

# Unsettled But Unafraid: A Liturgy For Worshipping At Home

Week of March 15, 2020

St. Simons Presbyterian Church

*Although we are not able to gather in-person in worship this week, we are able to gather in spirit. This simple resource is designed to help us worship together around a common liturgy and theme during this time of disruption from our normal routines and places. You are invited to use this liturgy either individually or as a family or group. If you are using it in a family or group setting, consider giving each person one part to "lead". Take some time to consider the reflection questions and share with others. If using individually, try to carve out 10-minutes to quietly read and reflect.*

## **Opening Sentences:**

The Lord's unfailing love and mercy never cease,  
fresh as the morning and sure as the sunrise.

## **Psalm 100**

Be joyful in the LORD, all you lands; serve the LORD with gladness  
and come before God's presence with a song.

**Know this: The LORD alone is God;  
we belong to the LORD, who made us,  
we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.**

Enter God's gates with thanksgiving; go into the holy courts with praise;  
give thanks and call upon the name of the LORD.

**For good is the LORD, whose mercy is everlasting;  
and whose faithfulness endures from age to age.**

## **Scripture – Mark 2:1-12 (A Healing in Capernaum)**

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

## Reflection Questions

- What impresses you most about the four friends who take the paralyzed man to Jesus?
- What is the healing you are in need of this day? Sickness? Fear? Worry? Something else?
- Writing about the events in Capernaum, Jesuit priest, James Martin, SJ, observes that, "Jesus seems moved to see people demonstrate such faith in him so early in his ministry. [...] As Thomas Stegman, SJ, a professor of New Testament at Boston College, reminded me, Jesus' power to heal remains the same no matter where he is. 'The question is,' he said, 'are people willing to receive the gift he is offering?'" What would it look like for you/us to receive the gift of Jesus' healing this week?
- Where do you find connection in this story?

## Closing Prayer

God who is everywhere, we come to you from many different places and at many different times. Though we are not together in person, we are together in spirit and we trust your Spirit to be moving and you hear our prayers.

For your **Church** in every place, that we may worship and serve you faithfully. Lord, hear our prayer...

For **leaders and people** in every land, that they may know your way and do your will in the midst of this uncertainty that the world is facing. Lord, hear our prayer....

For **justice** throughout the world, that there may be peace and plenty for all in this time when healthcare professionals are stretched thin, when medical supplies are stretched, and hospitals reach capacity. Lord, hear our prayer...

For **those who are ill** with the coronavirus and other illnesses, that they may know your loving care and your presence with them always. Grant healthcare workers wisdom and endurance as they care for patients. Lord, hear our prayer...

For **healthcare workers** who are tired and yet unrelenting in their care, that they may feel renewed in your strength. Lord, hear our prayer...

For **those who grieve** that we live in a time when the risk is high and human contact is dangerous, may they know they are not alone and your Spirit is present. Lord, hear our prayer...

For those who **hunger and thirst**, that they may be filled with good things and remembered in the midst uncertainty that is spreading. Lord, hear our prayer...

Eternal God, hear our prayers and remind us always that nothing can separate us from your great love; through Jesus Christ. Amen

A Prayer for the Week:

God of the present moment,  
God who in Jesus stills the storm and soothes the frantic heart,  
bring hope and courage to all who wait or work in uncertainty.  
Bring hope that you will make them the equal of whatever lies ahead.  
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,  
for your will is health and wholeness;  
you are God, and we need you. Amen.

*-New Zealand Prayer Book 747*

## **Be Still and Know**

A Reflection by Kate Buckley

Lent 2020. It started with a tent in the drizzling rain and a tiny pot of palm ash. The pastors of St. Simons Presbyterian took shifts and placed our fingers on the foreheads of 90-year-olds and babies who stopped for “Drive Thru Ashes”. We said these words, heavy with truth and still thrumming with hope:

“From dust you have come.  
And to dust you shall return.”

I can’t speak for Alan and for Annie, but my eyes were at a constant brim of welled-up, not-dropped-yet tears. This is how Lent started. Heavy with wetness, rain drops and muted tears.

And then. Alan invited us a few weeks ago to pause and marvel. It was a rainy day he spoke about when he met a church member hunkered on a hallway pew, sheltered from the rain.

Sitting and waiting. We are sitting and waiting. We are hunkered down. Taking shelter from the germs that spread so mysteriously and so exponentially. Even as we stock up on toilet paper and hand sanitizer and check our newsfeed and our TV news channels... we are sitting and we are waiting. We are heavy with ash-covered foreheads and eyes brimming with tears. There are plenty of articles out there. News, politics, science documents, suggestions, policies to put into place...

I’m going to ask you to do something crazy. Turn off the news. Shut down the laptop (after you read this!). Put your cellphone on the kitchen counter. Go onto your front porch or sit by a window. Somewhere you can see Creation or feel the fresh air.

Be still. Be still and know. For just a minute. Take a deep breath. And pray in the words of the psalmist to our Lord:

“God is our refuge and our strength,  
A very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear,  
Though the earth should change,  
Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
Though its waters roar and foam,

Though the mountains tremble with its tumult.” (Psalm 46)

This Lent, we have sat and marveled. Now I invite you to sit and surrender. Give it over to God. It is too heavy for us to bear. It's ok to feel the weight. Beautiful and terrible things have happened on the face of the earth. And are happening now. But take a moment to surrender to the God of our magnificent Creation. Surrender to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Surrender to the winds of the Holy Spirit which whisper now, soft and still beneath the scurrying of this chaos: **Do not be afraid.**