

# Gather Us, O God



*Advent to Gather*  
*Advent Together*

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## GATHERING FOR WORSHIP

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**Prelude**

“America the Beautiful

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.

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## PROCLAIMING THE WORD

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*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: Eternal God, you sing a song of silence to our noisy hearts, inviting us to still our anxious souls, and find our peace in your hands which cradle us.

Jesus Christ, you reveal God to us and do so in the tenderness of your touch, the gentleness of your words, the goodness of your heart, and the peace of your shared yoke.

Holy Spirit, your presence opens us to experience the freedom of the Gospel. As we hand you our anger, our hurt, our sin, may our burdens become our songs of joy and may we find our rest for our souls. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

**The First Reading**

Zechariah 9:9-12

**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 11:16-19, 25-30

**The Message**

Lift ev'ry voice and sing till earth and heaven ring,  
ring with the harmonies of liberty.

Let our rejoicing rise high as the list'ning skies,  
let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us;  
sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;  
facing the rising sun of our new day begun,  
let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod, bitter the chast'ning rod,  
felt in the days when hope unborn had died;  
yet with a steady beat, have not our weary feet  
come to the place for which our parents sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears has been watered;  
we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,  
out from the gloomy past, till now we stand at last  
where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;  
thou who hast by thy might led us into the light,  
keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met thee;  
lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee;  
shadowed beneath thy hand may we forever stand,  
true to our God, true to our native land.

*Text: James W. Johnson, 1871-1938*

*Music: J. Rosamond Johnson, 1873-1954*

## **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. How can we match up to the world's needs? We cannot even identify them adequately. Come to our aid!

*A brief silence.*

L: Lord of all justice, break our hearts for what breaks yours. We pray for all our brothers and sisters, who have been victims of oppression and injustice. As we celebrate the freedoms we have in our country, give us courage to acknowledge our role – whether complicit or implicit – in mistakes and sins of the past in which we have denied those same

freedoms to others through discrimination and racism. By the power of your Holy Spirit, empower us to work toward abolishing social structures which continue to perpetuate racial practices and policies. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

L: Lord of all compassion, friend of all in need, you have untied our burdens and healed our spirits. We lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still burdened, those seeking healing, those in need within the church and the world.

We especially pray for:

- Josh Baker
- Lemont Bell
- Amos Brown
- Tim Caldwell
- Freda Christ
- William Ensley
- Eileen Folkerth
- Amber Gazda
- Jennifer Gazda
- Andrea Hankins
- Dwight Hartsell
- Dick Kuklantz
- Waylon Kuklantz
- Phyllis Lester
- Ray Matthews
- Rick Messina
- Hilda Mertz
- Justin Mertz
- Richard Schulz
- Lori Shownes
- Myra Steele
- Mary Faith Strickland
- Tim & Karen Taylor
- Connie von Brunt
- Linda Ann Wassum
- Herbert Watson
- Beverly Williams
- Lewis Williams
- Mandy Lynn Worley

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

- Pastor Sherrill Curtis, the friend of Pastor Ward
- Carole Johnson, the mother of Brenda Cicensia
- Betty Taylor, the mother of Tim Taylor
- Cheri Strickland, the wife of Kirby Strickland

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.

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

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

- L: Lord of all healing and care, we pray for all healthcare professionals and relief workers, especially those who find themselves on the frontlines to bring healing, comfort and care to all impacted by the coronavirus. Strengthen, encourage, and empower us to be people of peace in the midst of anxiety, impatience, worry, dread, and a hunger for life to be normal again. May we be people who embody of a spirit of camaraderie, generosity, and faithful confidence. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**
- L: Lord of all freedom, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will. 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.**

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## SENDING GOD'S PEOPLE

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### 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

### “This Is the Song”

Traven Harrington

This is my song, O God of all the nations,  
 a song of peace for lands afar and mine.  
 This is my home, the country where my heart is;  
 here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine;  
 but other hearts in other lands are beating  
 with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.

My country's skies are bluer than the ocean,  
 and sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine.  
 But other lands have sunlight too, and clover,  
 and skies are ev'rywhere as blue as mine.  
 So hear my song, O God of all the nations,  
 a song of peace for their land and for mine.

This is my prayer, O God of all earth's kingdoms,  
 your kingdom come; on earth your will be done.  
 O God, be lifted up till all shall serve you,  
 and hearts united learn to live as one.  
 So hear my prayer, O God of all the nations;  
 myself I give you; let your will be done.

*Text: Lloyd Stone, 1912-1993, sts. 1-2; Georgia Harkness, 1891-1974, st. 3*

*Text sts. 1-2 © 1934, 1962 Lorenz Publishing Company.*

*Text st. 3 © 1964 Lorenz Publishing Company.*

*Music: FINLANDIA, Jean Sibelius, 1865-1957*