



The Sunday Supplement

Issue 16: 4th July 2020

Call to Worship

The Holy One is here in this community of faith:

Great is our God and greatly to be praised!

Let us bless the Holy Name forever and ever

Great is our God and greatly to be praised!

Let us meditate on God's wondrous works

Great is our God and greatly to be praised!

Let us bless and praise God's name forever and ever

Great is our God and greatly to be praised!

Prayer

Holy One, you have promised to be with us,
And long ago sent your Spirit to abide among us
and guide us to a future of goodness and hope.
We come seeking your truth, your justice, your kindness.
O God, you are with us this morning.
Let us feel your presence and
welcome you into our lives.
Come and fill these desires of our hearts.

Rev. Catherine Rolling <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/>



Reading

Matthew 11:16-30



Prayer: Caring for Our Neighbours

In these days of knowing, not knowing,
We, like the buds on the trees,
Are eager to burst forth into the world.
Hold us gently in place
Until we are certain in the ways of
loving our neighbour.

Let us not toss ourselves and neighbour
into thoughtless harm.
Let us recall that all life is sacred in your
eyes,
not only that of the unborn child,
but also those with lines of life lived
etched upon their hands and faces,
and including those whose immune
systems are compromised.
These, too, are your beloved, whose
care we are blessed to bear.

And we seek blessing upon those
who have answered a call to care for us
in our times of physical healing,
no matter our opinion, our ideology,
our hardship, Lord.
These, we hold in our care as
neighbours.

Help us to hear that caring for one
another
is your command on our lives.
Open our ears to hear the tragedy in this
time of coronavirus,
and not only our own anxiety and grief
that may come on blustering words and
tired rhetoric.
Instead, let us think on how we will make
the world a better place.

Instead, let us think on what kindness,
however small, we might offer someone.
Instead, let us remember that our life is
not our own, but belongs to you.
Instead, let us dream how we might
enter our communities
to be a beacon of hope for those living in
disorder to come alongside them while
they find order;
alongside them while they reorder their
lives.

Help us always, Lord, to remember our
promise to you
that we will care for our neighbour as
ourselves. Amen.

*Reverend Brenda Torrie, First United
Methodist Church in Newcastle,
Wyoming*

Thought for the week



Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, says Jesus. Come to me, and you will find rest for your souls. These familiar words are both comforting and challenging, reassuring but at the same time unsettling. In their original context, these words follow harsh and critical comments directed at those listening. Jesus is frustrated with his audience. They are like children who are never satisfied. Worse still, despite witnessing God at work in Jesus, their lives have not changed at all.

Many in our own time would recognise the frustration that Jesus felt. Over the past few months, a global pandemic has changed everything. No-one has been unaffected, no area of our lives left untouched. The gradual relaxation of measures designed to bring COVID-19 under control should bring joy but too often seems the cause of yet more tensions. It seems that we, like the people of Jesus' day are never satisfied. Worse still, despite all we have witnessed, there often seems little will for long term change to our lifestyles.

Christians face a challenge in the coming weeks and months. Rather than joining in the general clamour of discontent, we have a message of hope and healing to offer the hurt and broken people in our communities. As we hear the invitation of Jesus to 'come and find rest' we must not forget those who will need help to do that. The story of the men who went to great lengths to bring their disabled friend to Jesus for healing is a reminder to us. Many around us will need to be helped if they too are to 'come and find rest'.

In our time of anxiety and fear Jesus' words reassure us but they are not without challenge. The offer of comfort and rest is not the whole story. There is a burden to be borne, a task to be accepted. Reassuringly, the burden is light and the task is not beyond us. As others rush to 'get back to normal' we are invited to rest a while with Jesus and to learn from him. Individually, and as a Christian community, we need help as we face the task that lies before us.

The days, weeks and months ahead will bring many challenges. Constant changes to official guidance will require us to reshape our lives in many ways. Churches have decisions to take on reopening in the limited ways now possible. Like the people Jesus addressed, we must respond to the challenge. Like them, we have a choice to make. Individually, and together, we must decide how to live in our changed, and changing, circumstances.

Come to me, says Jesus. Come to me and I will show you the way. Learn from me. Work with me. Come to me. Bring those who are broken and hurting with you. Don't be afraid. My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

What a friend we have in Jesus

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
And what a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

Oh, what peace we often forfeit
Oh, what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Blessing

May the blessing of the God of peace and justice
be with us;

May the blessing of the Son
who weeps the tears of the world's suffering
be with us;

And may the blessing of the Spirit
who inspires us to reconciliation and hope
be with us
from now into eternity.
Amen.

World Council of Churches <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/home.html>

