

Gather Us, O God



Advent to Gather
Advent Together

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GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

Prelude

“They’ll Know We are Christians”

Annette Nolan

Pastoral Welcome

Call to Worship

L: Gather us, O God

C: And we will know your life that makes us one.

L: Gather us, God

C: And we will celebrate our variety and uniqueness.

L: Gather us, God

C: And we will give you the pain of our brokenness.

L: Gather us, God

C: And we will share the gifts of your Spirit.

L: Trinity of love braid us as one

C: That our brokenness be healed by you

That our fears be held by you

That our gifts be used by you

That our lives be offered to you

So that the world may know your reign of love. Amen.

Sharing the Peace

L: Where people squabble

C: Peace be among us.

L: Where races fight

C: Peace be among us.

L: Where neighbors argue

C: Peace be among us.

L: Where nations disagree

C: Peace be among us.

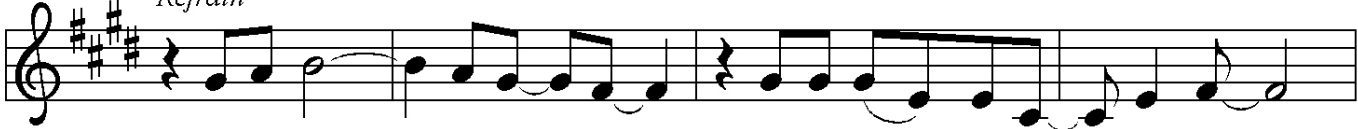
L: Where Christ’s disciples gather

C: Peace be our way.


L: The peace of the Lord be with you.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Refrain



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky-ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;
For this holy house, for all who worship and praise,
Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Refrain

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;
That we may live out . . . truth and justice and grace,
Let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

Refrain

Prayer of the Day

L: Lord Jesus, your encounter with the Canaanite woman magnifies the hunger of a mother's heart who seeks healing for her daughter. Unshakable, this desperate mother cannot be dismissed or hushed. It is her tenacious love for her daughter that is strong enough to bear the weight of your most unlovable words. We pray that our hearts might be vast enough to hold a love *just like hers*; that our faith might burn with the strength of convictions *just like hers*; and that our prayers might be stripped of the *thees* and *thous* and become passionate cries for healing and justice for others and the world *just like hers*. We ask all of this in your name, trusting in your steadfast love and your gracious presence. Amen.

The First Reading

Isaiah 56:1, 6-8

The Gospel Acclamation



Al-le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the



words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Scripture

Matthew 15:21-28

The Message

Pastor Ward Misenheimer



1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my peo - ple cry.
 2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my peo - ple's pain.
 3 "I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame.



All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
 I have wept for love of them. They turn a - way.
 I will set a feast for them. My hand will save.



I, who made the stars of night, I will make their dark - ness bright.
 I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love a - lone.
 Fin - est bread I will pro - vide till their hearts be sat - is - fied.



Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"
 I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?"
 I will give my life to them. Whom shall I send?"



Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you



call - ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you



lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

Music: HERE I AM, LORD, Daniel L. Schutte

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The Iona Abbey Creed

L: Now let us confess our faith with the words of the Iona Creed:

**C: We believe in God above us,
maker and sustainer of all life,
of sun and moon, water and earth,
of the breadth and beauty of all humanity.**

**We believe in God beside us, Jesus Christ,
the Word made flesh, born of a woman, servant of the poor,
tortured and nailed to a tree.**

A man of sorrows, he died forsaken.

He descended into the earth to the place of death.

On the third day he rose from the tomb.

**He ascended into heaven to be everywhere present,
and His kingdom will come on earth.**

**We believe in God within us,
the Holy Spirit of Pentecostal fire,
Life-giving breath of the church,
Spirit of healing and forgiveness,
Source of resurrection and of eternal life. Amen**

Prayers of the Faithful

L: Lord, look on your world – then look on us. We know the world is so fractured and filled with chaos and crisis. Where to begin with our prayers? In our struggle to find the words, may your Spirit intercede with sighs too deep for words. Come, Holy Spirit!

A brief silence.

L: Lord Jesus, as the Canaanite woman brought her daughter's need to you, overcoming stigma and rejection to do so, confident of your healing in her life, we bring the needs of others to you, especially those for whom pain is a constant companion, those who struggle with the confusion and distress of mental illness, for those whom treatment is not available or affordable, and for all those we name now.

We especially pray for:

- Josh Baker
- Lindsey Baker
- Lemont Bell
- Freda Christ
- Nell Clayton
- Emma Fetting
- Eileen Folkerth
- Jennifer Gazda
- Jasmin Kivett
- Dick Kuklantz
- Waylon Kuklantz
- Phyllis Lester
- Ray Matthews
- Rick Messina
- Justin Mertz
- Caroline Morton
- Calvin Roberson
- Richard Schulz
- Myra Steele
- Kirby Strickland & family
- Mary Faith Strickland
- David Townsend
- Dan Trabilisy
- Linda Ann Wassum
- Herbert Watson
- Beverly Williams
- Lewis Williams
- Lisa Williams
- Terry & Carol Wisner
- Jeff Woods

L: We now pray aloud or in the silence of our hearts for those we wish to name (*give time for community to pray*).

L: We remember and celebrate the lives of those who have died, especially . . .

Sharon Stancher, friend of Pastor Ward
 Erica Miller, friend of Pam Rhynes
 Grace Stegall, aunt of Lisa Williams

. . . By your Holy Spirit, comfort their families, and all who grieve, give peace to those who mourn, strengthen all through the promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus.

L: Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord Jesus, we know you hold the future and walk with us even now on this unpredictable path of the pandemic. We trust that you walk with us during difficult times and never abandon us to navigate life's challenges alone.

We look to you, Lord, to make your presence known to all students, teachers, staff and families in the midst of the anxieties in making difficult decisions and the true desires to educate all students.

We look to you, Lord, to take, bless and multiply our efforts to educate and nurture your children.

We look to you, Lord, to give us the peace that passes understanding, to hear the cries of the hurting and to promise that small amounts of faith can bring life-giving change.

We look to you, Lord, for wisdom, for courage, for inspiration, and for creativity.

As we make difficult decisions in an unprecedented time, grant us an unshakable commitment to one another, especially to the most vulnerable among us.

Send your Spirit to open our eyes to the new things you are doing.

Send your Spirit to open our ears to the voices we need most to hear.

Send your Spirit to open our hearts to the profound love you have for us all, so that everything we do in this time of fear, anxiety and uncertainty reveals your compassion, kindness and grace.

Send your Spirit to comfort and direct us as we humbly look to you for guidance and strength.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord, take the time and gifts you have entrusted to us, and teach us how to use them to give others the abundant life of Jesus – so that your people may rejoice in the new life you give, for you are the life-giver and we are your servants.

C: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (sung)

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil, for the kingdom, the pow'r and the glory are yours, now and forever.

SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE

Benediction

L: May you never feel alone in the struggle for justice and peace.
May you know the support of family, friends, and people who feel as passionately about the world as you do.

May you feel a part of the great cloud of witnesses, who through the ages, did God's work and prayed for the coming of the Kingdom.

May you never feel alone.

And if you do, may you carry in your heart the words of Jesus, who told his friends: "I am with you always."

C: Amen.

Dismissal

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Sending Song

"Blest Be the Tie That Binds"

Annette Nolan