

Worship at Home for January 31 2021,

You may choose to read right through this document, stopping for your own reflection at any time, or only read the prayers or the scripture or reflection. You might read with family or friends, or alone. Links will take you to music that may enhance your experience as you move through the worship, but you might choose to visit them later, or not at all. Feel free to share this with anyone who might be interested.

If you'd like to comment or have a question, please call or email me directly:
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In the Spirit

Rev. Joanne

January 24, 2021

Centering Prayer:

In the icy chill of winter, we turn to your warmth, O God.
Fill our spirits with the heat of your love,
fill our hearts with the warming glow of your truth
as we enter our own time of worship this day.
Amen

Opening Music: "Spirit, Open My Heart"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUy4kas8WR8>

Opening Prayer

Source of our being, open our hearts and spirits this day
to hear the great good news of your presence with your people.
Enliven us and remind us that you call each of us to hear, to speak, to act
in ways that bring justice, show kindness and declare your love.
Help us to worship and to live knowing deeply that you are with us,
through the words of the prophets, through the ministry and love of Jesus ,
through the community we share. Amen

Scripture Readings:**Deuteronomy 18:15-20**

The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. This is what you requested of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: 'If I hear the voice of the Lord my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die.' Then the Lord replied to me: 'They are right in what they have said. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die.'

Mark 1:21-28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, 'What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.' But Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be silent, and come out of him!' And the unclean spirit, throwing him into convulsions and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, 'What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Reflection: What is a prophet?

In our reading from Deuteronomy, Moses speaks to the Israelite people and tells them that God will provide a prophet for them from their own people. We have the rest of scripture as testament to that truth – Isaiah, Ezekiel, Micah, Jeremiah, Daniel – just to name a few. Prophets were called by God to speak God's truth, but they also called others to hear God's word and live God's way.

We call Jesus a prophet – among many other names and roles. In this week's gospel passage from Mark, we see him at the very beginning of his ministry speaking with authority and teaching God's way like a prophet, gaining notoriety like some prophets, which also made him a target.

Being a prophet in any time is a challenging task. We know that people seem to want to disregard the words of the prophets, and for some the meaning is tied to proof that 'predictions' come true. There is also the reluctance to take on the task of being a prophet, and the need for humility. At times we just want 'big' names in our list of prophets, and forget that we may have our own prophetic calling.

I have heard it said that those who preach have a prophetic role in the communities they serve. I am not sure that I identify as such, but I do know that I am called to work to bring God's word to life in community. Yet in that community I am not the only one with that task of shining light on God's truth! Some illuminate the word through their outreach work, or in the music they share that can bring a

different interpretation to scripture. Others speak God's truth into committee meetings and declare it in decisions that are made.

I think one of our important tasks is to listen to those prophets from our past, but also listen for prophetic voices in our present. The words of inaugural poet Amanda Gorman that were shared in this week's AppleLog are prophetic. The writings of young anti-racism leaders are prophetic, even the writings of our new United Church General Secretary Michael Blair our moderator Richard Bott can be seen in the same category.

How do you speak God's truth in your circumstances? Who do you rely upon to speak that truth to you?

We are not all prophets, but I believe more of us are called to that work than we realize, more are called than feel they can take on the challenge. We can encourage one another, we can speak out when we see or hear someone who needs a supportive word so that they can live out their own prophetic call. Importantly, we can live our faith expecting to hear prophetic words from scripture, in the words of Jesus, but also in our community.

May we be both blessed and blessing in the work we do. Amen

Hymn: "Here I am, Lord"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UkTlj2uPI4>

Prayers of the People

*Our podcast focused on healing and wholeness,
so our prayers shared here from that podcast reflect the theme.*

Loving God, we thank you for all the ways we know wholeness and health
in body, mind and spirit -
we are grateful for opportunities to connect with others virtually,
for the soothing and restorative gifts of music,
for the uplifting winter sunshine.

Healing God, we thank you for all those who provide their work and time
to restore our wellness – nurses and doctors, dentists and physical or mental
therapists, ministers and musicians, our friends and family.
With gratitude, we offer prayers for people who serve us and serve you, God.
Surround them with your light, ease their burdens of care and concern,
keep them safe and renew their energies.

Compassionate God, we remember those who need healing in their bodies today,
and we offer our prayers for those who are in pain, those who are recovering from surgery,
those who are waiting for tests or results, those who are battling COVID-19
We pray for those who need healing in their minds or their spirits, and we pray for those who are feeling
lonely, depressed or anxious, we pray for those in isolation, and those who feel isolated,

we pray for those who are grieving and sad.

Liberating God, we remember black, indigenous and other people of colour who live with racism and oppression. We offer our prayers for your justice, but also pray that we may be open to new understandings and new paths ourselves.

We remember our LGBTQ + siblings, and pray that they may feel welcome in our community of faith, and wholly loved by you, God.

Abiding God, you walk with us, know us, and encourage us to bring wholeness and know your restoring love. Lead us to offer healing as we can, in Jesus' our healer's name we pray, Amen.

Closing Music: "Healer of Our Every Ill"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rZDfEKttMI>

Blessing:

Go into the rest of your day following the voice of Jesus,
hearing the Spirit in your spaces and your interactions with others,
knowing God's love in your heart.

Amen