



*Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven;
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. - Luke 6:23*



Tessa Mars

Praying for the visa, 2019
Le Centre d'Art d'Haiti

Gathering as the Body of Christ

CENTERING SONG

“HALLE, HALLE, HALLE-LUJAH”

AAHH 642

GREETING

PRESIDER

*OPENING PRAYER

STUDENT MINISTER

A drop of water.

A drop of water.
Insignificant in isolation.
When dropped in a pool
The ripples move out into infinity
The water is changed
By one drop of water.

A drop is falling
Now
Into the pool of our spirit.
The water begins to ripple...

***Holy God,
as we consider the magnitude of a drop of water
to touch and change the pool,
may we hear the power of your touch in our lives,
the potential for our lives to touch others. Amen.***

*OPENING HYMN

“I’VE GOT MY MIND MADE UP/CARIBBEAN MEDLEY”

ARR. McCLURKIN

I’VE GOT MY MIND MADE UP
AND I WON’T TURN BACK
BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE MY JESUS
SOMEDAY
(repeat)

GOODBYE WORLD
I STAY NO LONGER WITH YOU
GOODBYE PLEASURES OF SIN
I STAY NO LONGER WITH YOU
I MADE UP MY MIND

TO GO GOD’S WAY
THE REST OF MY LIFE
I MADE UP MY MIND
TO GO GOD’S WAY
THE REST OF MY LIFE

I’VE GOT MY MIND MADE UP
AND I WON’T TURN BACK
BECAUSE I WANT TO SEE MY JESUS
SOMEDAY
(repeat)

*CONFESSION & WORDS OF ASSURANCE

The baptismal font reminds us of God’s promise of cleansing and forgiveness. In that confidence, let us enter this time of confession.

God, we run from Truth and from the people we know who have not told it in the past. We handle mercy with a credit card and not with our hands. We become cynical, believing Justice is always trumped by self-interest. We despair when Peace is trampled by people of faith. Up from the ground of Africa, down from the bright sky, come, O God, now, and help us to believe in your Kiss—the Kiss of God that will restore and revive all of your people. **Amen.**

God’s unending love cleanses and renews us. We are forgiven. Amen.

*SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

STUDENT MINISTER

You are invited to pass the peace to each other in a non-contact way that’s comfortable to you and your neighbor.

Let us find inspiration from the words of Maya Angelou: “On this platform of peace, we can create a language to translate ourselves to ourselves and to each other. We Angels and Mortals, Believers and Non-Believers, look heavenward and speak the word aloud. Peace. We look at our world and speak the word aloud. Peace. We look at each other, then into ourselves and we say without shyness or apology or hesitation. Peace, My [Sibling], Peace, My Soul.”

And also with you.

Service of the Word

POEM

EXCERPT FROM *THE ANTILLES: FRAGMENTS OF EPIC MEMORY*

DEREK WALCOTT

This prose connects to the scripture through the concept that broken is whole and the unity of all of the broken creates something beautiful and blessed.

Break a vase, and the love that reassembles the fragments is stronger than that love which took its symmetry for granted when it was whole. The glue that fits the pieces is the sealing of its original shape. It is such a love that reassembles our African and Asiatic fragments, the cracked heirlooms whose restoration shows its white scars. This gathering of broken pieces is the care and pain of the Antilles, and if the pieces are disparate, ill-fitting, they contain more pain than their original sculpture, those icons and sacred vessels taken for granted in their ancestral places. Antillean art is this restoration of our shattered histories, our shards of vocabulary, our archipelago becoming a synonym for pieces broken off from the original continent.

God of fire and light who dwells in thick darkness, the light and the dark are alike to thee, open the eyes of our hearts that we might see. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READING

LUKE 6:17-26

NRSV

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke, chapter 6, verses 17 through 26.

He came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea, Jerusalem, and the coast of Tyre and Sidon. They had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. And all in the crowd were trying to touch him, for power came out from him and healed all of them. Then he looked up at his disciples and said:

“Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. “Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. “Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. “Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. “Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. “Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. “Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.

Reader Hear what God is saying to the people. **Thanks be to God!**

SERMON

REV. DR. NATHAN BAXTER (16-FEB)

JENIFER BUTLER (19-FEB)

Love, you are strong as a dark blue mountain
Love, you are as fluid as a wide silver river

Love, you are as splendid as a clear night sky
Love, you are as mysterious as a dark forest.

Love, you are as wise as enduring friendship.
***Love, you are true power, not mere distraction
 truth, not deceit,
 purpose, not impulse,
 poetry, not prose,
 sing not sang,
 now more than tomorrow,
 but tomorrow more than yesterday***

Love, condense yourself into this moment,
 permeate the silence that joins us in community,
 so that in the fire of the words to come,
 the promises of this hour
 might be sealed in peace.

Amen

Service of the Table

OFFERTORY SONG

INSTRUMENTAL

***THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

Brothers, Sisters, and Siblings, this is the mighty feast, the joyful feast, the holy feast of and for the people of God. Our Savior invites all who trust him to come.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.
 Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy to give you thanks, God of majesty and mercy. For you have called forth the creation and raised us from dust by your reach. We bless you for the beauty and bounty by which each of us was wonderfully made in your image. Because we are thankful we sing! We sing your highest praises in one voice with the company of our ancestors who paved the way:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest!**

Christ was born fully human and fully divine. He shares in our joys and sorrows. He shared in the joy of our resilience despite the deathly terror of the African enslavement, and shared in the sorrow that his gospel didn't compel transformation and quick abolition. Christ shared in the joy of the Emancipation Proclamation but equally shared in the sorrow of a people who have worked so hard to override and overturn it, and recreate instead that which it was designed to eradicate. Yet and still he offered his life in obedience and trust in God.

We bless you, O God, for the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit. That Holy Spirit who leads us into truth, fights for justice and equality, continues to gather us as believers even in the face of adversity, and moves us to be empowered by your love.

It is the movement of the Holy Spirit that allows us to trust in the life, death, and resurrection which reconciles us to you. Great is the mystery of faith:

**Dying you destroyed our death,
Rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

On the night that he was wrongfully incarcerated, Jesus took bread, and after giving thanks to God, he broke it into pieces without the suggestion of privilege or supremacy. He gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, Jesus lifted the cup to those in need of liberation and empowerment, saying, "This cup is the new covenant, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me." Every time you eat this bread of equity and drink this cup that pours freedom, you proclaim with your life the saving death of the risen Lord until he comes again.

We pray O Lord, that as we take this bread and this wine as a gift from you, we may celebrate with joy and hope the redemption won for us in Jesus Christ. Please pour out your blessings on this bread and this cup as we remember you, your gifts, and your mystery.

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

PRESIDER

We have a few COVID related options for those who wish to partake. If you wish to receive from the ministers, take an empty eco-friendly cup from the stack on the aisle table and approach the minister, who will place a piece of bread in your open hand. (Or take a cup that already has a piece of gluten-free bread in it, or take one of the sealed celebration cups with the wafer on top and juice beneath; hold them out to the minister for a blessing.) A minister will pour grape juice into your cup. Eat, drink, and dispose of the cup in the waste baskets at the side aisles as you return to your seat.

If you are unable to come forward, please signal the ministers and we will come to you at your seat. Those who prefer not to partake in Communion are invited to a different kind of divine encounter through an interfaith prayer of blessing. If this is your preference, we invite you to meet the preacher at the baptismal font.

Whoever you are and wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here at this table where Christ is the host.

COMMUNION SONG

"GIVE ME JESUS"

AAAH #561

Going Forth as the Body of Christ

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

PRESIDER

O God, with gratitude and praise
you have blessed and fed us in this sacrament,
united us with Christ, and given us hope in the face of turmoil,
to remind us that in you, everything is already alright.
Make us children of remembrance
so that herstory and history lives on in us.
Send us from this place with purpose and in your power,
blessed, transformed and bent toward the arc of justice
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*BENEDICTION

SENDING & POSTLUDE

May we see blessings in the vulnerable.
May we find truth in the silenced.
And may we recognize the beauty of broken pieces put back together. Amen.

Cover Art: <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-12-artists-caribbean-diaspora-shaping-contemporary-art>

Opening Song: Donnie McClurkin “Caribbean Medley” <https://youtu.be/ernVXpmugQE>

Call to Worship: ~ written by Katherine Hawker, and posted at <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/06/opening-and-prayer-drop-of-water.html>

Prayers of Confession and Assurance: Adapted from Tirabassi, Maren. “From Psalm 85.” In *A Child Laughs: Personal Prayers of Justice and Hope*. Edited by Maria Mankin and Maren C. Tirabassi. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2017.

Peace of Christ Action: Angelou, Maya. “On This Platform of Peace, We Can Create A Language.” Dominican Sisters of Peace. December 21, 2015. <https://opeace.org/blog/2015/12/21/on-this-platform-of-peace-we-can-create-a-language/>

Poem: Walcott, Derek. “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory.” *The Noble Prize*. December 7, 1992. <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1992/walcott/lecture/>

Prayer for Illumination: Rev. Wil Gafney, Ph.D. <http://www.wilgafney.com/2019/12/01/holy-blackness-the-matrix-of-creation/>

Prayers of the Community: Belletini, Mark. “Reading No. 202.” Essay. In *Lifting Our Voices: Readings in the Living Tradition*, 67. Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2015.

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**The worship planning team creates all other parts of the liturgy except where noted.*

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THE WORSHIP TEAM SEEKS:

To serve the universal church of our Creator.
To minister to the unique and diverse needs of the seminary community.
To foster an expansive culture of worship that values difference and challenges the normative.