

AFFIRMING
MINISTRIES WORSHIP



Sunday May 7, 2017

Welcome & Acknowledgements:

Whoever you are, wherever you have come from, good morning all.

As we gather, we recognize the gifts of Divine Love given to us and our ancestors in faith. We recognize God's land, cared for by many. We acknowledge that for thousands of years Indigenous peoples have walked on this land, in their own country. Their relationship with the land is at the center of their lives. As we open our worship today, we acknowledge that we are gathered in the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine First Nations & Metis people— in the area most recently defined as Treaty 6, and we acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages¹. 

Call and Response²:

All people are equal before the Divine spirit of God.

We each have a spark of the Divine within us.

May we seek and find the spark of the Divine within us.

May we feel the presence of the Divine as we gather here, as we enjoy the gathering of our community this week, and as we go forth for the rest of the year.

May we seek and find our best selves with the help of the Divine within us.

¹ Please change the references to suit your particular location. This is adapted from the River Bend Presbytery Acknowledgement Statement.

² Written by Mark Stanley (Quaker), used with permission. This was written for the Ecumenical Pride Worship held in Saskatoon on June 11, 2016.

May we find the courage to live with integrity; the strength to help those who need our support; the compassion to forgive those whose prejudice overcomes their love.

May we seek and find love with the help of the Divine within us.

May the Divine nurture our relationships, our families, and our communities.

Quakers meet together and worship in silence as we listen for the still, small voice of the Divine spirit of God. Please join me in a moment of silence as we seek the spirit of God within. (*Time of silence...*)

Let us together worship God.

Opening Prayer:³ *I think the silence above works as an opening prayer, but if you feel that you might need another one with words...*

God of Love we come together to meet in your name.

We come as a church family.

We aren't alike.

We don't look alike.

We don't think alike.

We don't act alike.

And we don't all like the same things.

Despite our diversity

^{3 3} Adapted from Rosalie Sugrue's work in *Courage to Love. Liturgies for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community*. Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan (The Pilgrim Press, 2002), page 223-224.

And our faults
We are all made in your image.
May we never forget whose image we reflect.

We pray for an inclusive church here, across Saskatchewan, Canada
and the world,
And yet we don't always like each other.
It is hard to accept
That other good people can hold views that differ from ours.

Not all of us can walk a straight and narrow path.
Not all of us would want to.
We know there are many worthy paths to travel
And you can be found on them all.

Provision us with hope and joy.
Enable us to journey with dignity
And move forward valuing otherness.
Help us to seek good in everyone
And in that seeking there find you.
Amen and Amen.

A Litany⁴

From fear and ignorance; **Gracious One, deliver us.**

⁴ Adapted from Richard Watson's work in *Courage to Love. Liturgies for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community*. Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan (The Pilgrim Press, 2002), page 238.

From indifference and detachment; **Gracious One, deliver us.**

From prejudice and pity; **Gracious One, deliver us.**

From selfish and speedy judgements; **Gracious One, deliver us.**

From shallow and simple answers; **Gracious One, deliver us.**

In this time of silence, we name our personal and societal regrets,
challenges and sin in our lives...

(Time of silence)

With hope and wisdom: **Living God, inspire us.**

With compassion and involvement; **Living God, inspire us.**

With openness and love; **Living God, inspire us.**

With full and prayerful generosity; **Living God, inspire us.**

With courage to face the reality and complexity of life; **Living God,
inspire us.**

With joy to celebrate, nurture and express our diversity in sexuality
and gender expression; **Living God, inspire us.**

(Time of silence)

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Living God,

You inspire us with the depth of your love

That we bear it on our lips and in our lives;

Remind us that your love is wider than our regret, deeper than our
sin, and carries us through all the challenges in our lives.

Your love and mercy colours inside, outside, on the lines of our lives.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Children's Time: see resource sheet

Bible Readings:

Acts 2:42-47

2:42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2:43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.

2:44 All who believed were together and had all things in common;

2:45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

2:46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts,

2:47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Question: What does your community look like? What do you want it to look like? What are your barriers? Where is the Spirit of God?

Psalms 23

23:1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

23:2 He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

23:3 he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

23:4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff-- they comfort me.

23:5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

23:6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

1 Peter 2:19-25

2:19 For it is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly.

2:20 If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God's approval.

2:21 For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

2:23 When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly.

2:24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

2:25 For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

Question: Where might we need healing in our world? Where do you see woundedness? In what way is Jesus an Ally for Creation?

John 10:1-10

10:1 Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit.

10:2 The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.

10:3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

10:4 When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice.

10:5 They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers."

10:6 Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

10:7 So again Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep.

10:8 All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them.

10:9 I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture.

10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

Question: what if the doors are shut to you, and you are made to look like a bandit? In what way does being an Affirming Ministry open gates to others who might feel themselves shut out?

Reflection: Please feel free to use the stories "Stories for Affirming Ministries Sunday" listed in another document

Prayers of the People: *(other prayers may be added, including Jesus' prayer)*

God, who made us in your imageⁱ

Teach us to love ourselves as you love us.

God who made us in your image

Allow us to show that image to the world.

God who made us in your image

Help us to see your image in all those we meet.

God who made us in your image

Teach us to conserve and protect all your creation.

God who made us in your image

Bless, protect and keep us and all your children safe.

Offering Prayer: Through the many diverse gifts we are given, may we use all that we are and all that we have to grow acceptance, mercy, love in the world. In Christ's name we pray.

Sending Forth:

Let us go into the world to show our colours of diversity, pain and joy.

We go to live love in the world.

Let us go into the world knowing that wherever we go, the Holy One calls us there.

We go to find the holy in the ordinary,

Let us go into the world being touched by the grace of God.

Let us go knowing we are all unconditionally and deeply loved.

Blessing:

May God bless us;

May God enfold us in the love of Christ

May God guide us in the Spirit's care

May God's own peace prevail,

this day and always.

Hymn suggestions

More Voices = MV; Voices United = VU

All are Welcome MV#1

Come touch our Hearts MV#12

Dance with the Spirit MV #156

Deep in our Hearts MV#154

Draw the Circle Wide MV#145

Go Make a Difference MV#209

My Love Colours outside Lines MV#138

Now there is No Male or Female VU#627 (Tune is *From the Slave Pens*)

One More Step along the Road VU#639

Part of the Family (Come in, Come in and Sit Down) VU#395

Spirit Open my Heart MV#79

There is Room for All MV#62

Though I May Speak VU#372

Walk with Me VU#649

Wall that Divide (Though Ancient Walls) VU#691

We are One VU#402

^{i i} Adapted from Anna Cory's work in *Courage to Love. Liturgies for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community*.
Compiled by Geoffrey Duncan (The Pilgrim Press, 2002), page 232.