

The Gayton Kirk

God Is Holding Your Life: Light of the World

March 19, 2023

Lent Four

11 AM Service



Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust that God is, indeed, holding our lives. In this series we have a guest composer. Richard Bruxvoort Colligan is a modern-day interpreter of the Psalms—a “psalmist.” Many of our songs are written by him. Our artwork for the series is inspired in the tradition of Henri Matisse

Please note: The Gayton Kirk livestreams the 11 AM Worship Service. Our camera captures the worship leaders at the front of the sanctuary. We do not film the congregation during communion.

Welcome to worship! If you would like to participate in Holy Communion via streaming or zoom, please have bread and wine or juice set aside.

RINGING THE HOUR

PRELUDE

“Be Thou My Vision”

arr. Wendy Stevens
Devon Laporre, piano

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Reverend Janet James

Today’s Psalm comes late in the Book and offers a glimpse of a time when the exiled outcasts are gathering back together and seeing their world built back up. We too, yearn for a re-gathering and a day when we sing our praises and play our instruments with abandon together again. We wait, we hope, we stay firm in our faith, knowing as our ancient ancestors did, that God is indeed holding our lives.

THEME SONG

“God Is Holding Your Life”

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
Devon Laporre, piano

*Venturing out or coming home,
‘neath heat of day or cool of night,
we call the one who hears your voice
and comes to heal and keep your life.*

*God is holding your life
God is holding your life
God is holding your life, we believe
God is holding your life
God is holding your life
God is holding your life, we believe*

OPENING PRAYER

Xavier Rivera, liturgist

Healing God,
You are working to bind up the wounds of the world.
Open us this day to be your hands and feet for a suffering people,
so that we might make a difference right where we are,
contributing to your reign on earth as it is in heaven.
**We praise you for the strength to persevere,
holding our lives together in love.**
Amen.

HYMN #35

“Praise Ye the Lord, the Almighty”

Devon Laporre, piano

“Blessing of Mud,” Jan Richardson

Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the dirt.
Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the earth
beneath our feet.
Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the dust,
like the dust
that God scooped up
at the beginning
and formed
with God's
two hands
and breathed into
with God's own
breath.
Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the spit.
Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the mud.
Lest we think
the blessing
is not
in the mire,
the grime,
the muck.
Lest we think
God cannot reach
deep into the things
of earth,
cannot bring forth
the blessing
that shimmers
within the sludge,
cannot anoint us
with a tender
and grimy grace.

The Lord's Prayer

Spirit of God, stir within our hearts, that we may speak anew the familiar words that Jesus taught us...

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

"Selah" Moment

Xavier Rivera, liturgist

The Psalms have a repeated direction throughout – the word "Selah." Scholars are not sure exactly what it means. Perhaps because the Psalms were to be used in worship, we can surmise that the word indicates a pause, or an invitation for a musical instrument to be played. In this worship series, we will use an instrumental sound to remind us to take a pause, a breath, and remember that the settling of our hearts can offer the feeling that we are held in the hands of the Divine.

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

Elder Sally Wambold

Open our hearts and minds by the power of your Spirit, Holy God, that we might hear and receive the message you intend for us today.
Amen.

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 147

Elder Sally Wambold

¹Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing praises to our God;
for the Lord is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.
²The Lord builds up Jerusalem;
the Lord gathers the outcasts of Israel.
³the Lord heals the brokenhearted, and binds up their wounds.
⁴The Lord determines the number of the stars;
and gives to all of them their names.
⁵Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;
the Lord's understanding is beyond measure.
⁶The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;
and casts the wicked to the ground.
⁷Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;
make melody to our God on the lyre.
⁸The Lord covers the heavens with clouds,
prepares rain for the earth,

makes grass grow on the hills.

⁹The Lord gives to the animals their food,
and to the young ravens when they cry.

¹⁰God's delight is not in the strength of the horse,
nor is the Lord's pleasure in the speed of a runner;

¹¹but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear God,
in those who hope in the Lord's steadfast love.

¹²Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

¹³For the Lord strengthens the bars of your gates;
the Lord blesses your children within you.

¹⁴The Lord grants peace within your borders;
and fills you with the finest of wheat.

¹⁵The Lord sends out his command to the earth;
the Lord's word runs swiftly.

¹⁶God gives snow like wool;
and scatters frost like ashes.

¹⁷The Lord hurls down hail like crumbs—
who can stand before his cold?

¹⁸The Lord sends out his word, and melts them;
the Lord makes the wind blow and the waters flow.

¹⁹The Lord declares his word to Jacob,
his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

²⁰The Lord has not dealt thus with any other nation;
they do not know God's ordinances. Praise the Lord!

John 9:1-41

Elder Barbara Crump and Liturgist Juan Rivera

As he walked along; he saw a man blind from birth. ²His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" ³Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." ⁶When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see.

⁸The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" ⁹Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." ¹⁰But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" ¹¹He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." ¹²They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

¹³They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see."

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. ¹⁷So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

¹⁸The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" ²⁰His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." ²²His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. ²³Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

²⁴So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." ²⁵He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." ²⁶They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" ²⁷He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?"

²⁸Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from."

³⁰The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³²Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

³⁴They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

³⁵Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

³⁶He answered, "And who is he, sir?
Tell me, so that I may believe in him."

³⁷Jesus said to him, "You have seen him,
and the one speaking with you is he."

³⁸He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

³⁹Jesus 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." ⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" ⁴¹Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

Here ends the reading of Scripture. **Amen.**

SERMON

The Rev. Janet James

HYMN #649 "Amazing Grace, How Sweet the Sound" Devon Laporre, piano

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each week we will have a moment to write prayer concerns on small pieces of paper. We will then place these prayers in a bowl – a symbolic action of placing them in God's hands, God's care.

Let the people say, "Selah" **Selah!**

Let us continue our prayers.

As a prayer posture for this worship series, I invite you to cup your hands, ready to receive God's love and peace, and in preparation to be God's love and peace in the world.

Let us pray for the leaders of this world and this church community.
Selah... God of Justice, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in conflict around the world. *Selah...*
Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.

Comfort the people who have lost homes, businesses, and loved ones due to forces of nature. Draw close to them. *Selah ...*
Powerful Savior, hear our prayer.

Let us not turn away, but help us be your hands and feet to love those who are suffering and bear witness to your presence with them. *Selah ...*
Jesus the Christ, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who are sick, have chronic pain, whose health is failing, who are depressed, who are anxious. *Selah...*
Comforting Healer, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who are homeless, hungry and alone. *Selah...*
Emmanuel, God-With-Us, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in comfort,
for Christ-like hospitality and generosity. *Selah...*
Transforming Spirit, hear our prayer.

Holy and Living One, for those we have named and the ones whose names we do not know, hear our prayer. **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The Rev. Janet James

Holy and Living One, as we gather to break bread once again,
break us open to your love, to your peace, to your presence,
to your transformative power.
In the name of the One who invites us time and again, Jesus the Christ.
Let the people say, “Selah” **Selah!**

Confession and Assurance

We are all invited to the gift of this table of grace. As a response to the invitation, we are asked to let go of all that separates us from accepting this grace. We confess the ways we have placed hardship in the hands of others, rather than peace.

Put peace into each other's hands (see bulletin p.12 for music tune)
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle flame,
with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.

When we place peace in each other's hands,
we place love in all the hands of the world.
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven!
Glory to God! Amen!

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you!

And also with you.

Open your hearts, your mouths, your lives to the Holy One.

We long for this communion.

Let us give our greatest thanks in the company of the beloved.

It is a good and joyful thing to give our thanks and praise.

Gift of Life, Creator of All That Is, You have breathed life into us,
filled our emptiness, loved us through our resistance.

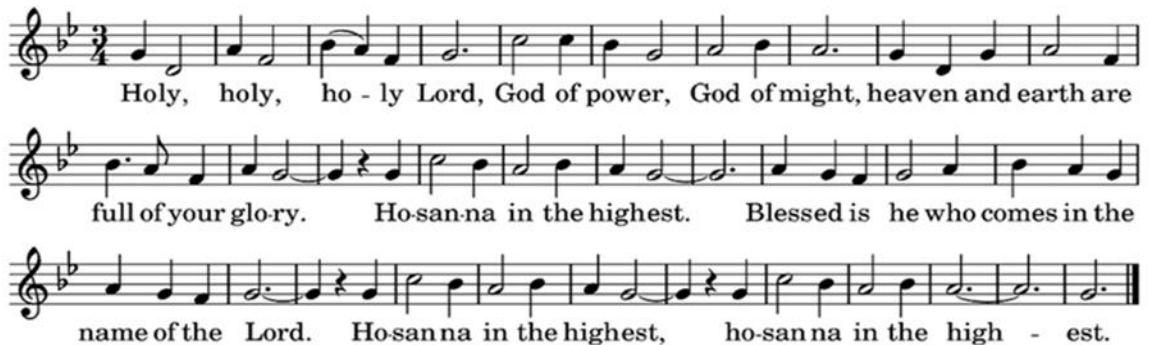
Time and again you say, Listen!

Time and again you say, Live!

Time and again you say, Love!

And so we gather and give thanks in this moment.

We stop so we may listen, we breathe so we may live,
we open so we may love.



Holy are you God, and blessed be your work in Jesus,
Peace-Giver, Life-Healer. Spirit-Anointer, do your work in us, as in him.

May we proclaim release, recovery, liberty

and the end of all oppression.

May we savor the taste of goodness and offer this gift of love to all.

Jesus gathered with his disciples, his friends, his family.

He took bread, said thanks over it, gave it to his companions and said,

“Take, eat, this is my body. My life is given for love of you.

So whenever you gather together, stop... *Selah*... think of me.

Be at peace. I am here.”

And after the supper he lifted his cup, gave thanks over it,

and offered it to his companions, saying, “Drink from this cup, all of you.

This is my life, my love poured out for you. Whenever you gather

together, stop... *Selah*... think of me.

Be at peace. I am here.”

*Put peace into each other's hands
like bread we break for sharing;
look people warmly in the eye;
our life is meant for caring.*

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ's offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Holy Spirit, Breath of Wind,

Fill us, transform us.

Holy Spirit, Lover of Justice,

Fill us, transform us.

Holy Spirit, Maker of Unity,

Fill us, transform us.

And all God's people say, **Amen!**

*As at communion shape your hands,
into a waiting cradle;
the gift of Christ receive, revere,
united round the table.*

We who are many are one body, one loaf, rising in Spirit together.
Even if we cannot be physically in the same space, we are one in love.
We are one in the grace of Christ broken open for us.

While we have many cups,
God's love is poured upon us from the one cup of salvation.
It is in this sharing beyond all time and space that we are drawn close,
that we are made whole, that we are made free.

As you are served by those with you, or served by your own hand,
know that the hand that serves you is the hand of all Christ's Body,
through mystical union with the Divine.
You are not alone.

The Communion of the People

The gifts of God for the people of God.
*After we receive the bread and the cup,
let us hold the cup and drink together.*

*Put Christ into each other's hands,
he is love's deepest measure;
in love make peace, give peace a chance,
and share it like a treasure.*

Response of Thanksgiving

God of all that is too deep for words,
we give you thanks that, at this table of grace,
you offer your holiness, your steadfast love.
Open us often to your *Selah*, your pause,
to hear the needs of your people.
We pray this in the name of the Host of this Table,
Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

POSTLUDE

“How Great Thou Art”

arr. Chris Nole
Devon Laporre, piano

BENEDICTION

The Rev. Janet James

The Peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

(Please make a gesture of extending your cupped hands toward others who may be with or near you as a sign of offering the peace that Christ gives us. If you are alone, place your cupped hands over your heart, as a sign that you send your heartfelt peace out to the world.)

***Give thanks for strong yet tender hands
held out in trust and blessing.
Where words fall short let hands speak out;
the heights of love expressing.***

Now go in the knowledge that
God is holding your life
even as we hold each other.
You are not alone.
You are loved. **Amen.**

OFFERING

It is appropriate to respond to God with our time, talents, and money. Financial offerings can be made by mail to P.O. Box 29635, Henrico, VA 23242 or **click here** to donate by PayPal on The Kirk's website www.thegaytonkirk.org

Would you like to become a member of the Gayton Kirk? Please let Janet James, Pastor, know of your interest.

For a copy of our weekly newsletter, *Kirk Happenings*, please go to www.thegaytonkirk.org, scroll down the website's front page, and click the box that says, "Kirk Happenings."

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WORSHIP NOTES

Worship Liturgists:

First Sundays: **Betty Doll**, Robert Evans, Susie Trulove

Second Sundays **Mike Doll**, Norma Smith, Lilly Craddock

Third Sundays **Sally Wambold**, Barbara Crump, Xavier Rivera, Juan Rivera

Fourth Sundays **Linda Smiley**, Patti McCloskey, Lily Titmus

Fifth Sundays, **Betty Doll**, Lilly Craddock, Xavier Rivera, Sally Wambold

Brendan Donahue, tech support

Marilyn Johns, zoom master

Devon Laporre, piano

Elder John Donelson, song leader and handbell director

The Rev. Russ Kerr, youth pastor

The Rev. Janet James, pastor

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PRELUDE "Be Thou My Vision" arr. Wendy Stevens

IMAGINATIVE WORD —Jan Richardson from *Circle of Grace: A Book of Blessings for the Seasons*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE www.worshipdesignstudio.com/life

COMMUNION PRAYER © www.worshipdesignstudio.com/life

POSTLUDE "How Great Thou Art" arr. Chris Nole

LITURGY © www.worshipdesignstudio.com/life 1

SCRIPTURE Psalm lections for Year B in the Revised Common Lectionary

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COVER ART Parrot and Mermaid Henri Matisse

by Henri Matisse <https://www.art.com>

HYMN

"Put Peace Into Each Other's Hands" Devon Laporre, piano

1. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands and like a
 2. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands with lov - ing
 3. Put peace in - to each oth - er's hands, like bread we
 4. As at commun - ion, shape your hands in - to a
 5. Put Christ in - to each oth - er's hands, He is love's

6
 trea - sure hold it; pro - tect it like a
 ex - pec - ta - tion; be gen - tle in your
 break for shar - ing; look peo - ple warm - ly
 wait - ing cra - dle; the gift of Christ re -
 deep - est meas - ure; in love make peace, give

11
 can - dle flame, with ten - der - ness en - fold it.
 words and ways, in touch with God's cre - a - tion.
 in the eye: our life is meant for car - ing.
 ceive, re - vere, u - nit - ed round the ta - ble.
 peace a chance and share it like a treas - ure.

THE GAYTON KIRK WEEKLY CALENDAR

SUNDAY MARCH 19

8:30 AM - Celtic Worship Service **in-person** and ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

9:45-10:45 AM — Holy Politics - **in-person** (led by Rev. Nancy Summerlin)

9:45 AM - Youth & Children's Sunday School **in-person** (led by Rev. Russ K.)

11:00 AM - Worship Service **in-person**, live streaming, and on ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

12:15-1:30 PM - Diaconate lunch Meeting **in-person** (led by Lavinia J.)

5:00 PM - Jazz Vespers **in-person**, live streaming, and on ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

5:45 PM - Jazz Vespers discussion - **in person** and ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

MONDAY MARCH 20

11:00 AM - Coffee & Scripture - ZOOM (led by Janet J.)

1:30 PM - Creative Expressions **in-person** (led by Sandra O.)

6:30 PM - Session Meeting - ZOOM

7:00 PM - Art by Hand **in-person** (led by Liz B.)

TUESDAY MARCH 21

10:30 AM - Chair Yoga - **in-person** (led by Robin R.)

1:00 PM - Bridge - **in-person** (led by Ellen W.)

1:00 PM - Learn to Play Bridge - **in-person** (led by Tina B.)

7:00 PM - Enneagram Class— ZOOM (led by Janet J.)

WEDNESDAY MARCH 22

9:45 AM - Causes, Actions, & Effects of World War II - **in-person** (led by Bland W.)

3:00 PM - Staff & Committee Head Meeting - **in-person** and ZOOM -contact Janet for link (led by Janet J.)

7:00 PM - Taizé- **in-person**

THURSDAY MARCH 23

10:00 AM - Tai Chi - **in-person** (led by Steve S.)

6:30 PM - Handbell Choir Practice - **in-person** (led by John D.)

SUNDAY MARCH 26 CENTSABILITY

8:30 AM - Celtic Worship Service **in-person** and ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

9:45-10:45 AM — Holy Politics - **in-person** (led by Rev. Nancy Summerlin)

9:45-10:45 AM - Youth & Children's Sunday School **in-person** (led by Rev. Russ K.)

11:00 AM - Worship Service **in-person**, live streaming, and on ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

12:15 PM - Carver Meal Packing **in-person** (led by Stacy D.)

5:00 PM - Jazz Vespers **in-person**, live streaming, and on ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)

5:45 PM - Jazz Vespers discussion - **in person** and ZOOM (hosted by Marilyn J.)