

God's Open Door Policy

a service of worship for peace and reconciliation
—order of worship—

Call to Worship:

ONE: King Ahaz slept with his ancestors, and Hezekiah his son became king when he was twenty-five years old. And Hezekiah did what was right in the sight of God. In the first year of his reign, in the first month, Hezekiah opened the doors of the house of God and repaired them.

MANY: Open the gates of the temple!

ONE: The psalmist cried, "Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to God. This is the gate of the Lord; the righteous shall enter through it."

MANY: Open the gates of righteousness!

ONE: God said of Cyrus, the Persian king, "He is my anointed; I have grasped his hand and will subdue nations before him. I will open doors before him, and the gates shall not be closed."

MANY: Open the doors, and let them not be closed!

ONE: Paul and Silas were sitting in their prison cell, singing and praying, when suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

ALL: God of miracles, shake the foundations of the prisons that we build for ourselves and each other. Open the doors of our prejudices, and break the chains which separate us. Amen.

—by Katie Cook (texts from 2 Chronicles 29:1-3; Psalm 118:19; Isaiah 45:1; Acts 16:25-26);

Llamado a adoración:

LIDER: Y durmió el rey Acaz con sus padres y comenzó a reinar Ezequías su hijo, siendo de veinticinco años. E hizo lo recto ante los ojos de Jehová. En el primer año de su reinado, en el mes primero, abrió las puertas de la casa de Jehová y las reparó.

GENTE: ¡Abrenos las puertas de la casa de Jehová!

LIDER: El salmista gritó: "Abridme las puertas de la

justicia. Entraré por ellas, alabaré a Jehová. Esta es la puerta de Jehová; por ella entrarán los justos.

GENTE: ¡Abrenos las puertas de la justicia!

LIDER: Así dice Jehová a su ungido, a Ciro, al cual tomé yo por su mano derecha, para sujetar naciones delante de él; para abrir delante de él puertas, y las puertas no se cerrarán.

GENTE: ¡Abrenos las puertas y que no se cierren!

LIDER: Pablo y Silas estaban sentados en su celda, orando y cantando himnos a Dios, entonces hubo de repente un gran terremoto de tal manera que los cimientos de la cárcel se sacudían; y al instante se abrieron todas las puertas, y las cadenas de todos se soltaron.

TODOS: Dios de los milagros, sacude los cimientos de las cárceles que nos construimos a nosotros mismos. Sacude los cimientos de las cárceles que nos construimos los unos a los otros. Abre las puertas de nuestros prejuicios y rompe las cadenas que nos separan. Amen.

—por Katie Cook (los textos de 2do de Crónicas 29:1-3; Salmos 118:19; Isaías 45:1; Hechos 16:25-26); traducida por Dra. Linda McManess de La Biblia Reina Valera.

Hymn

Pause for Reflection

(read silently)

So we have a group of Jesus' followers huddling together on that first Sunday evening. According to the accounts in Luke and elsewhere, these people have heard amazing stories from the Galilean women, and from Cleopas and his companion—and there is indication in Luke that they have heard of Jesus appearing to Simon Peter. Yet they are still afraid of being arrested and killed, so they have locked themselves in. The term "for fear of the Jews" reiterates a theme in John's gospel that scholars say arises from a conflict between the local synagogue and the community, themselves Jews, for whom this gospel was written.

Interpreters have made much of John's emphasis on the locked doors. As careful as John's descriptions usually are, it is interesting to note that there is no mention of how Jesus got inside and among the group. Some say that this was to show that locks and walls couldn't keep Jesus out. Perhaps it was also to show that Jesus didn't want them relying on locks and walls.

—Katie Cook, adapted from "What It Means to Believe" (Formations, a Smyth & Helwys adult curriculum, the first Sunday after Easter)

Reading from the Prophets: Isaiah 2:2-4

ONE: In the days to come, the mountain of God's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains; and shall be raised above the hills;

MANY: all the nations shall stream to it.

ONE: Many peoples shall come and say

MANY: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that God may teach us God's ways and that we may walk in God's paths."

ONE: For out of Zion shall go forth instruction, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

MANY: God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples,

ONE: they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

MANY: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Lectura de los profetas: Isaías 2:2-4

LIDER: Acontecerá en lo postrero de los tiempos, que será confirmado el monte de la casa de Jehová como cabeza de los montes, y será exaltado sobre los ceros,

GENTE: Y correrán a él todas las naciones.

LIDER: Y vendrán muchos pueblos, y dirán:

GENTE: "Vengan y subamos al monte de Jehová, a la casa de Dios de Jacob; y nos enseñará sus caminos, y caminaremos por sus sendas."

—traducida por Dra. Linda McManness de La Biblia Reina Valera.(Spanish translation by Linda McManness, with adaptations from the Reina Valera Bible.)

Meditation on Perceptions: A Dramatic Reading

written by Ann Sims

Reading from the Gospels: John 20:19

When it was evening on that first Easter Sunday, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the temple authorities, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (paraphrase)

Sermon

Where Do You Draw the Line? by J. Frederick Ball

Pause for Reflection

(read silently)

It is a day of resurrection, but for most of Jesus' disciples, it is still a day of confusion. What are all these stories they've heard since morning? What's going on? Do they dare begin to hope? They are huddled together in the upper room, trying to push back the despair they have felt since Friday. Into the midst of this group, Jesus suddenly appears out of nowhere. He says, "Peace be with you." He shows the group the wounds in his hands and side. Then he says, again, "Peace be with you."

The next portion of the story is one that is often overlooked. It has overtones of the commissioning and ascension stories in the other gospels, and also of the coming of the Holy Spirit in the second chapter of Acts. Jesus says, "As I have been sent, so I am now sending you." Then Jesus breathes on them. Like the spirit brooding over the face of the Genesis waters, he breathes on them. Like the spirit blowing with a gale force over the Pentecost crowd in Jerusalem, he breathes on them. May that breath brood over us, to make us new, to make us whole. May that wind blow over us, to make us understand one another, to make us one.

—Katie Cook, adapted from "What It Means to Believe" (Formations, a Smyth & Helwys adult curriculum, the first Sunday after Easter)

Theme Interpretation

Hymn

Benediction

written by Heidi Baxter

Choral Response

"God's Open Door Policy: A Service of Peace and Reconciliation" was created by Seeds of Hope Publishers and sponsored by the Office of Reconciliation Ministries of the American Baptist Church USA. Liturgy by Katie Cook. (Copyright © Seeds of Hope, Inc. 2004)