

A Liturgy of Hospitality

by Katie Cook

Call to Worship

ONE: Time after time we come into this place, into the house of God.

MANY: *Time after time, we sing and pray and tell stories.*

ONE: Time after time, we listen for a word from God.

MANY: *What will we learn today?*

ONE: What word of comfort and hope will we hear?

MANY: *What word of indictment?*

ONE: What challenge will we receive?

MANY: *Today, let us open our hearts to the voice of God.*

ALL: *Let us hear the word for us today.*

Musical Invocation

“Hope of the World”

Words: Georgia Harkness, 1954

Music: V. Earle Copes, 1963

Tune: VICAR

Chalice Hymnal, 538

Reading from Hebrew Scripture

Genesis 18:1-15

Reflection: Desert Hospitality

Desert hospitality was a life-and-death matter. For these nomadic people, food and water and relief from the blazing sun were necessities to be shared. In this story, Abraham is resting at an oasis, and he sees three men traveling alone across the scorching sand. Rabbinic tradition says that he breaks off talking to God to see to their needs. He washes their feet. He asks Sarah to make cakes for them. He personally goes to select a calf to slaughter and gets milk for them. Then he stands under the trees and talks with them while they eat. He understands that this is more important than personal piety.

This story is held up as an example of ideal hospitality, and is contrasted with the story of Lot at Sodom. Abraham was not doing wrong by breaking off his prayers. Spirituality IS service to

others, care for others. All of this was later put into law: the need of a human being is more important than your prayer or ritual. And don't give the stranger just anything; give him your best.

—*adapted from observations by Rabbi Paula Reimers*

Reading from the Law

Leviticus 19:10

Reading from the Prophets

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah:

SECOND READER: What have you made of the vineyard that I planted? I had hoped for justice, but all I see is bloodshed.

THIRD READER: Woe to you who add house to house and field to field, until there is room for no one but you.

SECOND READER: The desert is full of refugees, says the Lord, people fleeing from the horrors of war.

THIRD READER: Bring water to the thirsty, says the Lord. Meet the fugitives with bread to eat.

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Ezekiel:

SECOND READER: Hear me now; do not repeat the sin of your sister Sodom—the sin of inhospitality.

THIRD READER: She and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not help the poor. But she was not as bad as you are.

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophet Amos:

SECOND READER: I don't want your sacrifices. I don't want your noisy songs or your solemn assemblies.

THIRD READER: You have turned justice into wormwood. You have sold the needy for a pair of shoes.

SECOND READER: At these words we cry out, We didn't know this is what you wanted. What shall we do? What do you command of us?

FIRST READER: This is what the Lord says through the prophets:

THIRD READER: Share your bread with the hungry. Bring to your house the poor who are cast out. Cover the naked. Take care of your families.

SECOND READER: If you do these things, you will shine like the noonday sun, you will bring the new heaven and the new earth, you will be the healers, the repairers of broken walls. You will be my people; you will be called by my name.

—*from Isaiah 5:1-10; Isaiah 21:13-16; Ezekiel 16:49; Amos 5; Isaiah 58:7-14*

Hymn

“What Does the Lord Require?”

Words: Albert F. Bayly, 1949 (Micah 6:6-8)

Music: Erik Routly, 1968

Tune: SHARPTHORNE

The Worshiping Church (Hope Publishing Company), #571

Gospel Reading

John 6:1-14

Reflection: We Live in a Desert

But it has become very difficult for us today to fully understand the implications of hospitality. Like the Semitic nomads, we live in a desert with many lonely travelers who are looking for a moment of peace, for a fresh drink and for a sign of encouragement so that they can continue their mysterious search for freedom. —Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer*

Litany of Confession

ONE: We miss the mark so often, Lord, Ignoring the needy who reach out to us,

MANY: Judging those who are different from

us, asking more of others than we ourselves are willing to give.

ONE: Open our eyes to the meaning of love.

MANY: Let our feet be quick to answer the cries of the wounded,

ONE: Let our hands lift up the fallen,

MANY: Let our wealth bring healing to the sick.

ONE: So we shall live the meaning of love, O Christ.

ALL: Amen.

—*from “Communion Prayer” by Mary Ruth Crook, Fall Fresh on Me*

Assurance of Grace

ONE: Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid. (Isaiah 40:1-2)

MANY: Let us hear the good news: in the grace of God, in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.

Epistle Reading

Hebrews 13:1-3

Benediction

O God, as we commit ourselves to you, Fearful and hesitant, strengthen us, Feed us with your manna in the desert places. Keep our eyes bright and our voices joyful As we praise your name. Amen.

—*adapted from “Prayer of Commitment” by Mary Ruth Crook, Fall Fresh on Me*

Musical Benediction

“Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service”

Words: Albert F. Bayly

Music: *The Sacred Harp*,

arr. James H. Wood, 1958

Tune: BEACH SPRING

The Worshiping Church (Hope Publishing Company) #426

art by Jesse Manning

Citizenship Quiz

Think you could easily pass the United States Citizenship Test? Take this quiz to find out!

To find out how well you did, check the correct answers at the bottom after you've finished the quiz!

1. Who was President during World War I?

- A. Woodrow Wilson
- B. Herbert Hoover
- C. Gerald Ford
- D. Calvin Coolidge

2. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

- A. Fought terrorists
- B. Founded the NAACP
- C. Fought for civil rights
- D. Fought for governmental aid for schools

3. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

- A. The holocaust
- B. Communism
- C. Nuclear Weapons
- D. Nazism

4. What do the stripes on the American flag represent?

- A. The founding fathers
- B. The 13 original colonies
- C. The number of states at that time
- D. The number of amendments in the constitution

5. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?

- A. The West Coast
- B. The Alaska Territory
- C. The Louisiana Territory
- D. The Northwest Territory

6. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States?

- A. Sandra Day O'Connor

B. Ruth Bader Ginsberg

C. John Roberts

D. Antonin Scalia

7. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the constitution. What are those three words?

- A. E Plucar Enem
- B. United We Stand
- C. I Pledge Allegiance
- D. We the People

8. Which of the following states does not border Canada?

- A. Maine
- B. New Hampshire
- C. Vermont
- D. Oregon

9. Which two rivers are the longest rivers in the U.S.?

- A. Missouri River and Ohio River
- B. Missouri River and Mississippi River
- C. Ohio River and Colorado River
- D. Mississippi River and Colorado River

10. What is the "rule of law"?

- A. Procedure to make laws
- B. The idea that everyone must follow the law
- C. Procedure to execute laws
- D. The jurisdiction of law enforcement agencies

Correct answers: 1. A, 2. C, 3. B, 4. B, 5. C, 6. C, 7. D, 8. D, 9. B, 10. B

Immigration Word Search

V N A T I V E O I O C G L
D J B B Q M Y V E A L O P
P Z Y N B L G V S L N Q Z
I U U C M A T P S H J B J
N I U D M N R R I E M O H
O U W H F O E B O R D E R
I S W B O I F F M P Q M N
T R A Z R T U F V C S Z U
A B T M E A G Q I O P S T
R H V O I N E K S U Z U A
G Y E D G R E W A N O Y A
I V Q E N E D R O T I S I
M U V E Z T N O U R O Y F
M S E R F N Y J J Y D Y V
I R C F Q I H C I T I Z E

BORDERS
CITIZEN
COUNTRY
FOREIGN
FREEDOM

HOME
IMMIGRATION
INTERNATIONAL
PASSPORT
NATIVE

NEIGHBORS
REFUGEE
VISA
VISITOR

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