

God of Mercy, Hear Our Prayer: An Election Year Worship Service

September 8, 2016
Central Lutheran Church

We begin worship at the baptismal font.

Yale Law Professor Stephen Carter speaks of an "etiquette of democracy," which includes such guidelines as:

"Our duty to be civil toward others does not depend on whether we like them or not;"

"Civility requires that we sacrifice for strangers, not just for people we know;"

"We must come into the presence of our fellow human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude;"

"Civility requires that we listen to others with knowledge of the possibility that they are right and we are wrong;"

"Civility allows criticism of others, and sometimes even requires it, but the criticism should always be civil."

(From Augsburg College President Paul Pribbenow's Academic Year Welcome Letter, 2016-2017)

PRELUDE

REFLECTION AND HYMN OF LIGHT Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory

Reflection

Joyous light of heavenly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
You who sing creation's story, shine on every land and race.
Now as evening falls around us, we shall raise our song to you.
God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.

Reflection

In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
In the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.
Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul,
love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.

Reflection

You who made the heaven's splendor, every dancing star of night,
Make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light.
Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
Loving Spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.

Reflection

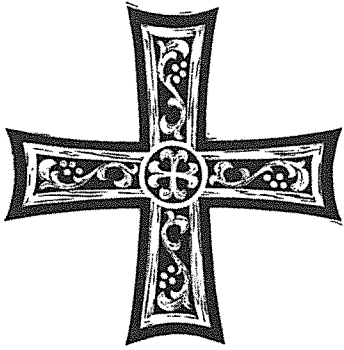
BAPTISMAL REMEMBRANCE AND CONFESSION OF SIN

You be - long to Christ, in whom you have been bap - tized.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Text: *Holy Baptism and Related Rites*, Renewing Worship 3
Music: Robert A. Hobby, b. 1962
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As we sing, please move to a pew near the front of the sanctuary.

We come this night, with faces in our mind's eye, with stories in our ear, with our very lives touched and challenged by others. We come this night in need of mercy, forgiveness, and healing. And so together, as the people of God united through the love of Christ and led by the Spirit's call, we come to the baptismal waters that make us one. Let us return to the font with our faults and failings, our paralyzing anxieties and trembling fears, our hurts and the ways we have hurt others.

Silence for self-examination and reflection

God of liberation and freedom:

We confess that we have sinned against you, our neighbors, your creation, and ourselves. Our thoughts, our words, and our deeds have revealed our brokenness and our participation in systems and structures that bind and oppress. Take us again, O mothering One, to your waters of rebirth, that we might be renewed to shine with your compassionate justice. This we pray as people in need of a fresh word of your radical grace. Amen.

My friends, by water and the Holy Spirit, God gives you a new birth, and through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God forgives you all your sins. Almighty God strengthen you in all goodness and keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

BAPTISMAL SONG You Belong to Christ

GREETING

PSALM 19

The Psalm is sung antiphonally (West side; East side) by two verse sections. The Refrain is sung at the beginning and end of the Psalm.

**Refrain: O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.**

WS: 1-2	WS: 9-10
ES: 3-4	ES: 11-12
WS: 5-6	WS: 13-14
ES: 7-8	



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PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord, we give thanks for the privileges and responsibilities of living in a democratic society. Give us wisdom to play our part at election time. Protect us from the sins of despair and cynicism, guard us against the idols of false utopias, and strengthen us to make politics a noble calling that serves the common good of all. **Amen.**

READINGS

Isaiah 42:1, 11:2

Ephesians 2:13-18

Romans 12:9-21

The Small Catechism, The Fourth Petition, p. 1163

SONGS AND SILENCE

Come Now, O Prince of Peace	247
Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading	401
O Living Breath of God	407
What a Friend We Have in Jesus	742

As we prepare to engage in small group discussion, please consider the following agreements:

Shared Commitments in Conversation

- Assume positive intentions
- Treat each other with dignity and respect
- Be genuine with each other and constructive in offering ideas, perspectives and feelings
- Listen attentively to seek understanding, not necessarily agreement
- It is everyone's responsibility to be sure no one person dominates the conversation and that everyone person who wishes has a chance to speak
- Stay with the questions
- Speak for yourself, not someone else
- Agree not to cross talk or start side conversations
- Recognize you are part of something larger
- Commit to the whole, not just your piece

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (25 minutes)

PRAYERS Sung Response, O God, We Call

O God, we call, O God, we call, from deep in-side we yearn, from

deep in-side we yearn, from deep in-side we yearn for you.

Text and music: Linnea Good

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THE LORD'S PRAYER

THE PEACE

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND BLESSING

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the water, you are the bright wellspring for the healing of the nations.

Praise to you for the crystal waters of baptism and your word of promise forgiving us all.

Your light shines within us and through us: our witness is fueled by you.

Praise to you for your Spirit that burns with the light of gentle justice inspiring us all.

Illumine our days by your reconciling ways, for we belong to Christ and are made whole by you.

Energize our bones by your healing touch, for we belong to Christ and are made whole by you.

Make us light-bearers, casting out fear and division by your grace.

Send us out, anointed for your creative and redeeming work in the world.

Go now from this service of worship to the service of God's people near and far, refreshed by the living water that Jesus offers to you. Listen for the parched voices of the least of these; search out the dry places and the arid souls, and become for them a spring of living water. And as you go, may the blessings of the God of life, the Christ of love, and the Spirit of grace be upon you this day and forevermore. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song 808

Liturgist: Bishop Ann Svennungsen

Lectors: Rev. John Hulden, Rev. Craig Pederson, Rev. Deb Stehlin

Dialogue Participants: Deacon Amy Blumenshine, Rev. Luisa Cabello-Hansel, Rev. Dan Carlson, Ms. Babette Chatman, Rev. Dan Garnaas, Rev. Mike Matson, Ms. Anna Scott

Musicians: Dr. Stephen Self, Mr. Sam Rudy

Planning Team: Minneapolis Area Synod Worship Committee & Public Voice Committee

Small Group Discussion Trainer: Rev. Eva Jensen

"O God, We Call" and "You Belong to Christ" used by permission, OneLicense, S-917275

God of Mercy: Hear Our Prayer
Worship Service in an Election Year

Gathering Song & Dialogue Reflection

Voice 1 We come to this night from places spread across our synod.

Voice 2 We come to this night from places spread across the political spectrum.

Voice 1 It is in the midst of news report upon news report; attack ad upon attack ad; campaign call upon campaign call that we come.

Voice 2 It is in the whirlwind of hurt and hope, frustration and excitement, anger and joy, action and indifference, longing and wondering that we come.

Voice 1 Whatever brings you to this night...whatever brings you to this worship, may this place and time allow you to see God drawing near. Welcome, this night, to this synodical worship service of prayer and community at Central Lutheran Church.

Song Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory ELW 561 verse 1

Voice 3 I see faces of immigrants arriving on planes from Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, the Sudan; faces of people crossing the border under the cover of night or raging sun from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico. I see faces of descendants of immigrants who arrived by ship—Norwegian, German, Swedish. I see the glow of God’s own face in the face of my neighbors, my parishioners, my friends.

Voice 4 I see faces filled with fear. The word terrorism comes into our living rooms through news reports and media. There is talk of building walls. I see faces of children fleeing Syria; youth escaping violence in Central America; I hear individuals and families labeled “illegal.” I realize that I, too, am anxious...scared...wondering. I long for God to come and light my heart anew.

Together God of day break and shadows, come.

Song Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory ELW 561 verse 2

Voice 5 I hear the stories and know them too well—the weary souls who patrol our streets and alleys and see things that no person should ever see. the child who wonders if mom or dad will come home safe from patrol; the spouse who freezes when there is a police involved shooting; The personal struggles of family, loss, addictions, and illness. They are weary from carrying the heavy burdens of misunderstanding – a misunderstanding of who they are, what they do, and why they do it.

Voice 6 I hear the stories and know them too well—chains that have bound people in oppression. The education system that leaves so many of children behind; the pipeline from our schools and streets to prison; the ways that those lifted up to serve and protect start to feel like enemies instead of supports in our communities; the power of drugs and alcohol, fast food and diabetes, and environmental health issues to take our children. I long to hear that Black Lives Matter...that my life matters.

Together Emmanuel, set us free; make us whole.

Song**Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory****ELW 561 verse 2**

- Voice 7 I touch the lives of fellow soldiers coming home. I am proud of their faith, their willingness to serve. They have served in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and on bases overseas. I hear the stories of families of soldiers and veterans—there is pride, there is gratefulness, there is loss, there is pain, there is joy, there is a desire to be named. I go to the homes of soldiers lost to war and suicide and share in the tears and despair. There is a power in saying that son or daughter, wife or husband, died for the sake of others...for the common good. I understand.
- Voice 8 I touch the lives of veterans coming home. Some share their stories; some have stories held in a silence that haunts...turning dreams to nightmares. I weep over the lives lost, the families broken. I grieve what our sons and daughters endure. I long for them...for us...to know peace of body, mind and spirit; peace between nations. My heart breaks, and I say simply, "Let us make this better."
- Together Spirit of healing, lead us to your promised day.
- Voice 1 God, we are the hopeful, the doubting, the disillusioned...
- Voice 2 we are the liberal, the independent, the conservative...
- Voice 3 we are the recent immigrant, the descendant of European settlers, the off-spring of First Nations...
- Voice 4 we are the employed, the under-employed, the unemployed...
- Voice 5 we are the police, the Black Lives Matter activist, the member of a hurting community...
- Voice 6 we are the miner, the farmer, the environmentalist.
- Voice 7 we are the soldier, the peace activist, the proud and hurting nation...
- Voice 8 we are all of this and more...and tonight we come together in song, story, and prayer.
We say together,
- All God of mercy, hear our prayer.

Prayers of Intercession

Sing Refrain

Bishop: Gathered....all of creation.

_____ God of all peoples, we give you thanks for this land. Bless our country with honest work, robust education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence and discord, from pride and arrogance. Make us who came from many nations with many different languages a united people. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

_____ God of righteousness, you stand in power over all authorities. May those who hold civic power understand that this is a trust from you to be used, not for personal glory or profit, but to promote the welfare of all. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

_____ Almighty God, be with those seeking election or serving in public office. Give them wisdom and energy, courage and compassion that theirs might be an honorable calling – pleasant in your sight. Grant that all citizens may see their God-given vocation to engage the public square as those who vote and who support and challenge their elected leaders. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

Sing Refrain

_____ Hovering Spirit, watch over our nation. We thank you for the responsibilities of living in a democratic society. We thank you for the privilege of being able to organize ourselves politically. Give us wisdom as we vote; drive away cynicism and selfishness, and grant us grace to live with diverse and varied neighbors in mutual understanding and peace. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

_____ As we give voice through our votes, we pray especially for those advocates who speak for the voiceless. Especially, we pray for Bread for the World, the Children's Defense Fund, the advocacy offices of the ELCA, and all who speak for those whose voices go unheard. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

Sing Refrain

_____ Gracious and holy God, in baptism you have brought us from death to life. Open us anew to the transforming power of your gospel in our lives **this** day – that we may engage the world in hope and confidence that you are at work in ways beyond our imagining. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

_____ God, in baptism you have bound us together as one. Open us anew to the transforming power of your beloved community – that we may engage the world in hope and confidence that your incarnational presence is as close to us as our brother or sister in Christ. God in your mercy; **Hear our Prayer.**

Bishop: Into your hands....Amen.

Sing Refrain