

Worship Guide for March 15, 2020

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, while it is disappointing not to be able to meet for study and worship together as a whole group, we want to show our care for one another by seeking to keep each other safe and healthy. (As another pastor wrote, "Sometimes loving each other well means doing it at a distance.") We want to heed the concerns of health officials who are working to reduce the chance of a rapid spread of this contagious virus. And we want to practice sound judgement without succumbing to fear.

God's people have worshiped in many places and in many ways. This guide is intended to help lead you in worship this morning, using material that we were planning to use if we were 2together. In this way we can still share together in worship. If there are multiple people in your household, you can take turns reading the parts, and share reflections with one another. If you are by yourself, consider journaling your reflections. Or call someone and read & reflect together over the phone!

May the living water of Jesus Christ and his Spirit flow into your lives this week! My prayers are with you. Rebecca

Peace verse – You have heard people say, "Love your neighbors and hate your enemies."

But I tell you to love your enemies and pray for anyone who mistreats you.

Then you will be acting like children of your Father in heaven. - Matthew 5:43-45a.

Light a candle in your worship space to represent the Peace of Christ in your midst today.

Call to worship:

Come, let's sing out loud to the Lord!

Let's raise a joyful shout to the Rock of our Salvation!

Come, you who are thirsty and can find no water in the desert.

Come and see the One who offers the gift of living water!

Jesus, show us who you are,

so that the waters of your life overflow in us to be shared with others. Amen.

Song (to sing or read) – Jesus, Rock of Ages – Hymn #515

Jesus, Rock of ages, let me hide myself in thee.

Jesus, living Water, let me drink from your flowing stream.

Prayer of Confession and assurance of pardon:

Remember your mercy, O Lord,

and the love you have shown from of old.

Do not remember my sins; in your love remember me.

(Silent prayer)

You relieve the troubles of my heart,

and bring me out of my distress.

You consider my affliction and my trouble,

and forgive all my sins. Amen.

Epistle reading: Romans 5:6-11

Gospel reading: John 4: 5-42

Read this passage, or watch a dramatized version by clicking this link (or copy and paste it):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIErbgwqxm8>.

Or search Youtube for title: “Magdalena (English) Lesson 7: Jesus Our Living Water”.

Questions for Scripture reflection:

1. What did you notice when you read or watched the passage from John 4? What word, phrase, or feeling caught your attention?
2. In the Gospel of John, the story of Jesus’ encounter with the woman of Samaria is the second of at least four stories where Jesus shows himself (his identity) to different people. In what ways does the woman at the well interact or respond *differently* to Jesus when compared with Nicodemus (see John 3:1-17; focus of last Sunday)? Do you see any *similarities* between the woman and Nicodemus?
3. Sometimes when people read John 3:16 they think “eternal life” refers primarily to life after death. Do you think what Jesus says to the woman in John 4:14 (and what happens to her life) supports that understanding? Or does it change or expand our understanding of what is meant by “eternal life”?
4. What was the Samaritan woman “thirsty” for? What are you thirsty for? Think of a time when you experienced in yourself (or saw in someone else) the gift of Christ’s “living water”.
5. When the Woman at the well realizes she is talking to “a prophet”, she dives into a question about worship – where is the proper place to worship? Rebecca summarizes Jesus’ answer as – ‘where you worship isn’t as important as our attitude in worship.’ Do you agree with that summary? How do you want to apply Jesus’ teaching on worship (4:21-24) to you and your worship practices or attitudes?
6. Compare John 4:28-29 with John 1:35-46. Pray for God to open opportunities for you to invite others to “come and see” Jesus, and to drink his life-giving water.

Song (to sing or read) – Lord, I am fondly, earnestly – Hymn #514

Lord, I am fondly, earnestly longing into thy holy likeness to grow,
thirsting for more and deeper communion, yearning thy love more fully to know.

Chorus: Open the wells of grace and salvation,
pour the rich streams deep into my heart.
Cleanse and refine my thought and affection,
seal me and make me pure as thou art.

I would be thine, and serve thee forever, filled with thy Spirit, lost in thy love.
Come to my heart, Lord, come with anointing, showers of grace send down from above.

Suggestions for Intercessory Prayer

Give thanks for Janet's successful surgery and pray for strength as she recovers. Pray also for Ruth Yodxr's nephew Matt, as he recovers from a surgery. Continue to remember Carole and Bill and others as they respond to health needs.

The Green Hills Administration is requesting our prayers for them, for their staff, residents and families as they seek to keep people healthy. Pray for safety, strength and wisdom for staff as they care for residents as well as their own families.

As many people are seeking refuge in the USA, Mennonite Central Committee invites our prayers. Pray for Spirit-led wisdom and courage for migrants, border patrol agents, MCC partners, elected officials and all who are involved in responding to this crisis.

We pray for people in the U.S. and around the world as together we face the effects of the Covid-19 virus. Pray for healing for the sick, and for those who have been quarantined and feel lonely. Pray that our public officials be guided by wisdom and compassion. Pray for those without access to healthcare. We pray that God's peace will guard our hearts and minds so that we are not overcome by fear, and so that we continue to nurture kindness and community even in the midst of uncertainties.

Song / prayer – Hymn #377

“Healer of our every ill, Light of each tomorrow,
Give us peace beyond our fear, and hope beyond our sorrow.”

Closing benediction:

God will guide us continually, and satisfy our needs in parched places,
and we will be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Amen.