

Oakdale Park Church Worship Liturgy  
Sunday, March 15, 2020

Friday, March 13, 2020

Dear Friends,

COVID-19 may be dictating social distance between us, but the worship of our God will not be stopped. As the leaders of Oakdale Park Church, we are encouraging you to meet with a small group (less than 20 people) and gather in someone's home to worship this Sunday, and for as many Sundays as our congregational worship is suspended. If you need help finding a group to worship with, please let your Elder know and they can connect you with one. We want everyone to have a small group to worship with during this time.

We are sharing a liturgy for your worship this Sunday which includes song recommendations and text of a short sermon (audio will be posted on the church website by Saturday). Printed copies of this document are available for pick up from the church office on Friday until 5pm, or from the home of Shannon Jammal-Hollemans (1236 Allerton Ave SE) on Friday evening or Saturday. Call or text Shannon at 616.432.1720 if you plan to stop by her house to pick up a copy.

We encourage you to provide your own musicians for the songs listed in the liturgy. Feel free to select your own songs to sing together if you prefer (the website [hymnary.org](http://hymnary.org) is a great resource for songs and music). Or your group may sing along with the links to music videos provided. Feel free to listen to the songs once through before singing along.

As the body of Christ, we will celebrate the Lord's Supper this Sunday. We want this practice to continue in your worship as small groups. In a small gathering, don't worry about tearing from the same loaf and dipping in a common cup, just pass the Purell instead of the peace beforehand and afterwards. :) Language for the administration of the Lord's Supper is also included in the liturgy for this week.

We hope that you will see this as an opportunity for creativity in your worship. This unique time in the life of God's people offers us an opportunity to gather the way that the earliest Christian communities gathered--in homes, around a shared loaf, diving into God's word and worshipping together with song and prayer. We look forward to seeing what God does through us during this time!

Sincerely,

Pastor Shannon Jammal-Hollemans, Interim Worship Coordinator  
Pastor John Rozeboom, Interim Staff Supervisor

### **Before starting your worship:**

1. Make sure every participant has a copy of the liturgy (on their phone or printed).
2. Purchase a loaf of bread and grape juice or wine for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.
3. Assign leaders for these 10 parts of the service (people can take multiple parts):
  - Call to Worship
  - Song Leader & Musicians
  - God's Greeting
  - Prayer of Confession
  - Assurance of Pardon
  - Communal Prayer
  - Scripture Reader
  - Sermon (to bring it up on their phone or to a speaker, or to read it aloud)
  - Discussion of Sermon
  - Lord's Supper
4. You may want to come to an agreement on how the communal prayer will go (popcorn style, prayer requests, etc.) Remember to check the church prayer line for requests.

One idea for communal prayer would be for the leader to invite people to offer items of praise, and items for prayer.

- After each item of praise or thanksgiving is spoken, the leader would say, "Lord, you are good!" and the whole group would respond together, "and your mercy endures forever!"
- After each item for prayer (needs, laments) is spoken, the leader would say, "Lord, in your mercy..." and the whole group would respond together, "Hear our prayer".

The prayer leader could wrap things up by closing the prayer at the end.

5. Each person should read through their parts before starting the service, particularly the person leading the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to either Pastor John or Shannon.

## Worship Liturgy

### Call to Worship - Based on Psalm 51:7-12

One: Cleanse us with hyssop, and we will be clean;  
wash us, and we will be purer than fresh snow.  
Let us hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  
Hide your face from our sins and blot out all our iniquity.

Create in us pure hearts, O God, and renew steadfast spirits within us.  
Do not cast us from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from us.  
Restore to us the joy of your salvation and grant us a willing spirit to sustain us.

### Opening Song - Come As You Are <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2zhf2mqEMI>

#### Verse 1

Come out of sadness  
From wherever you've been  
Come broken hearted  
Let rescue begin  
Come find your mercy  
Oh sinner come kneel  
Earth has no sorrow  
That heaven can't heal  
Earth has no sorrow  
That heaven can't heal

#### Chorus

So lay down your burdens  
Lay down your shame  
All who are broken  
Lift up your face  
Oh wanderer come home  
You're not too far  
So lay down your hurt  
Lay down your heart  
Come as you are

#### Verse 2

There's hope for the hopeless  
And all those who've strayed  
Come sit at the table  
Come taste the grace  
There's rest for the weary  
Rest that endures  
Earth has no sorrow  
That heaven can't cure

#### [Chorus]

Come as you are  
Fall in his arms  
Come as you are

#### Verse 3

There's joy for the morning  
Oh sinner be still  
Earth has no sorrow  
That heaven can't heal  
Earth has no sorrow  
That heaven can't heal

#### [Chorus]

Come as you are

Songwriters: David Crowder, Ben Glover &  
Matt Maher

### God's Greeting - Based on Isaiah 1:16-20

- One: Wash and make yourselves clean.  
Take your evil deeds out of my sight;  
stop doing wrong.
- All: Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed.  
Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.
- One: "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord.  
"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow;  
though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
- All: We are willing and obedient. Come, let us worship the Lord!

### Prayer of Confession from The Worship Sourcebook, #52

- One: God of grace,  
we confess that we have elevated the things of this world above you.  
We have made idols of possessions and people and used your name for causes  
that are not consistent with you and your purposes.  
We have permitted our schedules to come first  
and have not taken the time to worship you.  
We have not always honored those who guided us in life.  
We have participated in systems that take life instead of give it.  
We have been unfaithful in our covenant relationships.  
We have yearned for, and sometimes taken, that which is not ours,  
and we have misrepresented others' intentions.
- All: Forgive us, O God, for the many ways we fall short of your glory.  
Help us to learn to live together according to your ways  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen.

### Assurance of Pardon from Joel 2:12-13

- One: "Even now," declares the LORD, "return to me with all your heart,  
with fasting and weeping and mourning."
- All: To you, O Lord, we rend our hearts.
- One: Return to the LORD your God, for God is gracious and compassionate,  
slow to anger and abounding in love, and God relents from sending calamity.
- One: In you alone, O Lord, we find our home. Amen.

Song of Praise - Reckless Love <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eq1N8OhDnEA>

### **Verse 1**

Before I spoke a word,  
You were singing over me  
You have been so, so good to me  
Before I took a breath,  
You breathed Your life in me  
You have been so, so kind to me

### **Chorus**

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending,  
reckless love of God  
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found,  
leaves the ninety-nine  
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still,  
You give Yourself away  
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending,  
reckless love of God, yeah

### **Verse 2**

When I was Your foe,  
still Your love fought for me  
You have been so, so good to me  
When I felt no worth,  
You paid it all for me  
You have been so, so kind to me

### **[Chorus]**

There's no shadow You won't light up  
Mountain You won't climb up  
Coming after me  
There's no wall You won't kick down  
Lie You won't tear down  
Coming after me

**(Repeat verse 2 more times)**

### **[Chorus]**

Songwriters: Caleb Culver, Cory Asbury & Ran Jackson

Communal Prayer - Do this in the format most comfortable for your group.

Scripture Reading - Matthew 18:1-14

Message - "Litany for the Little Ones" by Rev. Shannon Jammal-Hollemans

The disciples came to Jesus with a question. And Jesus responds to their question in his typical fashion--with no easy answer. Without a simple answer to give, Jesus issues his disciples a call to vulnerability. The greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who are last in the kingdom on earth. Those who will be great are those who you consider to be little.

And Jesus drives this home by making two points.

1. First, Jesus talks about the seriousness of causing little ones to sin. He says that being a stumbling block to those who you consider to be little is an offense to God. So offensive, in fact, that causing a little one to stumble is warned against six times in verses 6 through 9. And to drive the point home, Jesus uses the most powerful image he can conjure for his listeners to illustrate it--the image of a huge millstone stone tied around someone's neck and their being tossed into the sea. He also employs hyperbole here, the literary device of exaggerating to make a statement in a powerful way. Jesus says that it would be better to cut off your foot or gouge out your eye if they lead you astray than to face God's judgement.

2. Second, Jesus admonishes people for despising others who they consider “little”. Whether because of age, gender, economic status, sexual identity or a perceived disability, God takes looking down on others seriously. God loves everyone, but it is clear here that God recognizes the greater needs of some and offers a special portion of grace to those with greater needs. That is the God who leaves the 99 to chase after the one who has fallen away.

It says in this morning’s text that Jesus called to himself a little child. One of the biblical scholars who offers valuable insight on Jesus’ disciples is Ray VanderLaan. He points out a few facts about Jesus disciples that it is important to note here.

1. First, Jesus’ disciples were blue collar folks . They were guys whose hands got dirty and who probably smelled funny after a day working the fields or fishing on boats. Most of these guys were people who others considered as “little”.
2. Second, the disciples were the guys who weren’t smart enough to go on to study the Torah. Because the kids who got the grades, the “cream of the crop”, were placed in Rabbinical school after their bar mitzvah at age twelve. The guys who followed Jesus around were the ones who didn’t make the cut.
3. And thirdly, Jesus’ disciples were young. Between the ages of 12 and 20, with Peter being the oldest, and John being the youngest. We know this from clues we receive in other passages in the gospels. There’s that scene where Jesus and his disciples are at the temple and they need to pay the tax. They only needed to pay the tax for two-- Jesus, who was around 30 years old, and Peter, who was married and probably around the age of 20. Only men who were over the age of 20 had to pay the tax.

It is with these facts in mind that Ray VanderLaan points out that, when Jesus pulled a child to himself, he was probably pulling over the disciple John. John was likely the youngest disciple, probably about 12 years old. He was likely a kid with a lot of energy who the other guys had their share of fun picking on. VanderLaan supports this idea by pointing to the fact that John is referred to as the disciple whom Jesus loved. It’s not that Jesus loved John and not the others, but because Jesus had a particular affinity for the least, the lost, the last and the little. And in John’s case, the littlest.

VanderLaan also points to the scene later in the gospels where we read that the mother of John and his big brother James, the “sons of Thunder” as they sometimes were called (another insight into their personalities!), had the gall to ask Jesus if he would place her sons beside him on his throne in his kingdom some day, one at his right and one at his left. She dared to ask this question because she knew that Jesus had a special place in his heart for John, and she wanted that for her son James, too.

But Jesus points out in this morning’s story, as he does again and again to his disciples, that they are missing the point.

We are often tempted to objectify children, to look at childhood through the nostalgic lens of “simpler times”. That is not the image that Jesus is trying to bring to mind here. To become like a child, according to Jesus, is to be the kid who gets bullied.

Jesus loved John more not because there was something special or amazing about him. Jesus loved John more because there *wasn’t*.

The Belhar Confession, one of the documents at the heart of what this church believes, testifies that, in a world full of injustice and enmity, God is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged. That is the point that Jesus is making here. Jesus loves the little ones.

Every summer when I was a kid, my mom would bring me and my siblings to my grandparents house to swim at their pool with my cousins. These were the days before a lot of people had air conditioning in their houses, so spending the day in the pool was just perfect for us in those hot Michigan summers.

Some of my favorite memories from those days are of my Cousin Mike. Mike and his twin brother, Matt, were two years younger than me. Mike was born with cognitive impairment and some physical deformities and disabilities, and he died when he was just 6 years old.

I still have vivid memories of those childhood summers, and my cousin Mike running around the pool in his life jacket, even though we weren't supposed to, and running off the diving board into the deep end of the pool. His laughter was contagious.

Mike is the perfect image of a disciple to me. Because Mike had courage. While the rest of us hummed and hawed and dared one another to jump into the deep end of the pool, Mike didn't stop to think about it. He just did it. Without fear. And he loved it.

My cousin Mike's favorite song was *Jesus Loves Me*. We sang it at his funeral.

I think we need to be more like Mike. And that means not pointing to others as the "little ones", but realizing that we are all little ones before the face of God. I want us to sing my cousin Mike's favorite song this morning. But I have altered one of the lines for us to sing. Instead of singing, "They are weak but he is strong", I want to invite you to sing, "We are weak but he is strong."

### Questions for Discussion

(Take ten minutes to discuss the sermon.)

1. After hearing the description of Jesus' disciples in today's sermon, what do you imagine Jesus' disciples were like? Why do you think Jesus chose them? What are some gifts that "little ones" have into understanding God?

2. What are some ways that we can follow Jesus' example of elevating those who others consider "little"?



*From left to right, my sister Tamara, my cousin Mark (Mike's older brother), my brother Tarek, my cousin Mike, and myself during one of those summers at the pool.*



## Song of Response - Jesus Loves Me

### **Verse 1**

Jesus loves me this I know  
For the Bible tells me so  
Little ones to Him belong  
We are weak but He is strong

### **Chorus**

Yes Jesus loves me  
Yes Jesus loves me  
Yes Jesus loves me  
The Bible tells me so

### **Verse 2**

Jesus loves me He who died  
Heaven's gate to open wide  
He will wash away my sin  
Let this little child come in

### **[Chorus, twice]**

## The Lord's Supper from the CRC Liturgies for Congregational Use

One: Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them up to the Lord.

One: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right for us to give thanks and praise.

One: Let us pray. With joy we praise you, gracious God, for you have created heaven and earth, made us in your image, and kept covenant with us--even when we fell into sin. We give you thanks for Jesus Christ, our Lord, who came as the light of the world to show us your way of truth in parables and miracles. Therefore we join our voices with all the saints and angels and the whole creation to proclaim the glory of your name. Amen.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took the bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it [here the One breaks the bread] and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, he took the cup after supper [here the One pours the wine] and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this in remembrance of me." For whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

People of God, the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him alone for their salvation. All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him as Lord, are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord.

[Indicating the elements, the One proclaims,] The gifts of God for the people of God!

[First, pass the Purell. Second, the Lord's Supper is passed from one to another with the words, "The body of Christ, given for you," and "The blood of Christ, shed for you."]

One: Let us pray. We thank you, O God, that you remembered your promise to reconcile the world to yourself. We thank you for living among us in the person of Jesus Christ, who was both fully human and fully God. We thank you that he carried your judgment on our sin, and that by his death and resurrection, he conquered both sin and death. God, by your love, sustain our hope. Stay with us by your Spirit. Renew our hearts, move us to faith, lead us in the truth, stand by us in our need, and make our obedience fresh and vibrant. In the name of our only Savior, Jesus Christ, we pray these things, Amen.

Doxology - My Ransom <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EOJXier3vm4>

### **Verse 1**

What fear can overtake my vision?  
What doubt can overcome my faith?  
What strife can silence all my singing?  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.

### **Verse 2**

What thief can steal my heart's possession?  
What pow'r can overwhelm my soul?  
What shame can silence my confession?  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.

### **Chorus**

And what unspeakable mercy  
has emptied heaven's reserve?  
And what Redeemer so worthy  
has covered sin with such love?  
And what unsearchable riches,

far beyond human words?  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.

### **Verse 3**

What lie can sever what is certain?  
What storm can wash away my hope?  
What threat of death can take my freedom?  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.

### **[Chorus]**

Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe.  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.  
Lord, Your wounds have paid my ransom.

Songwriters: Cindy Morgan,  
Phil Madeira & Cliff Duren

### Benediction from Numbers 6

[Open your arms and hands as you offer this blessing to one another]

All: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen.