

in the big love living liturgies

“Here is Your Mother” • John 19: 25b-27

Mother’s Day Worship Service for In-Home or Remote Group Use

prepared by Rev. Kathryn M. Schreiber

Worship Note

As we continue the selfless practice of Sheltering in Place, as we witness new losses and new gains, as we continue to adjust to living differently - our souls may be restless, forlorn, confused, over excited, or numb. This service is one of a series designed to tend the pandemic-stressed soul.

Preparations

- You may wish to arrange to worship distantly with others at the same time.
- Read through this service beforehand to assemble items needed, including items for Holy Communion - a cup with a beverage and some bread or other finger food.
- A “Christ Candle” can be any sort of candle or object which represents Christ’s presence.
- Choose songs to sing (our suggestions or your favorites). Assemble what you’ll need to sing.
- Ensure an uninterrupted place to worship.
- Decorate your space to welcome God’s presence, as we do at church, with special decorations for Mother’s Day.

Time for Children

“Out of the Bag: Jesus’ Mother” on YouTube channel: Kathryn Schreiber

Worship Service

Please adapt to make this worship service your own. Your intention is what is important.

We Gather

Call to Worship

Julian of Norwich, 15th century English mystic, healer and saint wrote:

“Jesus is our true mother,
The protector of the love which knows no end.
We have our being from Jesus,
where the foundation of motherhood begins.
God revealed that in all things,
as truly as God is our father,
so truly is God our mother.”

“God is the power and the goodness of fatherhood;
God is the wisdom and loving kindness of motherhood.
God is the one who makes us to love,
And the endless fulfilling of our true desires.
God desired Christ to be our mother, our brother, and our Savior,
for God knows us now and loved us before time began.” *(jn)*

May we gather in the presence of Jesus Christ, our true mother. Amen.

Light the Christ Candle

Song for Welcoming Christ

Suggestion: “What Child is This” - W C Dix, GREENSLEVES, vs 1-2 (#162 Chalice; #HOL)

We Unburden and Gather Hope

Naming Our New Reality

If you are with others in person or via devices please share what is on your minds and in your hearts. If you are alone, speak out loud to God. How has it been for you and your loved ones this week? Who did you most enjoy spending time with? What deeply comforted your spirit? What continues to be challenging? Be honest. Name your truth no matter what it is. God is listening.

Silent Prayer

In the quietude of your soul simply be in God's presence just as you are. Your mind will wander. Thoughts will come up. Be kind to yourself. Temporarily let go of following your thoughts. Sit in God's presence, possibly repeating "True Parent" or "Mothering God" or "Mother Jesus."

Acts of Unburdening and Affirming

Place pebbles or small items at the base of the Christ Candle thinking or speaking whatever you wish to offer to God for release or gratitude. These offerings need not be named. The soul knows what to give to God and God knows what to receive.

Blessing of Grace

Like a very good mother,
 God always welcomes us home.
 No matter where we have been, or not been;
 No matter what we have done, or not done;
 No matter what we achieved, or did not achieve;
 We are God's beloved children.
 God always rejoices upon our return.
 Lean into the warm, spiritual arms of God:
 received, forgiven, embraced, and blessed. Amen.

We Listen

Wisdom Literature Reading: Sirach* 7:27-28 (New Revised Standard Version)

"With all your heart honor your father,
 and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother.
 Remember that it was of your parents you were born;
 how can you repay what they have given to you?"

Scripture Reading: John 19: 25b-27 (New Revised Standard Version)

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus
 were his mother,
 and his mother's sister,
 Mary the wife of Clopas,
 and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother
 and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her,
 Jesus said to his mother,
 "Woman, here is your son."
 Then Jesus said to the disciple,
 "Here is your mother."

And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

May God add a blessing to the reading and reflecting upon this Holy Word. Amen.

Reflection Upon Sacred “Family” Ties

(If your pastor has prepared a sermon, please read/view it now.)

During the 1990’s, influenced by increased access to biblical era texts and writings discovered in Egypt (Nag Hammadi) and Palestine (Dead Sea Scrolls), biblical scholars deepened their study of ancient Judea expanding our understanding of the life and times of Jesus Christ. Among these scholars is Professor Bruce Malina who has done excellent work in describing the social dynamics of 1st century CE, including family dynamics.

*Jesus’ relationship to his mother, as would have been true for all Jewish young men then and many today, is one of deep respect and mutual dependence. From birth to adulthood mothers are responsible for the moral education of their sons and they are fiercely protective of them. Upon widowhood, a mother becomes completely dependent upon her son/s for “recognition as a full person.” A female would not have been a respectable person on her own. Malina writes that the bond between mother and son, “is most often one of deep attachment, the relationship closest to what a North American would call love.” (Malina** page 84)*

Today’s reading from the Gospel of St John includes a very tender scene unique to this gospel. Jesus bonds his mother with his dearest disciple making them mother and son. Mary had other male children. The disciple had his own biological mother. This story isn’t about cultural or social practices, rather, it reveals a moral, spiritual love blessed by Christ - a Big Love. Through Christ we become family to one another.

Some of us have had loving parents or find it easy to be a loving parent or “mothering person.” Others of us have struggles as a child or parent. Most of us fall somewhere in between. This story about Jesus sharing his mother with a man from a different family reinforces a current theme in Jesus’ teachings that spiritual family may not be the same as biological family.

On this Mother’s Day let us remember both our biological moms and the mothers of our souls. God often arranges for us to have additional mothers and fathers, sons and daughters through our faith community or extended relations. Who are you remembering today? Who might God be asking you to claim as your “heart family”? Is God inviting you to make peace with the limitations of your “blood family”? Thank God for all your bonds of affection and faith.

Special Music

Music Salon at 5 "Daily Music" No3 Scarlatti Sonata in E, 5点音乐沙龙“每日一曲”第3曲

Piano, Eileen Huang (Sonja Lee’s sister)

video: <https://youtu.be/5ifGrtcZQsE>

We Share

Song of Gathering for Holy Communion

Suggestion: “Who Is My Mother, Who Is My Brother?” - S E Murray, KINDRED (#486 Chalice)

video: https://youtu.be/hq_n_sx02Kg

Who is my mother, who is my brother?
All those who gather round Jesus Christ:
Spirit-blown people, born from the Gospel
sit at the table, round Jesus Christ.

Differently abled, differently labeled
widen the circle round Jesus Christ:
crutches and stigmas, cultures' enigmas
all come together round Jesus Christ. (cont'd)

Love will relate us--color or status
 can't segregate us, round Jesus Christ:
 family failings, human derailings--
 all are accepted, round Jesus Christ.

Bound by one vision, met for one mission
 we claim each other, round Jesus Christ:
 here is my mother, here is my brother,
 kindred in Spirit, through Jesus Christ.

Please call the presence of loved ones to join us.
 Let us speak their names...
(say the names of those with whom you'd like to share this Holy Meal.)

Prayer of Consecration

Beloved Jesus, You invited everyone into ministry.
 You shared Your table with everyone.
 Today we ask You to fill each of our cups and pieces of bread
 with God's Holy Spirit. Amen.

Words of Institution *(responsive)*

It is common Jewish practice, weekly,
 to gather the family around the table
 inviting God's radiance presence
 as the Sabbath begins each Friday night at sunset.

It is common Jewish practice, annually,
 to prepare special symbolic foods and readings
 remembering God's gift of the Passover
 in hopes that next year everyone will gather in Jerusalem.

Jesus observed Jewish practice
 by gathering with family and disciples
 around a borrowed household table
 the last year they gathered in Jerusalem at Passover.
 His mother, Mary, as she did weekly,
 lit the Passover Sabbat candles and prayed.

Whenever we gather around a table in Jesus' name
 we join the Jewish community
 remembering God's faithfulness.
 God brought the Hebrew slaves out of Egypt.
 God brings humanity out of sin through Jesus Christ.
 God is the Great Liberator, the Holy Redeemer, the Source of All Grace.

(lift up the bread)

From our different tables
 let us speak together the words of the Living Christ:
 All: "Take, eat.
 This is my body,
 which is given for you.
 Do this in remembrance of me."

(eat bread)

(lift up the cup)

From our different tables

let us speak together the words of the Living Christ:

All: "Drink this, all of you.

This is my blood of the new covenant,

Which is poured out for you and for many,

for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it,

in remembrance of me."

(drink from cup)

Prayer of Thanksgiving (unison)

Mothering God, You take such good care of us!

Even when we are far away from Your House

You fill our humble loaves and cups with Your Holy Spirit.

You nourish our souls with faith, hope, and love.

Thank You, Holy One, for Your great faithfulness. Amen.

We Pray

Prayers of Petition

On this Mother's Day we give thanks for the women who have given birth to our bodies and to our souls. Let us ask God's blessing upon them, be they here on earth or in heaven. Let us pray for all mothers - especially those for whom this pandemic is especially challenging. Which moms are you thinking about this week... mothers separated from their children; mothers grieving; mothers awaiting the birth of a child? Let us pray for and with mothers working on the frontlines; mothers who have lost jobs; mothers who are tending children and parents. If your community shares prayer requests, please include them.

Song for Prayer

Suggestion: "Shelter Me" - Mike Joncas. Copyright 2020. The Jan Michael Joncas Trust.

video: https://youtu.be/1EbCgi_7gQs

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Imagine the sanctuary where you usually worship. Let the memory of your Beloved Community fill your soul and let us pray together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

We Give Thanks

Offering

Do something to honor your mother or a mothering person in your life. What did she teach you that is a gift you give to others today? (Please see the Donation note at the end of this document.)

Song of Gratitude

Suggestions: "Great is Thy Faithfulness" - T O Chisholm, FAITHFULNESS (#86 Chalice; #514 HOL)

We Continue in Hope

Song of Hope:

Suggestion: "Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us" - D Bechtel, AUSTIN (#583 New Century Hymnal)

A Blessing upon Mothers

If you are with the mother of your household, or your mother, place a hand upon her.

If she is not present, place a hand upon your heart.

You may include other mothers, including those Christ has given you, when you speak “her” name.

God of Love, hear this prayer.

God of holy mothers,

of holy Elizabeth, mother of John,

of holy Mary, mother of Jesus,

bend down Your ear to this request

and bless the mother of our family.

Bless ___ (*say her name*)___ with strength from Your Spirit.

Bless ___ (*say her name*)___ with the melody of Your Love.

Bless ___ (*say her name*)___ with an eternal place at Your Table.

Bless ___ (*say her name*)___ with the gift of Your grace

now and forever. Amen. *(rdac)*

✠ *this concludes the service* ✠

Footnotes:

*Sirach (also known as “Ecclesiasticus” or the “Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach”) is an ancient Hebrew text dating from either before or after the earthly life of Jesus. Note - “Jesus” in the title refers to the Hebrew name “Yeshu’a” which was a common given name, in this case, the son of a man named “Sirach”. Most Protestant Christians consider these “Apocryphal” or “Deuterocanonical” holy texts to be of spiritual importance but not on par with the officially authorized books of “The Bible.”

** Malina, Bruce J. *Windows on the World of Jesus*. ©1993. Westminster/John Knox Press. Louisville, Kentucky. (Paperback)

Online Chalice Hymnal: <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/CH1995>

“Shelter Me”: GIA Publications is offering a free score through end of March 2021 at www.onelicense.net.

YouTube Music Videos: search by title AND one of the authors for best results

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