

Worship at Home and ZOOM Worship for February 7 2021,

Our Worship at Home this week mirrors our ZOOM worship service. The prayers and reflection here – including communion – are the same as those we will be using together.

***Please make sure your microphones are muted during the service.
If you have called in on your phone, press *6 to mute yourself.***

Words printed in Italics would traditionally be spoken by the entire congregation. If your microphone is muted please feel free to speak those words along with our readers, and of course sing along with the hymns!

To participate in the ZOOM worship over your telephone, call 647-374-4685 or 647-558-0588, and when asked enter this meeting id: **829 3573 8888** and this pass code: **224756** You will hear the service and even be able to speak when it is appropriate.

If you would like to participate in communion, make sure you have some bread or a cracker and some juice handy!

Rev. Joanne

February 7, 2021
Worship with Communion

Announcements

Welcome and Territorial Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated upon traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron - Wyandot, the Haudenosaunee, and later the Mississauga of the Credit First Nations. The territory is mutually covered by the *Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant*, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwa and other allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, this remains the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in their community, and to share and respect Mother Earth.

Centering Music: VU 808 Chorus only

**And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn,
make you to shine like the sun,
and hold you in the palm of my hand.**

Call to Worship and Opening Prayer

One: We come together in this virtual space
to worship our Creative and Creating God,

*Two: whose imagination seems endless as we watch the stars in the sky,
or ponder the unique shapes of snowflakes.*

One: We gather across the internet, or symbolically as we read,
to praise God whose love never weakens.

*Two: In response to that love, we strive to lift those who are weary,
and support those who stumble,
and welcome those who feel alone.*

One: No matter how we engage with worship,
we offer our best to God who walks with us always.

*Two: No matter how we are gathering today,
we are welcomed by the Spirit and held in God's care.*

One: Loving God, through time you have given strength and hope to your people,
as they were lead through wilderness times,
as they struggled to understand the prophets who declared your truth,
as they witnessed your love alive in Jesus.

Help us to know your strength, to seek understanding,
to experience your love in Jesus the Christ.

Amen

Opening Music: "God of the Bible" MV 28 Verses 1, 2, 5

**God of the Bible, God in the Gospel,
hope seen in Jesus, hope yet to come,
you are our center, daylight or darkness,
freedom or prison, you are our home.**

**Refrain: Fresh as the morning, sure as the sunrise,
 God always faithful, you do not change.**

**God in our struggles, God in our hunger,
suffering with us, taking our part,
still you empower us, mothering Spirit,
feeding, sustaining, from your own heart.**

Refrain: Fresh as the morning....

**Hope we must carry, shining and certain
through all our turmoil, terror and loss,
bonding us gladly one to the other.
till our world changes, facing the Cross.**

Refrain: Fresh as the morning....

Scripture Readings:

Isaiah 40:28-31 *The Inclusive Bible*

Do you not know? Have you not heard?
YHWH is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
This God does not faint or grow weary;
with a depth of understanding that is unsearchable.
God gives strength to the weary
and empowers the powerless.
Young women may grow tired and weary,
young men may stumble and fall;
but those who wait for YHWH
find a renewed power:
they soar on eagles' wings,
they run and don't get weary,
they walk and never tire.

Mark 1:29-39

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed with demons. And the whole city was gathered around the door. And he cured many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions hunted for him. When they found him, they said to him, 'Everyone is searching for you.' He answered, 'Let us go on to the neighbouring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also; for that is what I came out to do.' And he went throughout Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Special Music:

Reflection: *included at the end of the service for those worshipping at home*

Hymn: "We Gather Here" VU 469

**We gather here in Jesus' name
His love is burning in our hearts like living flame
For through the loving son God fashions us as one
Come take the bread come drink the wine
Come share the Lord**

**No one is a stranger here,
everyone belongs;
finding our forgiveness here,
we in turn forgive all wrongs.**

**He joins us here He breaks the bread
The One who pours the cup is risen from the dead;
The One we love the most is now our gracious host
Come take the bread come drink the wine
Come share the Lord**

**We are now a family
of which Christ is the head;
though unseen he meets us here
in the breaking of the bread.**

**We'll gather soon where angels sing
We'll see the glory of our Lord and coming King
Now we anticipate the feast for which we wait
Come take the bread come drink the wine
Come share the Lord**

Sacrament of Communion

One: May God be with you.

Two: May God be also with you.

One: People of God, open your hearts.

Two: We open our hearts to God and to each other.

One: Let us give thanks to the Living God.

Two: With joy and praise, we offer our thanks to the One who offers abundant life.

One: In the morning, Awakening God,
you took creation and flung it
to the far corners of chaos,
naming the stars twinkling in the night,
shaping deserted places for prayers,
feeding all the creatures in the fields.

Two: *You longed to walk with those
created in your image, so we would not weary,
but we listened to the boasting of death,
as it proclaimed sin's opportunities.*

One: You sent the prophets, who cried out,
'haven't you been listening; don't you
realize what God is trying to do for you?'
but we continued to delight
in all which opposed you.

Two: *So, having created all things,
you became the one thing we needed,
our Savior.
With those so weary that cannot take another step,
with those revived by your grace and hope,
we lift our praises to you now and forever:*

MV 203 (sung)

**O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space,
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise.**

***And blessed is the one who comes
and bears your name always.***

One: Holy are you, Star Namer,
and blessed is Jesus Christ, your Son.
He became weak,
so the power of the world
would be shattered;
he became poor,
so we might be filled
with the riches of your grace;
he went to that deserted place
we call the grave,
so death might be
knocked off its pedestal,
as you breathed new life
into his knackered spirit.

*Two: As we search for him in our time,
as we would proclaim the gospel,
may we find that mystery we call faith:*

*Christ died, not boasting in himself;
Christ was raised, the gospel lived out in him;
Christ will come to take us by the hand, giving us strength.*

One: Here is that Bread, which though broken,
can strengthen the powerless;
here is that Cup, which though emptied,
can fill the weary with hope.
Pour out your Spirit not only on these gifts,
but upon your children gathered around the Table.

*Two: We come, bone-tired,
so make us bone of your bone,
and flesh of your flesh.
We can barely take another step,
so empower us to walk
beside the lonely and the homeless.
We are so fatigued by our despair,
feed us with your hope and joy,
so we may proclaim your kingdom
to everyone we meet.*

One: And when the day comes
to gather with all your children
around the Feast of the Lamb,
we will join hands
and dance around the Table,
singing your praise forever and ever:
God our Creator,
Christ our Servant,
Spirit of Newness,
God in Community, Holy in One. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer VU 959

Telling the Story, Breaking the Bread and Filling the Cup

*This would be the moment for you to take your own bread and juice, perhaps sharing the words
"Jesus Christ the bread of life" and "Jesus Christ the true vine." If you are with another person,
you might choose to serve the bread and juice to each other.*

Prayer after Communion

One: For the breads we have eaten,
for the fruit of the vine we have tasted,
for the life we have received across distance and time,
we thank you God.

Two: *Grant that what we have done here in virtual community
may leave its mark on us,
and that it may remain always in our hearts.*

One: Grant that we may grow
in Christian love and understanding,
and that ours may be lives of faithful action,
in Christ's name. Amen.

Closing Music: "Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ" VU 468

**Let us talents and tongues employ,
reaching out with a shout of joy:
bread is broken, the wine is poured,
Christ is spoken and seen and heard.
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**Christ is able to make us one,
at the table he set the tone,
teaching people to live to bless,
love in word and in deed express.
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

**Jesus calls us in, sends us out
bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share:
God (Immanuel) everywhere!
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!
Jesus lives again; earth can breathe again.
Pass the Word around: loaves abound!**

Blessing:

One: God sends us forth into the world,

Two: so we will go to walk miles in the shoes of others.

One: Jesus calls us to serve everyone we meet,

Two: so we will become all things to all people.

One: The Holy Spirit encourages us to let go of our gospel-given rights,

Two: so we may breathe new life into the faint.

One: Go in peace to love and serve our God.

*Sacrament of Communion and Blessing written by Rev. Thom M. Shuman
and used with permission*

*For those who wish to remain to visit, you will be invited to turn on your microphones and
stay on the ZOOM call.*

Rev. Joanne's Reflection:

Here at the beginning of Jesus' ministry according to Mark's gospel, we find another healing. Last week in both our podcast and Worship at Home, we shared the story of the first healing which took place in the synagogue. Now we find ourselves looking in at the scene at the house of Simon and Andrew, where extended family live together, and Simon's mother-in-law is ill. We have moved, with Jesus and his first few disciples, from the public realm of worship and learning to the private and more intimate setting of the home.

In this new and yet familiar setting, Jesus continues his ministry of healing and lifts the unnamed woman from her illness – reminding us all that no matter where we are, we can be touched by God's presence and God's healing love.

Some observers of this story have remarked on the perceived unfairness of the woman, immediately upon rising, beginning to serve this group of men who have arrived at her home. However in our Hebrew testament passage, Isaiah writes

“those who wait for YHWH
find a renewed power:
they soar on eagles' wings,
they run and don't get weary,
they walk and never tire.”

This woman, touched by God through Jesus, is perhaps a living example of Isaiah's claim. When we encounter God, when we are open to the power of Jesus example of touching, healing and wholeness, we might gain the strength to rise and serve without tiring; we might find strength and purpose for our work.

This passage also focuses on Jesus' touch, how Jesus could simply take the ailing woman by the hand and bring her to health. It is a pattern repeated in his healings, and we know how important touch is in our own lives - the deep peace we know when we are held by one who loves us, the tenderness of holding a newborn, the companionship in a hug or a hand held, the community shared in a handshake. The loss of touching is one aspect of our pandemic lives that many grieve over.

How are we restored and renewed – given strength – without the physical?

Can anything replace touch?

I believe that nothing really replaces that physical connection – and we will return to a time when it is not risky to share a hug or handshake. In the meantime, we can earnestly pray for one another, and ask that God's Spirit touch the hearts and minds of those for whom we pray. We can spend some time thinking about how we have been held by others – physically and spiritually – and offer our thanks. We can remember that Jesus did not always touch to heal, and that for many his response was “your faith has made you whole.”

We can take note in our scripture passage that Jesus did not seek out the physical for his own connection to God, for his own refreshment and perhaps the healing of his own weariness. Instead, as Mark writes, he went to a deserted place to pray. Perhaps in our own spaces,

deserted as they may be in this time, we might find connection, we may “wait for God” and find renewed strength for our journeys.

May we go forward with hope, with the strength to touch each other’s lives in different ways, and with the conviction to follow Jesus. Amen