day. O God, with the light of your Word.
Speak to us through Scripture of your truth,
and dwell in us with your love.
May we know you more fully,
and follow you more nearly. Amen.

Scripture readings

Sermon

Affirmation of faith *(Julian of Norwich)*

I saw that God was everything that is good
and encouraging.

God's our clothing
that wraps, clasps and encloses us
so as never to leave us.

God showed me in my palm
a little thing round as a ball
about the size of a hazelnut.

I looked at it with the eye of my understanding
and asked myself:
"What is this thing?"
And I was answered: "It is everything that is created."

I wondered how it could survive since it seemed so little
it could suddenly disintegrate into nothing.

The answer came: "It endures and ever will endure,
because God loves it."

And so everything has being because of God's love.

Call for the offering

So come and follow Jesus,
you who have committed yourselves already,
and you who would like to do so for the first time;
you who have given yourselves to the care of creation
and to the suffering ones of the world,
and you who feel moved by the Spirit
to begin to offer yourselves;
you who have been faithful in your life commitments
and you who have failed.
Come, offer yourselves and your gifts,
and make new beginnings in your lives.

Prayer of dedication

Blessed are you, God of all creation;
through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings and our lives
for your glory and for the service of your kingdom. Amen.

Prayers of the people and the Lord's Prayer

Gracious God,
because we are not strong enough to pray as we should,
you provide Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit
to intercede for us in power.
In this confidence, we ask you to accept our prayers.

We pray today for your creation.
You entrusted the earth to the human race,
yet we disrupt its wholeness with violence,
and corrupt its purity with our greed.
Prevent us from destroying what you have made and called good,
so that our children's children may inherit lands and seas
brimming with life and beauty.

We pray today for the people of the world.
Preserve the people of every nation from tyrants.
Heal them of disease, especially of the pandemic
that has afflicted all peoples.
Protect them in disaster and war and famine.
Help all people – adults and children –
walk in the ways that lead to peace.

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We pray today for our city and neighborhood.
Heal the rifts and fear caused by violence
and racism in our streets and schools.
Protect all of our city's children,
and give them lives of safety, hope and joy.

We pray today for our country.
Give wisdom to those who govern us,
to our president and Congress and our courts.
Keep safe those who protect us from danger,
and form us as a nation
where justice flows like life-giving water.

We pray today for this church.
Strengthen its leaders – its ministers, deacons, elders –
sustain them and give them the energy of your Holy Spirit
so that they may give others new life and hope.
Be close to those in our community who are sick,
or alone, or vulnerable.
We pray today especially for the newly baptized,
that in the community of faith,
you will gather them to you as a mother hen
gathers her young under her wing,
and they will come to know you and love you more and more.

We pray today for all who are fathers, of body or of spirit.
Give them the grace to love their children abundantly and wisely,
giving embrace when that is needed,
and space and freedom to find their own way in life.

We pray for those students who will graduate in this season.
Fill them with hope and energy as they find their callings in the world,
and may they "go to the other side" as they journey with you,
and serve you and your people with gladness
to transform the world to look more like your kingdom.

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Eternal God, your love is stronger than death.
We rejoice in the lives of those who have died in faith.
Keep us in joyful communion with them
until we join the saints of every nation
gathered before your throne in ceaseless praise.
We pray these things through Christ, with Christ, in Christ,
in the mystery of the Pentecost Spirit,
in the name of the Triune God.
In the words that Christ taught us, we pray, saying, *Our Father...*

Charge and benediction

Watch with us in the storms of our lives, dear Lord;
still the waves with your powerful voice,
and give us courage to continue the journey with you
to the other side, to a new world.

And may the God of hope
fill us with all joy in believing,
that we may abound in hope
in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

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Liturgy written by Barbara Chaapel,
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