



Central Presbyterian Church
Worship for Sunday, March 15, 2020
Celebrating the Lord's Day from our homes

Worship is one of the most important things we do as God's people. Even though we cannot meet in person, we can still worship! In fact, in the early days of the church most Christian worship services occurred in house churches and small groups. We invite you to practice this simple service of worship in your home as we ground ourselves in our identity as followers of Jesus Christ in these unprecedented times. We will still be Determined to Love, Invited to Wonder, and Inspired to Serve, sharing the light of Christ for an anxious world.

*This liturgy is something you can do with your whole household or just by yourself. If you're doing it as a family, we encourage dividing up the parts so there are different leaders. **Bold** parts are for all to read together. If you are by yourself, walk through the service and as you read it all, remember CPC as a body of Christ is together in Spirit and you are not alone. Words in italic are instructions for you as you move through worship.*

Optional things to gather before beginning the service:

candle and match/lighter
Bible

pencils or something else to write with
device with internet access and sound capabilities

We Gather as God's People

Call to Worship:

**Illuminating God, your light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overcome it.
Come, shine in my heart.**

Light a candle

When we confess our sins, we are reminded that God's grace is so much more than we can fully grasp—that even in times of uncertainty, when we may not be our best selves, God offers forgiveness, gentleness, and love. Confident in God's love shown to us in Christ, we confess our sins:

Prayer of Confession: modified from a prayer written by Rev. Mindi Mitchell
Wondrous God, we confess that at times our doubts and fears override our hope and faith. Forgive us when we lose sight of the joy of Your love and instead fall into despair and gloom. Lift up our spirits, Lord, and help us to remember the promise of new life here and now, not just the hope of resurrection for the future. We give thanks for Your Son, Jesus the Christ, who continues to offer us new life, who continues to turn us around and upside down. Forgive us, restore us and renew us.

Time for silent prayer.

In the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness:

Hear the Good News. Anyone who is in Christ is a new creation! In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Thanks be to God.

To share the peace of Christ this week, consider taking a picture of the candle you lit at the beginning of the service and share it on facebook with the hashtag, #cpcpeace

We Listen For God's Word

This week we offer a Psalm and a Gospel reading for you to read and meditate on.

The Psalm is one we picked from a short list of "heart psalms" that comfort us as your pastors in times of trouble. You are encouraged to read it through more than once. Try underlying or circling words that stand out to you as you read it. Is it the same word or phrase each time? Or do different things stand out the more you read it?

The Gospel reading continues our time together in the Gospel of Mark. However, we've decided to go back to a passage that we skipped early on in Mark's story. Use the art to help you hear how God is speaking through the words. How might you depict the story?

We have included an optional meditation to follow the Mark story. You may choose to skip this if you are worshipping with young children, as it focuses on a faithful response to Covid-19.

Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

Selah

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;
he utters his voice, the earth melts.
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

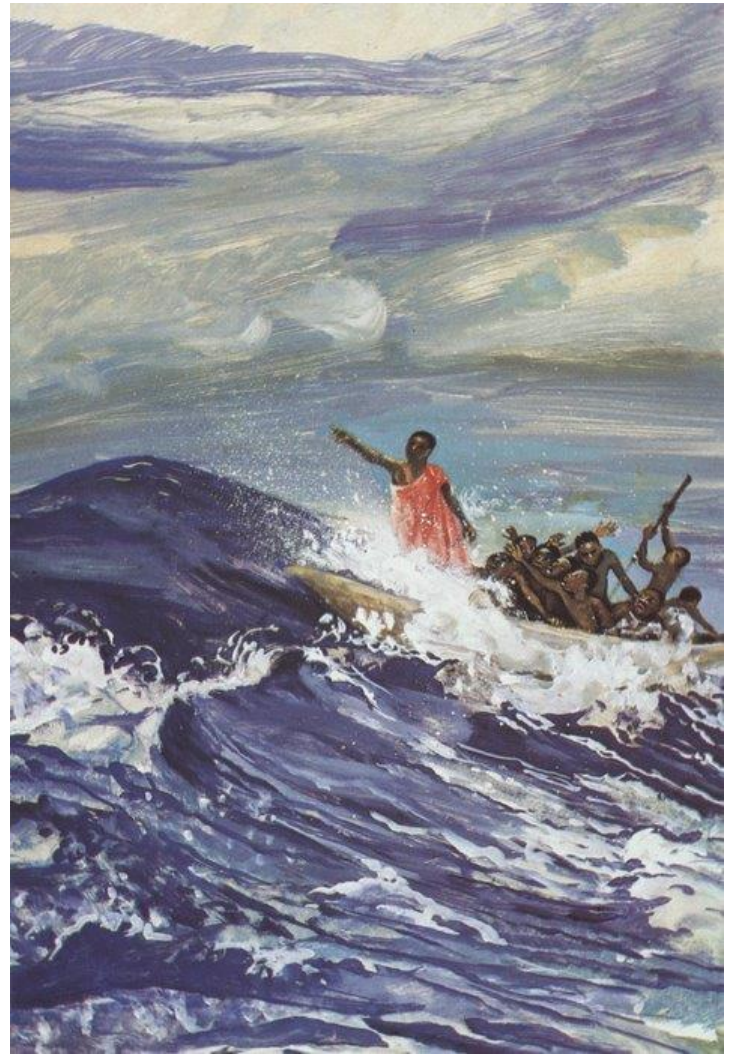
Selah

Come, behold the works of the LORD;
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields with fire.
'Be still, and know that I am God!
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth.'
The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Selah

Mark 4:35-41

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, 'Let us go across to the other side.' ³⁶And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. ³⁷A great gale arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. ³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' ³⁹He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, 'Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?' ⁴¹And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, 'Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'



Meditation: written by Kara K. Root: The 20-second gift of washing your hands

<https://faithandleadership.com/kara-k-root-20-second-gift-washing-your-hands>

Wash your hands for 20 seconds.

Never has 20 seconds felt so long in my entire life.

I'm trying to follow [the CDC's advice](#) for avoiding the new coronavirus. I count as I wash my hands:

“One, two, three, four ...”

My normal hand-washing time is apparently somewhere around eight seconds. After eight seconds, I feel finished.

“... nine, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 ...” I resent each additional second. Each one feels long and annoying.

Twenty seconds is an eternity! It's making me cranky.

The soap is gone because I've kept my hands under the water. I have to get more soap. I think about how much water I'm wasting.

A tip I hear to avoid the counting: Wash your hands for two rounds of “Happy Birthday.”

I try this ONE time. I hate it SO much. I don't want “Happy birthday to you” in my head that many times a day. It's bad enough at actual birthdays.

That 20 seconds of hand washing, several times a day, is an excellent opportunity to stop and soak in resentment. It's a marvelous forced pause to wallow in grouchy irritability and anxiety.

To keep myself from ending early, cutting it to 12 seconds, or 14, I take to ruminating on the spread of the virus. I wonder how many more people have gotten it so far.

I berate myself for my impatience. Surely, I must be an exceptionally impatient person if I can't stand here for 20 seconds.

I scold myself for telling my kids to do this and then having such a hard time with it myself. I'm a bad parent. I wonder whether they're actually washing their hands for 20 seconds. I probably should nag them more often and more forcefully.

This was my increasingly unpleasant hand-washing routine.

Until yesterday.

My husband walked in the door and said, “Hey, did you know 20 seconds is the Lord’s Prayer? It’s one Our Father.”

Suddenly, the whole thing blew open. I thought immediately of the contemplatives and the mystics, the church fathers and mothers. I thought of those who tried to find ways to follow St. Paul’s direction to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

I remembered breath prayers, in which the words are attached to the rhythmic in and out of the breath, becoming part of the pray-er, and thought of John Chrysostom, who in the late 300s is thought to have originated the practice with the simple prayer, “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God / Have mercy on us.”

Kathleen Norris’ book [“The Quotidian Mysteries”](#) popped into my mind. It follows the ancients (and mystics of many religions) in reconceiving the performance of everyday tasks as prayer by doing them with awareness and intention, connecting one’s heart to God.

The house becomes a sanctuary; chores become worship. Preparing meals, washing dishes, hanging laundry -- all are opportunities for prayer.

My own [study and practice of Sabbath](#) has taught me the gift of stopping, of being reoriented to who I am, and whose I am. When we stop, God meets us. I know that this is available to me already, at any moment.

I’ve felt the gift of both planned and forced Sabbath. How is this any different?

Wash your hands for 20 seconds.

Now I see that each time I wash my hands, I’m offered a chance to slow down and be present with God. I’m offered a moment in which to stand still and breathe and come back into myself.

Head, heart, body, right here, with God.

How many opportunities throughout my day do I now have to pause and be reoriented?

Suddenly, this task, this frustrating requirement, becomes a gift.

I turn on the faucet. I listen to the sound of the water. I breathe. I wet my hands and squirt soap into my palm. I am aware of my hands and how they've changed, aged. They look just like my mother's when I was young. She was once just the age I am now.

I begin.

"Our Father, who art in heaven ..." I feel the strength in my fingers, the flexibility, the sensitivity to touch and sensation. My hands do so much, and I take them for granted. Thank you, hands. Thank you, God, for my hands.

"Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Around this point, my hands begin to feel sudsy, velvety and a little tickly, as if wrapped in a soft blanket. It's a pleasant sensation.

I let myself enjoy it. How full life is of these small sensations! These little, unnoticed blessings of being embodied creatures!

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." My mind unclenches a little. It snaps to the phone call I've been replaying in my head for weeks.

I feel the tension in my throat and the tender, wounded anger I've been nursing -- let's face it, cherishing. I think about the tone in her voice, the dismissive way she treated me.

It rises up and balloons in my chest as it has in the car, in the bed, in the shower -- anytime I am still long enough for it to catch up and invade me again.

But this time, I face it squarely. "Forgive us ..." -- "Forgive me ... as I forgive ..." It breaks apart a little, dissipates. She doesn't know me. I don't need her to understand me. We are both doing our best with our days, with our lives. Beloved children of God, both of us. All of us.

Maybe I can let this go. Maybe I can wash my hands of it and let it go.

"For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever." The water is warm. I rinse off the soap. In just 20 seconds, my hands feel clean, and my mind and heart feel renewed. "Amen."

We Respond to God's Word

Prayers of the People

Written by Pastor Jenny

God of all things – all things great and small – all things visible and invisible – hear our prayers. In these days of changes sudden and drastic, we are grateful for faith in you – you who do not change – and in your love for us that is ever sure. We pray, O God, with thanks that you hold this whole chaotic world in your strong hands, with a love that will not let us go.

In these days of increasing uncertainty, we seek your assurance.

In these days of mounting disease and distress, we seek your healing mercies.

We pray for all in your world who, in the face of this virus' power, are fragile and vulnerable. For those fragile in body, who may not be able to withstand this illness well, we pray your strength and protection. For those who are now so vulnerable in terms of economic fallout, we pray for ways they might be supported and seen through this ordeal. We pray for those already sick, for your healing. We pray for those already mourning, for your comfort. We pray for those who fear, for your peace that passes understanding.

We pray for medical workers, stretched and overwhelmed. We pray for researchers and reporters, seeking to find possibilities and share information. We pray for community leaders and government officials, called to make decisions with courage for the common good. Inspire and direct their steps, we pray.

O God, guide us in these strange new days, as we find ourselves derailed from expectation and routine. Quiet our anxious hearts. Still our wandering, wondering minds. Help us to be patient and prayerful, slow to judge and quick to care. Help us, O God, to love our neighbor in all that we choose to do – and in all that we choose not to do. Remind us that we are your church wherever we are, and stir our spirits to find new ways to reach out with your love.

Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days.

In the way of Jesus we pray, Amen.

This week, Spirit Rising was going to be playing a contemporary setting of the classic hymn "O Love that will not let me go." Listen to these two settings you can hear on youtube. Do the words resonate differently in the different settings? Use these words to guide you this week.

Classic Setting: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvA6PYa54sg>

Indelible Grace version (contemporary setting): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c7BELqQjQwY>

O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go 833

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go'. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are printed below the vocal line of each system.

1 O Love that wilt not let me go, I rest my
2 O Light that fol-lowest all my way, I yield my
3 O Joy that seek-est me through pain, I can-not
4 O Cross that lift-est up my head, I dare not

wea-ry soul in thee; I give thee back the life I owe, that
flick-ering torch to thee; my heart re-stores its bor-rowed ray, that
close my heart to thee; I trace the rain-bow through the rain, and
ask to fly from thee; I lay in dust life's glo-ry dead, and

in thine o-cean depths its flow may rich-er, full-er be.
in thy sun-shine's blaze its day may bright-er, fair-er be.
feel the prom-ise is not vain that morn shall tear-less be.
from the ground there blos-soms red life that shall end-less be.

This intense hymn of commitment to God (addressed as Love, Light, and Joy) closes with an invocation of the ultimate testimony to those attributes (the Cross). The composer, a Scotsman, named this specially-composed tune for the 11th-century patroness of Scotland.

TEXT: George Matheson, 1881, alt.
MUSIC: Albert Lister Peace, 1884, alt.

ST. MARGARET
8.8.8.8.6

We are Sent into God's World

The Lord bless and keep you.

The Lord make God's face to shine upon you and give you peace this day and every day. Amen.

Let us be sent into the world with the choral benediction, "God Be with You Till We Meet Again."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXq3van1aOs>

SENDING

God Be with You Till We Meet Again 541

Unison *Harmony*

1 God be with you till we meet a - gain; lov - ing coun - sels
2 God be with you till we meet a - gain; un - seen wings pro -
3 God be with you till we meet a - gain; when life's per - ils
4 God be with you till we meet a - gain; keep love's ban - ner

guide, up - hold you, with a shep - herd's care en - fold you:
tect - ing hide you, dai - ly man - na still pro - vide you:
thick con - found you, put un - fail - ing arms a - round you:
float - ing o'er you; smite death's threat - ening wave be - fore you:

Unison

God be with you till we meet a - gain.

A North American Congregational minister wrote this text as a Christian expansion of the root sense of "good-bye": God be [with] ye/you. The tune, named for a cousin, was composed by one of the few 20th-century British composers to make a major contribution to hymnody.

TEXT: Jeremiah Eames Rankin, 1880, alt.
MUSIC: Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

RANDOLPH
9.8.8.9

(alternate tune: GOD BE WITH YOU, 542)

Art used in the service:

JESUS MAFA. Jesus lulls the storm, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN.

By Rembrandt - www.gardnermuseum.org : Home : Info : Pic, Public Domain

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6812612>

Image: *Peace Be Still*, by He Qi. 2001. Nanjing Seminary, China. Vanderbilt Divinity School Library, Art in the Christian Tradition.

Hymns are from our Glory to God Hymnal