

Evening Liturgy For Break The Silence Sunday ~ April 26, 2020

One of the churches I serve worships on Sunday evenings. The rhythm of that worship is different. We are ending our day, thinking about all that the week ahead will hold, and getting ready to head towards bed. The worship we share is designed to help enter more fully into our trust in God, releasing whatever we have been doing during the day, and helping us find some peace before our night's rest.

Some of the prayers are the same as in the liturgy above, and others have been written specifically for an evening service, either on a Sunday or at another time when your community gathers. As with all the BTSS materials, please feel free to adapt and interpret this liturgy as it best fits your community.

Pay particular attention to your selection of songs and hymns, thinking about ones that will allow people to slow down, to rest their bodies and souls in the music. Simplicity and repetition can be extremely helpful in an evening service's music choices. Some suggestions are made here, but please use the ones that your community knows, that speak to your experience of the God who desires wholeness for us, and for all creation.

An important part of our evening worship is also remembering that we are embodied, that we were created in love, by God, in God's very own image. Feeling at home, safe in a body that has been violated is something many survivors struggle with. Recognizing that a body that has been violated could still be in the image of God is an even greater struggle. Part of this liturgy is a guided meditation/prayer about embodiment, about seeing and recognizing the divine in bodies that have known violence, in bodies that don't look like magazine models, in bodies that are utterly human.

*Please take your time with this prayer, and indeed with the entire evening liturgy. This is not something to be rushed, but a time to open space, to allow the Holy to come into our lives in new ways, to resist the rush of modern life, to breathe, to listen, and to transform our lives together. ~
Pastor Moira*

Gathering Music

Ringing The Bells & Kindling The Light

As you begin, with the sun setting and the moon rising, consider what light might come into your worship space. You might think of lighting candles to represent all survivors, or for those who cannot share their stories, or for those who did not survive the violence done to them. You could also consider having members of the congregation each light a candle holding in their hearts the survivors they know.

Opening Prayer (responsive)

Inspired in part by a prayer by Howard Thurman, the full text of which may be found in the Liturgical Resources section. The prayer is intended to be said responsively with the leader having the lines in regular type and the congregation the lines in bold type. The prayer could also easily be said in unison, removing the phrase "Holy One, help us" from between the stanzas, retaining it as the closing line of the prayer.

Holy One, you breathed the world into being, and in your love you created each of us, a living embodiment of your image.

You weep with us when our hearts are broken, and you carry our pain with us when it is too much to bear.

Holy One, help us.

You know the stories our siblings hold in their hearts, and their bones.

You know their fear, the shame and grief that lives in them because it has not been given voice.

Holy One, help us.

We cannot fully know the pain of those who have experienced sexual violence, nor truly understand what they feel, but we offer what we can – the strength of our caring, the warmth of our efforts to understand, and the presence of our lives that their path, as lonely as it may be, will never be walked alone.

Holy One, help us. Amen.

Song ~ “We Have Come”

by Christopher Grundy, © Hand and Soil Music, 2009; used with permission
(this was written to be sung acapella)

a cappella, with drumming

words and music by Christopher Grundy

♩ = 170

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The first staff starts with a whole rest followed by a quarter note G4, then a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. The second staff continues with a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, a quarter note F#5, and a quarter note G5. The third staff has a quarter note A5, a quarter note B5, a quarter note C6, and a quarter note D6. The fourth staff has a quarter note E6, a quarter note F#6, a quarter note G6, and a quarter note A6. The lyrics are: 'We have come by way of struggle, We have come by all your steadfast love, We have come to lay our burdens down, we have come to taste your boundless grace, We have come to spread your ways of peace, we have come to stand with Jesus, by way of pain, we have come by all your steadfast love, to shed our shame, we have come to taste your boundless grace, to break the chains, we have come to stand with Jesus, O re-vive our souls again. and to rise as people changed. lead us on in-to your reign, lead us on in-to your reign, lead us on in-to your reign, lead us on in-to your reign.'

We have come by way of struggle, We have come by all your steadfast love,
We have come to lay our burdens down, we have come to taste your boundless grace,
We have come to spread your ways of peace, we have come to stand with Jesus,

7
by way of pain, we have come by all your steadfast love,
to shed our shame, we have come to taste your boundless grace
to break the chains, we have come to stand with Jesus,

13 **To Coda** 1.2.
O re-vive our souls a - gain.
and to rise as peop - le changed.
lead us on in - to your reign,

19
lead us on in-to your reign, lead us on in-to your reign.

A Time Of Prayer ~ “I am awesomely, wondrously made.”

As we enter into a time of prayer you are invited to close your eyes if that is comfortable for you. Bring your attention to your body, to the sound and feel of your breathing, to the sound and feel of your heart beating.

Throughout this time of prayer, if you get distracted, bring your focus back to your body, to your breath, to your heartbeat. Allow your breath to fill your body as much as you are able, lungs and belly expanding, and allow it to leave your body as completely as you are able. Hear these words from Psalm 139...

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, knowing that you were created in the image and likeness of God. Know that your body, as it is in this very moment, is the living presence of God on earth. Know that you, yes you with all your strengths and struggles, with all your joy and sadness, with all your beautiful contradictions, you are created in the image and likeness of God.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, thinking about all the things your body has done. Think about the places you have visited, the places you have lived, the ways your body has celebrated with laughter, and energy, and hope. Think about the memory of all those places and all that joy living in your body, in your very cells, and how your body has supported you through all of it.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, thinking about all the challenges your body has faced. Think about the days you have lived through, the things you thought you couldn't survive, the ways your body has struggled with health, and violence, and fear. Think about how you are here, having lived through all those things you thought you couldn't get through, and how your body has supported you for all these days.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, thinking about the places where your body is holding stress right now, perhaps in your shoulders, or your jaw, or your hands. Think about the places in your body that don't feel as strong as they once were, where you are feeling a scar, or the legacy of an old injury, or the challenge of aging, or the ache of overwork. Bring your attention to those places of stress, or pain, or vulnerability. Imagine those places as particularly filled with the goodness of God, the grace of God, the love of God that breathed you into life.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, thinking about what you and your body will be doing in the coming days, or weeks, or months. What joy awaits you, and what might you celebrate – birthdays and anniversaries, new relationships, a new season in your life? What challenges are ahead, and what might you struggle with – a decision, a change in your living situation, a loss or grief? In this place of sanctuary, allow yourself to feel the excitement and the fear of all that awaits you and your body.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Breathe in and out, allowing the breathe to fill you completely from your head to your toes. Feel the breath in your fingertips, and your ears. Feel the breath in your legs, and your shoulders. Feel the breath in your belly, and your arms. Feel the breath in your face, and your heart. Feel the breath, the Spirit of the living God, moving within you, reminding you that every part of you is forever loved, and created in God’s image.

*“I will praise YOU for I am awesomely, wondrously made.” ~ Psalm 139.14a
(from the Tanakh)*

Now, open your eyes if they were closed, and know that you are held, with gentle strength, with fierce tenderness, and with courageous humility in the love of all God has been, is now, and will ever be. Know that nothing in all the world, no human action, violence, or abuse could ever make you less than who you are, a beloved child of God, created in God’s very own image. And together let us pray the words that Jesus taught his first disciples saying together...

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever, and ever. Amen.

Song ~ “God Who Remembers”

by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, used with permission

(please see *Liturgical Resources* section for accompaniment)

God Who Remembers

Psalm 136

The musical score is written on three staves in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The melody is simple and repetitive, with lyrics written below the notes. The first staff contains the lyrics: "Let us give thanks to God who re - mem - bers". The second staff contains: "All of his - to - ry held in cov - e - nant, ev - 'ry sto - ry". The third staff contains: "All things re - mem - bered can be healed." The music ends with a double bar line.

Words and music by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

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Invitation To Confession

We have, as the church and as its individual members, been silent when lives of are shattered by sexual violence. We have shied away from those who would share their stories, afraid of what we might hear, of what it might mean for us, and for our lives. We have been quick to ask questions – what were you doing, what were you wearing, why didn’t you fight back – placing blame on survivors instead of where it belongs, with the perpetrators. We have offered flimsy theology, holding on to unhealthy ideas about purity and virginity, demanding quick forgiveness, and ignoring our own involvement in a system that allows sexual violence to continue. Together let us confess trusting in God’s grace to lead us on a new path.

Responsive Prayer Of Confession

This prayer is intense, calling out the reality of sexual violence and our complicity in it, individually and as the church. Don’t rush through these words. Allow this prayer to take some time. Remind people that it’s ok if the words are too hard to say out loud, at least right now, and that praying them in their hearts is an important first step. This prayer could also be said as a unison prayer, combining sections and allowing a brief time for silence after each section.

One: Today we have come to listen, and to take responsibility.

All: We have come to confess what we have done, and failed to do, that has allowed sexual violence to continue and has caused survivors to feel that they cannot share their stories with us, in the shelter of Christ's church.

One: We confess that sexual violence is real and present in our communities, in our church, in our families, and around the world.

All: We confess that we are afraid, that we would prefer to believe the statistics are wrong.

One: We pretend that this kind of violence and violation can't happen to us, or to someone we love.

All: We pretend that we don't know any survivors, that no one in our family, none of our friends, and surely no member of our church could possibly have endured what we cannot face.

One: We confess that the church has often silenced survivors with bad theology, holding up sacrifice and suffering as ideals of faithful living, and shaming survivors with our assumption that rape and abuse are about sex, rather than acts of violence, power, and control.

All: We confess that we feel powerless, that we do not know how to help.

One: We confess that our fear of what we might hear, of what survivors might tell us, is paralyzing.

All: We confess that it feels like anything we might do is too small to matter, that the reality of rape and sexual violence seems overwhelming.

One: And yet, we confess that we know we must do something, that our siblings are depending on us to listen, to hear them, to honor their questions and their struggles, to speak out, and to work for change.

All: We pray for the grace to be present, with open hearts and minds, that the wounds might begin to be healed, and that the world might begin to be changed. In hope we pray, Amen.

Assurance Of God's Grace

Holy One, you know who we are, and who we might yet become. You know where we have not done the work of listening, of supporting, and of working on behalf of those who have suffered violence. We trust in your forgiveness, in another chance to be good companions on the journey with those who have experienced the trauma of rape and sexual violence. We give thanks for your grace and love that will not leave us where we are, but that guides us as we work with you, and with one another, to rebuild the world. Thanks be to God.

Song ~ refrain to "You Are Mine" by David Haas

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Refrain

Do not be a-fraid, I am
with you. I have called you each by name.
Come and fol-low me, I will bring you home; I
love you and you are mine.

Scripture Reading ~ Luke 8.42b-48

Jesus heals a woman with a flow of blood *(adapted from the NRSV)*

As Jesus went, the crowds pressed in on him. Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. Then Jesus asked, “Who touched me?” When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.” But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.” When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Jesus, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

Sermon/Reflection/Stories From Survivors

In evening worship, think about keeping this short, allowing for silence and space to think, to breathe, and to simply be.

Offering Our Gifts

You might consider designating the offering, or a portion of it, to the local sexual violence resource center in your area, or to a national organization such as RAINN (Rape Abuse Incest National Network).

You can also help the work of Break The Silence Sunday by making a donation to our ministry. Gifts are welcome electronically with PayPal & Venmo at breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com and information about other ways to contribute to our work can be found on our website:

<http://breakthesilencesunday.org>

Unison Prayer Of Dedication

Generous God, we are grateful for all that you have given to us. We bring you these gifts, signs and symbols of our gratitude. We entrust them to you in the faithful hope that the work Jesus began – the work of listening to the stories of God’s people, of healing the brokenness of the world, and of restoring creation – might continue in us, and through us. Grant us the courage and the faith to listen, to pray, and to speak out. In hope we pray, Amen.

Song ~ “God Is Holding Your Life” (chorus)

by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan © 2006, Augsburg Fortress,

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full accompaniment can be found at <https://www.psalmmimmersion.com/psalm-121>



God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life we be - lieve — God is



hold-ing your life, God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life we be - lieve —

Words and refrain tune by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan. Verse tune: O Waly Waly

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Celebrating Communion

One: This table is not ours, but it belongs to God. All who seek to be fed and nourished by God’s grace, and sustained by this community are welcome to share at this table. We come, from the shadows of a waiting, hurting world, knowing that, wherever we have been, whatever we have experienced, we will be fed, nurtured, and renewed. We reach for the bread of God’s grace, aware of a hunger in our souls for a world of compassion and peace. We reach for the cup of God’s love, aware of an unquenchable thirst in the depths of who we are, a thirst for justice and hope. We come, trusting that God will meet us here. Let us pray together...

All: Holy One, we come to share the richness of table. We ask for your healing grace to be poured out on all those who have suffered sexual violence. Renew and restore them, and your church. Be present with us, and remind us that your presence is with us always. Give us the courage to truly be the Body of Christ.

One: Gracious God, we come to this table to know you, to remember your love, and to confess that your grace is for all. Some of us come to this table tired and anxious. Some of us come with hope in our hearts. All of us come, trusting in your Spirit’s presence, and trusting in the promise that we might all be One, whole and healthy, as your people. Let us pray together...

All: We thank you God that, in Jesus, you have given us the greatest gift, the gift of your very self. We thank you that he lived among us, and knew what it was like to be human. Feed us at this table, and give us the courage to be faithful to the One who dared to come into our world. Renew and revive us. Give us the courage to listen, and to speak out today and always. Amen.

One: We know the stories about Jesus' life, how he would come to share many meals with his disciples and friends. He would welcome those who had been cast to the margins of society, eating with sinners and prostitutes, with the sick and the lame, with the wealthy and the poor alike. On one of those occasions, as his earthly life was nearing an end, he found himself with his disciples and those who had followed him closely in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were there to share the story of hope, of release from captivity, of God's promise of freedom. During the meal he would take the bread, bless it, break it, and offer it to them saying, "this is my body which is given for you." Later, after supper, he would take the cup, give thanks, and say, "this cup is a reminder for us of the new relationship God has made possible between us, and all of creation." The bread we share is a reminder for us that just as God blessed Jesus with an earthly body, so our earthly bodies are blessed. The cup we share is a reminder for us of Jesus' life, and the grace of God that Jesus came to help us know. We pray that God would bless this bread, and this cup, and us as we receive them. We bring all our lives to God at this table, that we might be one people, united as the Body of Christ, working together for justice and peace. The gifts of God for the people of God. Come for all things are now ready. Come and see how good God is.

Sharing The Elements

Unison Prayer Of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, Gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, and in the love of this community. Send us from this table, nourished and empowered. Help us listen with all our hearts, and speak with all our minds, that all your people might truly know peace. Amen.

Committing Ourselves To Change

One: In the presence of one another, we pledge ourselves to ending the violence of rape and sexual assault, working towards a vision of the Beloved Community where all can live in dignity and peace. We acknowledge the reality of rape and sexual violence, a plague that brings hopelessness and fear to our siblings here, and around the world.

Many: We stand in solidarity with those who have been victims. We promise to be open to their stories, and with the grace of God, to listen and hear without judgment.

One: We know the promise of wholeness, and hope that Jesus came to bring to the world.

Many: We affirm the promise of God's love for all the survivors in our world, those whose stories are known to us, and those whose stories are still shrouded in silence and fear.

One: We know that we have not done enough, that we have been silent when those around us have been struggling.

Many: We look forward with hope, trusting in God's ability to give us strength to listen with courage, and to be silent no longer.

One: We believe that the future depends on us.

Many: We believe that there is something we can, and must do, as people of the Good News, and as members of one human family, to end the violence of rape and sexual assault.

One: We recognize that we cannot do this alone. We know we must learn to depend on each other, and on God, in the struggle to end sexual violence, and create justice.

All: Gracious God, help us to be aware of your loving disruption of our lives. Give us the courage to work with you, and with each other, to transform our hurting world. Empower us with your Spirit that we might break the silence of sexual violence. Help us listen and move together, from fear and pain towards your realm of peace and justice. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Song ~ “We Shall Overcome”

(tune: We Shall Overcome, public domain)

Music can be found in many hymnals including in the New Century Hymnal #570

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome, some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome, some day.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid, today.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not afraid, today.

The truth shall set us free, the truth shall set us free,
The truth shall set us free, some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
The truth shall set us free, some day.

Blessing & Closing Music

“We Have Come” by Christopher Grundy

This was written to be sung acapella, but a skilled musician can add simple cords to make congregational singing easier if acapella is difficult for your community. You can listen to a recording at

<http://www.christophergrundy.com/recordings/>

The song is on the album “Stepping In”, track number four.

“God Who Remembers”

Used with grateful permission of Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

You may hear a recording at <http://www.psalmmersion.com/psalm-136>

Richard’s work as a psalm scholar and musician, writing contemporary songs inspired by the psalms, can be found at www.psalmmersion.com

God Who Remembers

Psalm 136

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

tune: Willow's Pasture

Piano arr: Sherri Hansen

$\text{♩} = 108$

B m A D B m A D *Fine*

Let us give thanks to___ God___ who re - mem-bers *Fine*

5 G D sus4 D B m G

5 All___ of his - to - ry held in cov - e - nant, ev - 'ry sto - ry

9 E m B m F#m A *D.C. al Fine*

9 All things re - mem - bered can be healed. *D.C. al Fine*

Detailed description: This is a piano arrangement of the hymn 'God Who Remembers' (Psalm 136). The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a right-hand melody with chords and a left-hand bass line. The piece is divided into three systems. The first system covers measures 1-4, with lyrics 'Let us give thanks to___ God___ who re - mem-bers'. The second system covers measures 5-8, with lyrics 'All___ of his - to - ry held in cov - e - nant, ev - 'ry sto - ry'. The third system covers measures 9-12, with lyrics 'All things re - mem - bered can be healed.'. The score includes various musical notations such as treble and bass clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Chord symbols are placed above the vocal line. The piece concludes with a 'D.C. al Fine' instruction.

Additional Song Suggestions

In addition to the song suggestions in the liturgy, you might consider other hymns with themes of healing, and justice. These are some suggestions from the New Century Hymnal (NCH):

- “I Was There To Hear Your Borne Cry” (NCH #351)
- “Help Us Accept Each Other” (NCH #388)
- “How Firm A Foundation” (NCH #407)
- “My Life Flows On In Endless Song” (NCH #476)
- “Amazing Grace” (NCH #547)
- “Out Of The Depths, O God, We Call” (NCH #554)
- “Lead Us From Death To Life” (NCH #581) – particularly the chorus
- “Let Justice Flow Like Streams” (NCH #588)
- “We Shall Overcome” (NCH #570)

Additional music you might consider for choir, band, teaching the congregation, or simply for listening:

“God Is Our Refuge And Strength” by Andra Moran

<https://www.etsy.com/shop/AMMOMusic>

“Light Of Heaven” by Andra Moran

http://www.andramoran.com/track/8132/light-of-heaven?feature_id=59929

“Here In This Place” by Christopher Grundy

<http://sites.fastspring.com/christophergrundy/product/catalog>

“From My Hands” by Christopher Grundy (particularly the second verse)

<http://www.christophergrundy.com/recordings/>

On the CD “In This Life”

“Welcome To This Circle” by The River’s Voice

<http://www.riversvoice.com/shop.php>

“Move (Psalm 109)” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

<http://www.psalmmersion.com/#!move/cd4h>

“Stand With You” by Bryan Sirchio
<http://sirchio.com/songs/f/c/196>

“God Weeps” by Shirley Erena Murray
This hymn, a lament about “strength misused” and “trust betrayed” reminds us that God weeps at the way we walk with each other. It is included in *The Faith We Sing* at #2048

“I Will Change Your Name” by The Nebblett Family
This song talks about God changing the of those who struggle from “wounded, outcast, lonely or afraid” to “confidence, joyfulness, overcoming one”. You can see a video of the song here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liOzd21u5MY>

“God Will See Us Through” by Bryan Sirchio & Emma Ceurvels
For a recording and sheet music visit:
<https://www.covergencemp.com/god-will-see-us-thoug.html>

“All Belong Here” by Hannah & Lenora Rand and The Many
<https://www.themanyarehere.com/allbelonghere>

“How Could Anyone Ever Tell You”
by Libby Roderick © 1990
sung here by Trish Bruxvoort Colligan © 2003
<https://trishbc.bandcamp.com/track/how-could-anyone>

Lyrics:

How could anyone ever tell you
you were anything less than beautiful?
How could anyone ever tell you
you were less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice
that your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you're connected to my soul.