

A Liturgy for Senior Adult Sunday
September 8, 2013
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Call to Worship

Leader: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

People: He makes me lie down in green pastures

Leader: He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

People: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Leader: And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

(From Psalm 23)

Call to Confession

Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts.
See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

(Psalm 139:23-24)

Prayer of Confession (read responsively)

Loving God, when we can't see the good around us because
all we can see is what has changed and what doesn't work anymore,

Forgive us, Lord.

When we allow our fears to overtake us and prevent us
From anticipating the newness of each day,

Forgive us, Lord.

When we forget that you are here with us,
leading, guiding, and restoring us,

Forgive us, Lord.

Forgive us Lord, and grant us your grace to see life
as you see it for us and the grace to trust you as we walk into the future.
In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.

Silent Prayers of Confession

This is a time for the congregation to offer their personal confessions to God.

Assurance of Pardon

If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,"
even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

(Psalm 139:11-12)

Time with the Children

Invite the children to come forward.

Begin your time with the children by asking:

Who is the oldest person you know?
How old do you think that person is?

Think about that person. It might be a grandparent or even a great-grandparent.

Does this person look and or act differently than you do? Than your parents do?
(has gray hair and wrinkles, walks slow, sits a lot, gets tired more quickly)

There are some things this person can't do that you and your parents can do, right?

Now tell me some special things that this person can do.

(gives the best hugs, tells stories about long ago, fixes things, lets me have candy, takes me fishing, teaches me to sew or build things, etc.)

Today is a Senior Adult Sunday. On this special day we want to celebrate our senior adults and what they bring to our lives. Think about those senior adults who are part of your life. Give them a hug, draw a picture for them, or give them a call to let them know that you love them.

Pray

Thank you, God, for those older persons in our lives who bring love to us and who care for us and accept us. They help us to know little of what your love for us is like. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Open our eyes Lord with the longing to learn from those of the past so we might act according to your will in the future. Amen.

Prayers of the People/Intercession

Gracious and loving God, it is because you love us that we live, move, and have our very being. It is because of your love for us that we can make it through the difficult times in our lives, and it is your love that makes it possible for us to love one another. We pray for your people who do not know your love and have never known the love of others. Pour out your love upon them.

Let us pray for those in our church community for whom we have committed to pray...those who are unable to leave their homes for worship, those who are in hospitals or healthcare facilities, those who are dealing with chronic illnesses or taking treatments, those who are dealing with difficult medical decisions. We pray especially for those who are dealing with changes in their lives. Supply the needs of these, your people, O God.

We pray for those who are facing losses in their lives...losses of loved ones, jobs, relationships. We especially pray for all those people who live alone and seldom hear another voice or experience a human touch, for all those who find it difficult to get through the day and some

days find it difficult even to try. Search out these, your children, and restore them to wholeness. Empower them to reach out and receive your grace.

We pray for our church. May we all listen to your call to us and respond as you guide us in ministry. We pray for the leaders of our country and to world leaders, for those whose lives have been affected by our economic situation, for those who are serving or have served our country in the military and their families, and we pray for peace and reconciliation in our country and in our world.

Now we lift all these concerns on our hearts to you (pause). And as we do this, we also offer ourselves to you to use to bring answers to our prayer.

In the quietness of these moments, empty us, still us, so as your word is read and proclaimed we may be filled anew with your love and we may respond to this love as you call us.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ who taught his disciples to pray saying:

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 forever. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

Psalm 139:1-18, 22-23

Title: The Light in the Darkness

This text speaks to our senior adults because one commonality among the elder group of senior adults is “darkness.” Here are some of the ways darkness manifests itself to senior adults:

- moving from being productive in vocation and in church leadership to feeling unproductive
- failing eyesight and physical abilities cause isolation due to the inability to drive or to participate in former activities/organizations
- hearing loss limits conversations even over the phone
- losing family and friends, thus seeing yourself as “the only one left”
- leaving a lifetime home for assisted living or healthcare facility
- spending so much time with doctors or in hospitals.
- dwindling financial resources often has a negative impact on lifestyle
- recognizing those things they can no longer do, but not being encouraged to do new things or even think of what they can still do

This scripture tells us that when life becomes dark to us, with God there is light. The image that comes that comes to my mind is as powerful as being in the pitch dark and having someone hand you a flashlight. Your situation may still be what it was, but now you can see it better and, most importantly, you realize that are not alone.

So often when I talk about God with senior adults who are seldom able to leave their homes I hear, “Oh, I don’t want to bother God with my problems.” This text tells us that we do not have to find God, but that God comes to us where we are and already knows what we need.

Many of the senior adults who are experiencing the “darkness” may not be in the sanctuary, but there will be some who are and others who are already seeing this in their future.

“I come to the end, I am still with you.”

Offertory Sentence

For if the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has—
not according to what one does not have.

(2 Corinthians 8:12)

Offertory Prayer

Gracious and loving God, we are here today as blessed people who have received abundantly from you. Receive now the gifts we bring to be used in the work of your kingdom. And we also offer to you ourselves to be used to your glory and honor. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen.

Charge & Benediction

May God, who put saints of old in our paths to give us wisdom and knowledge,
Jesus Christ, who sacrificed all to give us a future filled with grace and peace,
And the Holy Spirit, who is with us all the way on our journey no matter our age,
Be with us all, both now and forever. Amen.