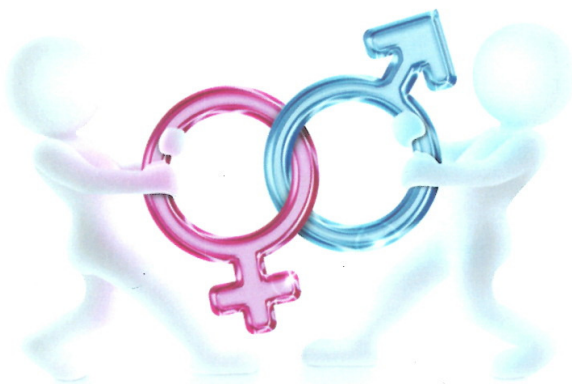


***Embodied Ministry: Gender, Sexuality
and Formation***

***Ripon College Cuddesdon
9th-10th July 2014***

Worship & Prayer Resources



OPENING REFLECTION & PRAYER

Hymn - Sing a new Church (*Tune: Ode to Joy or Nettleton*)
Words: Delores Dufner OSB

Summoned by the God who made us
rich in our diversity,
gathered in the name of Jesus,
richer still in unity.

Refrain: Let us bring the gifts that differ and, in splendid, varied ways,
sing a new church into being, one in faith and love and praise.

Radiant risen from the water,
robed in holiness and light,
male and female in God's image,
male and female, God's delight. **Refrain**

Trust the goodness of creation;
trust the Spirit strong within.
Dare to dream the vision promised,
sprung from seed of what has been. Refrain

Bring the hopes of every nation;
bring the art of every race.
Weave a song of peace and justice;
let it sound through time and space. **Refrain**

Draw together at one table,
all the human family;
shape a circle ever wider
and a people ever free. **Refrain**

From the Letter to the Galatians (3: 26-29)

For all of you are God's people through faith in the Messiah, Jesus. Indeed, all of you who were baptised into the Messiah have clothed yourselves with the Messiah. Because all of you are one in the Messiah Jesus, a person is no longer a Jew or a Greek, a slave or a free person, a male or a female. And if you belong to the Messiah, then you are descendants of Abraham and Sarah indeed, and heirs according to the promise. (International Standard version 2012)

Prayer

God of all the vast varieties of humankind, help us to move beyond the exclusiveness of an either / or mentality to the inclusiveness of an all and every way of thinking. Move us beyond binary definitions to the mystery and complexity of infinite creativity and creation.

We remember those senselessly murdered because of their all-encompassing humanity, those de-humanised by religious institutions who would prefer invisibility, yet who are prophets of true identity, parents and families confused and fearful yet holding firm to love.

Open hearts that need to hear, souls that need to know, and minds that need to see that there are no limits to You nor Your creation. In the name of the one who transcends divine and human labelling, who confounds our rigid definitions, and breaks down the walls that separate us, embraced in one Spirit of love. Amen

HYMNS

1.

Hymn - We sing a love (*Tune: Woodlands*) *Words: June Boyce-Tillman*

We sing a love that sets all people free,
That blows like wind, that burns like scorching flame,
Enfolds like earth, springs up like water clear.
Come, living love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love that seeks another's good
That longs to serve and not to count the cost,
A love that yielding finds itself made new.
Come, caring love, live in our hearts today.

We sing a love, unflinching, unafraid
To be itself despite another's wrath,
A love that stands alone and undismayed.
Come, strengthening love, live in our hearts today.

We seek a burning, fiery, Holy One,
That seeks out shades of ancient bitterness.
Transfigure these as Christ in every heart,
Come, joyful love, live in our hearts today.

2.

Hymn - Word of Welcome (*Tune: Hymn to Joy 87 87D*)

Words: David R. Weiss, 2003, Poet & Theologian, Lutherans Concerned/North America

In this holy place we gather, claimed through grace by God above;
Heaven's wings now wrap around us, downy depths of boundless love.
Freed from fears that keep us hidden, for the work that You desire.
Reconciling as we're bidden, hearts aflame with joyful fire.

Earth in all her verdant beauty sings Your joy made manifest;
Winged and finned and scaled and limbed life; fruitful frenzy, quiet rest.
Rushing wind and roiling waters, green of forest, blue of sky,
Dark of night and dawn of morning, all give praise to You on high.

As by imprint nature offers witness to Your gracious care
So in freedom's faith we follow after Christ if we but dare.
Rushing wind of Spirit able, blowing from the most to least
From the font and for the table, born again and bid to feast.

Word of welcome walk among us, watching as these wineskins burst
Breaking bread and pouring wine for all who hunger, all who thirst.
Now as we go forth to scatter, may Your presence yet abide
Joy of life and Love of justice, be our Wisdom and our Guide.

3.

Hymn - Welcoming God (*Tune: Assurance Irr.*)

Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, Co-Pastor, Limestone Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, Delaware

Children are welcome, Christ said one day,
When the disciples urged them away.
Children are welcome at Jesus' knee:
God's own example for ministry.
Welcoming God, You open the Way:
Even the smallest worship and pray,
Singing with faith and serving You well,
Your life to know and good news tell.

Women are welcome, as are the men;
Through God's own Spirit, we're partners again.
Partners as prophets, ministers, too:
No more divided – made one anew.
Welcoming God, You open the way;
Those once divided join now to pray,
Serving at Table, preaching Your Words,
So that Your love for all will be heard.

Outcasts are welcome; sinners are, too,
Eating with Jesus and being made new:
Some like Zacchaeus turned right around;
Wounded and poor ones felt peace profound.
God of great love, You stand at the door,
Welcoming people outcast and poor.
So You forgive and call us to be
Filled with the joy of Your jubilee.

So may we welcome into our pew
All who in Jesus are being made new-
All those who seek him, wanting to know,
Wanting to love him, wanting to grow.
Welcoming God, You stand at our door,
As someone different, outcast or poor.
With longing eyes, Lord Jesus, You search
May we all welcome You in Your church.

4.

Hymn - Hear Our Prayer, O Holy God (*Tune: Gethsemane / England's Lane / Dix 77 77 77*) *Words: Rev. Pamela June Webb Founder, Covenant of Inclusion, Open and Affirming Ministries of the GLAD Alliance, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* *the final verse might work as a sung response to Bidding Prayers/ Intercessions.*

Hear our prayer, O Holy God.
Help us place our trust in you.
Be for us new strength each day.
Let us follow in your way.
With your Spirit, like the Dove,
Healing others with your love.

Hear our prayer, O Holy God.
Bless us with the skill we need.
Help us listen with our ears
To the feelings and the fears.
With your Spirit, like the Dove.
Healing others with your love.

Hear our prayer, O Holy God,
May we always be prepared.
Sense the need of those in pain,
Let their tears flow like the rain.
With your Spirit, like the Dove,
Healing others with your love.

Hear our prayer, O Holy God,
Free us from our closet's dark.
Give us courage we can share,
Daring lives which show we care.
With your Spirit, like the Dove
Healing others with your love.

5.

Hymn - Guide Us To Openness (*Tune: Faithfulness 11.10.11.10 with refrain*)
Words: The Rev. W. Robert Martin, III, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Palo Alto, CA . Dedicated to the faithful ministry of More Light Presbyterians

Guide us to openness, Spirit of mercy,
Aid us in seeking God's justice and grace.
Move us to show Christ's compassion through witness,
Love first to offer and hate to erase.
Guide us to openness! Guide us to openness!
Let no one ever be shunned or denied.
Make of the Church a bold place of compassion,
That all who seek You may come and abide.

Spirit of tenderness, impart Your presence,
Fill both our hearts and our hands with Your care.
Let no one suffer or grieve unattended,
Grant us Your kindness and warmth here to share.
Guide us to openness! Guide us to openness!

Let no one ever be shunned or denied.
Make of the Church a bold place of compassion,
That all who seek You may come and abide.

Though there are those who would limit Christ's graces,
Still we refuse to believe in such lies,
For in this time we have made a commitment
Never to limit love's power or size.
Guide us to openness! Guide us to openness!
Let no one ever be shunned or denied.
Make of the Church a bold place of compassion,
That all who seek You may come and abide.

6.
Hymn - God Made Us From One Blood (*Tune: ST. DENIO 11.11.11.11*)
Words: Thomas H. Troeger, 1988

God made us from one blood all families of earth,
The circles of nurture that raise us from birth,
Companions who join us to work through each stage,
Of childhood and youth and adulthood and age.

We turn to You, God, with our thanks and our tears,
For all of the families we've known through the years,
The intimate networks on whom we depend
Of parents and partners and children and friends.

Through families we've tasted the value of trust
And felt what it means to be loving and just.
Yet families have also betrayed their best goals,
Mistreating their members and bruising their souls.

Help families in all of their various forms
To face with integrity struggles and storms;
Grant peace to our homes that will nurture the bud
Of peace for the families You made from one blood.

7.
Hymn - Faces and Facets (*Tune: Nettleton / Beach Spring 87 87 D*)
Words: Alan J. Hommerding

God-among-us in the faces of your children everywhere,
Lovely, jewel-like, sparkling facets, shining with your dazzling care:
You have made us in your image: woman, man, with gender graced;
Let us find in all our unions your creative, tender trace.

O, how myriad are the myst'ries of your holy, loving ways,
How life-giving is the witness when our bonds glow with your praise;
When you join us – woman/woman, man and woman, man with man –
May we see the brilliant facets of your wise and sacred plan.

As we search your countless faces, help our hearts, in prayer, discern
How our spirits, in each other, guide your world to grow and learn.
When one body, in your likeness, where two gender-natures dwell
Seeks your nurture, let us be, then, God-with-them, Emmanuel.

Send the day when peaceful justice mirrors covenants fulfilled,
End our days of fearful bias, hearts transformed by heaven's will.
Bring those days in us, Great Lover, when your reign shall set us free;
Sing that Day when all your people live as one, with dignity.

8.
Hymn - I Will Never Turn Away (*Tune: Beach Spring / Raquel 87 87D*)
Words: Richard Spalding, 2003

In the desert where they'd wandered (Gen. 15:1-6)
with a billion stars in view,
Abraham and Sarah pondered
how the promise could be true.
Though at first to hope seemed folly,
in the night they heard God say,
"Every star's a child of promise
I will never turn away."

With a majesty that stunned her (Luke 1:26-38)
as she prayed for grace to share
Came a word on wings of wonder
as an answer to a prayer.
Mary magnified the message:
"Let it be just as you say –

From the birth of Love Incarnate
I will never turn away."

In a time of strife and blindness
to the welter of the world (John 1:10-13)

Came a man whose Godly kindness
bore the pain of curses hurled (Isaiah 53:3-5)

Love unbowed raised up the loveless,
as each one heard Jesus say,
"All who come to me believing (John 6:37)
I will never turn away."

To the bearer of Christ's mission - (John 21:15-17)

"Feed my sheep in every place" -
Was entrusted a revision (Acts 10:9-16)

of the breadth of God's embrace.
Though at first such grace seemed reckless,
Peter heard the Spirit say,
"Every life made clean by loving
I will never turn away."

With a flagrant faith, impassioned
by a still more noble way (I Cor.12:31)

An apostle's pen refashioned
the devotion of his day.
"Hearts of faith contain this treasure
(though it's held in jars of clay):
Every soul whose joy is Jesus (Phil.4:4-7)
He will never turn away."

To the fragile, fateful beauty
of the fractious human race
Comes a church whose joyful duty
is to wield this word of grace:
Male and female, poor and wealthy, [Gal. 3:28]

Every color, straight and gay,
All who seek to find this Kingdom [Matt. 6:33]
Christ will never turn away!

And the gentiles, and the lowly
those ignored and those in chains,
Those reviled or thought unholy
trust the Love that lives and reigns.

(Eph. 2:11-13)

Even now we hear their voices
sighing with us as we pray –
8:26-28)

(Rom.

“Jesus, we are those you promised
You would never turn away.”

9.

Hymn - Though the Spirit's Gifts are Many (*Tune - Hyfrydol*) *Words: David Gambrell, 2002.*

Though the Spirit's gifts are many
There is one embracing call;
Many visions, many talents
In the One who loves us all.
Faith and wisdom, hope and promise,
Who we are and how we love –
These are gifts from our Creator,
These are blessings from above.

Let no mortal stand in judgment
When the Spirit calls to serve;
Let no power seek to silence
God's eternal, living Word.
We are children of the promise,
Living in the light of grace,
Working for a new creation
Where all people have a place.

Call the young and old together,
Put the partners hand in hand,
Speak with liberating power,
Tell the truth to all the land:
Christ is risen! Christ is risen!
Earth and heaven now rejoice;
Sing a song of love and welcome
With your Spirit-given voice.

Prayers from Jim Cotter

God of dying and rising, you plant the Spirit's life within us, as we meet you in your Word, in the sharing of food amongst friends, and in the community of your justice-seeking disciples. May that same Spirit inspire our thoughts and words today. Thankful for the gifts you have given us to build up the people of God, the gift of richly diverse humanity, the gifts of gender and human sexuality in all their creative manifestations, keep us from failing to rejoice in the ways you have blessed us, this day and always. Amen

Dear God, Giver of life, Bearer of pain, Maker of love, affirming in your incarnation the goodness of the flesh, may the yearnings of our bodies be fulfilled in sacraments of love, and our earthly embracings be enjoyed as a foretaste of the glory to come, in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus, our Companion, our Lover, and our Guide. Amen.

Living God, Source of our being, Goal of our becoming, in whose Holy Spirit of love and wisdom we live the nights and days, by whom our wounds are healed, and our hurts and hurting are absorbed and lose their power to harm, through whom we are drawn close to one another in our bodies to be touched and to touch, to receive and to give, in pleasure and delight, in intimacy and trust, in tremblings of our flesh and in matings of our soul, we come to rest in your stillness in gratitude, and to be recharged with your energy in hope, that with deep desire rekindled we may follow the Way of the Maker of love who embodied, once and for all, your heart of love divine , and with whom we swive in the dance of the new creation. Amen.

(*swive* is an old English word – a warmer word than the four-letter Anglo Saxon word to which it is neighbour!)

Closing Worship

*Our closing worship employs a good deal of silence after we have received so many words. It incorporates a brief period of Lectio Divina. Lectio divina means, literally, 'sacred/divine reading' and has 4 steps : **reading, reflection, prayer, and contemplation**. It usually focusses on biblical passages. It is an ancient method of praying the Word of God, first developed in some of the Church's oldest religious communities: Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans and others. It is **NOT** bible study, but rather it is meant to enable the Word of God to inhabit us, and we to inhabit, to dwell in, the Word of God, just as 'the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us.' (John 1:14) A simple pattern for Lectio Divina:*

1. Allow some moments of silence to be aware of the presence of others, and the presence of God in our midst.
2. The passage is read once. Different people could read consecutive paragraphs if the passage is long. Those present are invited to focus on a word or a phrase which 'hits' them.
3. The passage is read for a 2nd time. People are then invited to share the word or phrase which they are holding in their minds, simply by proclaiming it, not explaining it, nor turning it into an intercession.
4. The passage is read a 3rd time. After some moments of silence, those present are invited to share an intercession, related to the word or phrase which they have 'treasured in their heart' (Luke 2: 51).

Hymn : Word made flesh! (*Tune -Regent Square*) Words, Jim Cotter

Word made flesh! We see Christ Jesus
sharing our humanity,
loving, graceful, always truthful,
close to others bodily,
full of passion, full of healing
touch of God to set us free.

Wonderful are these our bodies
flesh and blood to touch and see,
place of pain and contradiction,
yet of joy and ecstasy,
place of passion, place of healing,
touched by God who sets us free.

O how glorious and resplendent,
fragile body you shall be,
when endued with so much beauty,
full of life and strong and free,
full of vigour, full of passion,
that shall last eternally.

Glory give to God the Lover,
grateful hearts to the Beloved,
blessed be the Love between them
overflowing to our good:
adoration and thanksgiving
to the God whose name is Love.

An invitation to prayer

May we cherish the silence and not be afraid.

May we know it is not empty but full of presence.

May the love at its heart calm our anxious fears, our rude awakenings, and strengthen the communion of our bodies.

May we know the gentle touch of a trusting hand.

Psalm 147 *unfolded by Jim Cotter*

The earth itself is transformed,
the cities of peace are established.
Creatures in their thousands leap for joy,
and the people dance in the streets.

The scattered outcasts greet one another,
kings and clowns tumble together,
the hobbling teach the dancers new steps,
the scars of the wounded shine.

Protesters and politicians sit down together,
the clever sit at the feet of the wise.
the frantic are calmed by those in wheel-chairs,
the sexually diverse are welcomed in love.

**Praise God whose promise is fulfilled:
It gives us great joy to give thanks.**

Women and men bring their gifts to each other;
no longer are they driven to harm and abuse.
In eyes that speak truth they see each other,
and know how to touch in the sparkling of love.

Marvellous rarities are tasted by all,
bread that is wholesome is baked once again.
The water we drink springs clear from the hills,
the finest wines grace every table.

**Praise God whose promise is fulfilled:
It gives us great joy to give thanks.**

Through the artists a world of bliss is unveiled,
through the poets fresh images of truth are revealed,
through the scientists what is hidden comes to the light,
through the lovers unfolds the joy of new life.

Restored, fulfilled, gathered together,
we know we belong to the universe.
In songs of harmony we embrace one another;
transfigured in the presence of the One who is All.

**O Lover, divine and human,
intimate, insistent, and tender,
courteous in paying attention,
passionate in wholehearted embrace,
bring us alive and alight,
each a singular creation.**

Lectio Divina from the 1st Letter to the Corinthians (12: 12-13; 27)

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free - and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many ... Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

A version of the Lord's Prayer - Jim Cotter

Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Love-Maker,
**Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name
echo through the universe.
The way of your justice
be followed by the people of the world.
Your heavenly will
be done by all created beings.
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom**

sustain our hope and come on earth.

**With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too severe to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.**

**For you reign in the glory
of the power that is love,
now and for ever. Amen.**

***A Blessing** - Jim Cotter*

*The blessing of God be with us, Father and Mother,
Sustainer of our earth, Source of all that is and that shall be.*

*The blessing of God be with us, the Universal Christ,
the Risen and Glorious Loved One, and our Friend.*

*The blessing of God be with us, Spirit spreading love and joy in our hearts,
Giving hope to the battered ones, inspiring justice and peace for the little
ones.*

**May this rich blessing be with us,
with all humankind living and departed,
and with all the creatures
of land and sea and air.
May our days be long on this good earth.**

**For we have been nourished
by the Bread of Life,
we have been quickened
by the Life-blood of the Universe.
With courage and hope
let us continue on our journeys. Amen.
Thanks be to God.**

Closing hymn : Faces and Facets **No. 7** above

