

Call to Worship

Psalm 103:1-5

- 1 - *With all our hearts, we praise you, LORD,*
2 - *from the depths of our being we name you*
as our one and only.
- 1 - *With all that we are we sing your praises, LORD;*
2 - *how could we ever forget all you have done for us?*
- 1 - *When we do wrong, you forgive us;*
2 - *when we are sick, you make us well;*
1 - *when our lives fall apart, you put us back together.*
- 1 - *With love and mercy, you treat us like royalty;*
2 - *you shower us with good things all our lives;*
1 - *you make us feel as young and free as an eagle.*
- 1 - Please rise now, in body or spirit, and let us sing of the
“Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,” #151.

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Opening Prayer

by Meghan Knight

Unison Confession

Hymnal #703

Gracious God, hear our confession.
Our faith is uncertain,
our forgiveness slow,
our conviction weak,
our compassion wavering.
We have exalted the proud and powerful,
put down the weak,
saturated the rich with good things,
neglected the poor,
sent the hungry away empty-handed.
We have helped ourselves.
Show us your mercy,
Help us show mercy,
through your Son, our Savior. AMEN

Hymnal #703

Adapted from the musical "Prayer Phrases"
by Harris J. Loewen, ©1986

scripture assurance to the right is from
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as adapted from Carolyn Brown,
Worshiping With Children

Assurance of God's forgiveness

Psalm 103:8-13

Please stand to receive from Psalm 103 the assurance that God does forgive us. For these verses, do as we do with your arms and hands, and thus express this scriptural promise with your body.

- ⁸ The LORD is merciful and loving,
slow to become angry and full of constant love.
(hands in front with palms up)
- ⁹ He does not keep on rebuking;
he is not angry forever.
(hands in front with palms down)
- ¹⁰ He does not punish us as we deserve
or repay us according to our sins and wrongs.
(both arms slash with palm down)
- ¹¹ As high as the sky is above the earth,
so great is his love for those who honor him.
(arms raised with palms up, then hug self)
- ¹² As far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our sins from us.
(point to the rear of sanctuary/east)
(point to the front of sanctuary/east)
- ¹³ As a father is kind to his children,
so the LORD is kind to those who honor him.
(hug self)

Amen

(fold hands together in prayer)

Please be seated.

Moment for Mission

Gary Miller

Returning our Tithes and Offerings

Gary Miller

Offertory

Cultivating Good Relationships

Romans 14:1-12

¹ *Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don't see things the way you do. And don't jump all over them every time they do or say something you don't agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently.*

²⁻⁴ *For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ's table, wouldn't it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn't eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God's welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help.*

⁵ *Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience.*

⁶⁻⁹ *What's important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for God's sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you're a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It's God we are answerable*

to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That's why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other.

¹⁰⁻¹² *So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I'd say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we're all going to end up kneeling side by side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture:*

*“As I live and breathe,” God says,
“every knee will bow before me;
Every tongue will tell the honest truth
that I and only I am God.”*

So tend to your knitting. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God.

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Sharing a joy, a concern,
a word of testimony or praise

Hymn #600

“O bless the Lord, my soul”

Pastoral Prayer

As we come to the Lord together just now,
whenever you hear me pray: “Lord in your mercy,”
please respond with “**Hear our Prayer.**”

Dear God, how do you keep track of us all? So many people, some many needs, so much suffering! Yet you love each like the most generous of fathers, and feel their pain like the most devoted of mothers. Help us to be inclusive in our loving like you are.

For the suffering and those who ease their pain, the sorrowful and those who try to comfort their grief, the diseased and those who work for their healing;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For the abused and those who seek justice for them, the weak and those who lend them unmeasured support, the heavy-laden and those who share the load;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For the misunderstood and those who listen, the timid and those who speak up for them, the lost and those who will suffer to see their recovery;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For the strong and those who keep them gentle, the wise and those who keep them humble, the kind and those who shield them from over-stretching themselves;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For the violent and those who must arrest them, the cruel and those who must contain them, the corrupt and those who must judge and sentence them;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For the strong in faith and those learn from them, the battlers and those who affirm them, the happy and those who rejoice with them;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

For peacemakers and those who trust them, the leaders and those who vote for them, the opinion makers and those who are swayed by them;

Lord in your mercy ... **Hear our Prayer**

Compared with you, O God, our compassion is miserly and our circle of care is most meagre. Nevertheless, we want to be more like you, asking that you will conscript our prayers and actions into the work of your universal salvation. Through Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen!

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About Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹ Peter came up to the Lord and asked, “How many times should I forgive someone who does something wrong to me? Is seven times enough?”

²² Jesus answered:

Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times!

²³ This story will show you what the kingdom of heaven is like:

One day a king **(look around and draft someone and bring him up front)** a king decided to call in his officials and ask them to give an account of what they owed him. ²⁴ As he was doing this, one official **(look around and draft another and stand him/her before the king)** was brought in who owed him fifty million silver coins. ²⁵ But he didn't have any money to pay what he owed. The king ordered him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all he owned, in order to pay the debt.

²⁶ The official got down on his knees **(thus)** and began begging, “Have pity on me, and I will pay you every cent I owe!” ²⁷ The king felt sorry for him and let him go free. He even told the official that he did not have to pay back the money. **(nudge the king over to the side and lead the “official” down the aisle)**

²⁸ As the official was leaving, he happened to meet another official, **(draft a third person)** another official who owed him a hundred silver coins. So he grabbed the man by the throat. **(thus)** He started choking him and said, “Pay me what you owe!”

²⁹ The man got down on his knees **(thus)** and began begging, “Have pity on me, and I will pay you back.”

³⁰ But the first official refused to have pity. Instead, he went and had the other official put in jail until he could pay what he owed. **(sit third person back down)**

³¹ When some other officials found out what had happened, they felt sorry for the man who had been put in jail. **(head back and whisper to king)** Then they told the king what had happened. ³² The king called the first official back in **(point, motion and, if needed, drag second person forward)** and said, “You're an evil man! When you begged for mercy, I said you did not have to pay back a cent. ³³ Don't you think you should show pity to someone else, as I did to you?” ³⁴ The king was so angry that he ordered the official to be tortured until he could pay back everything he owed. **(sit second person back down)** ³⁵ That is how my Father in heaven will treat you, if you don't forgive each of my followers with all your heart.

(have “king” sit and thank all)

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Sending One Another

*Whether we believe or whether we struggle,
we are God's.*

**Let us go out to welcome
the doubters and disciples around us.**

*Whether we live or whether we die,
we are the Lord's.*

**Let us go to embrace all
who have been abandoned by the world.**

*Whether we are brave or quake at the knees,
we are the Spirit's.*

**Let us go to encourage
our sisters and brothers who struggle.**

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