

A Liturgy for Senior Adult Sunday
September 14, 2014
Pat Pickett

Calls to Worship

Leader: Sisters and brothers, let us come to hear the Word!

People: Yes! We come to hear and *do* the Word!

Leader: Brothers and sisters, let us expand the ropes of our tents.

People: We widen those ropes to embrace all God has created, no exceptions.

Leader: Sisters and brothers, let the Spirit blow through our imaginations!

People: Our souls yearn to dance in the wind and fire of the Spirit.

Leader: Brothers and sisters, let us celebrate the gift of long life God has given us.

People: Truly we come with years behind us, but each day is an extra blessing to gather in praise.

Leader: Sisters and brothers, let us gather in a circle of joy for all the relationships of our lives.

People: We come to experience friendship, to be community, to find God.

Call to Confession

We cannot say that we have no sin. When we confess our sins, God who is eternally faithful hears our plea and forgives all our actions and omissions, which are sinful. Let us confess to our loving God who will restore us.

(based on 1 John 1:8-9)

Prayer of Confession

Holy God, how many times have we come to you to ask forgiveness? How many times have we promised to begin again? How old is the universe and how old are we? We are your children in the great scheme of things, but sometimes we are childish, not childlike.

We say that our age gives us the right to impose our ways when we have failed to see the beauty in change. We like things our way at home and at church. We confess that our fear of growing old has imprisoned us at times. We lash out at the very ones who love us the most.

We ask forgiveness for the tendency to focus on our losses, wrapping ourselves in a cocoon of self-pity, failing by omission to comfort others who are also hurting. We often use our age as an excuse to be self-centered and inflexible. We fail to forgive others because our hurts are special, we say. When we are unsympathetic and impatient with youth, help us to remember

our own youth and the promise it brought. We ask forgiveness for the times we allow loneliness to eat us alive, not turning the pain of it into the possibility of new relationships.

We ask forgiveness, most of all, for the times our prayer is thoughtless and routine. In our long lives you have been with us every step of the way. When we hurt and are lonely, help us remember our conversation with you is the healing and restoration we seek. In Jesus' name, we pray.

Assurance of Pardon

All our lives we have believed that before we asked forgiveness, you, our most loving God, forgave.

Prayers for Illumination

God of the living word, help us to be open to the words of scripture we are about to hear proclaimed. We want to follow faithfully in obedience and we seek to honor you in our hearing and doing through Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Isaiah 65:20 about the promise for an old man (sic) to live out his days and youth to live to 100
- Isaiah 40:28-31 with the eagle wing passage. Eagles are supposed to live longer than other birds
- Psalm 103:5 "You shall renew my youth like the eagle."

Other suggestions:

- Psalm 71 is obvious
- Psalms 92:12-15
- Proverbs 16:31, 20:29, 23:22—Wisdom of elders
- Matthew 6: 25-34—Lilies of the field is a good one
- Luke 2:21-38—Anna and Simeon

Prayers of the People

God of yesterday, today, and forever, we gather to celebrate our aging. As we continue our journey, we pray for wisdom to keep our focus. Eternal God, we give you thanks and praise for the religious imagination, the dreams and visions of those who have gone before us, sustaining us through our lives from infancy through our golden years. Even as we grow older, help us to remember that we have been called to serve you and not be led by a culture counter to the gospel.

We pray that even as we slow down, the fire of that first Pentecost continues to burn so that we are good models of your unending love. There are those among us who have outlived their loved ones and feel the sting of loneliness. Help us find one another so that we can become your open arms here in our midst. We pray for a greater sensitivity to one another's needs in our own family and for compassion that reaches beyond our doors. May our fear of being shelved become a challenge to help us continue to grow.

We pray for our brothers and sisters who have sharp minds and strong bodies that they might be generous with patience and understanding to those who don't. We pray that all who are secure economically find ways to reach out to those on fixed incomes and offer friendship in creative ways so growing old is less painful. As the days of our lives stretch into the twilight of our life on earth, we pray our spirits continue to be brightened by our belief in the resurrection.

Beyond our small lives, there is a larger world and we know there is pain in this world. We pray for families broken by war, economics, human frailty, divorce, and illness. We pray for the leaders of nations so they may come to the peace and justice you desire and yearn for us.

Our journey continues. We pray for days sprinkled with humor so we become a blessing for youth and a challenge to those in middle years. We praise you, we bless you, we give you thanks in Jesus, the Christ, Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Brothers and sisters, we have an opportunity to spread the good news through our offering. Sometimes all we have to give is ourselves. For you, O God, that is enough. You know the depth of every gift and treasure what we give. Let us give joyfully and generously from our heart and from whatever treasures we may have.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Generous God, please accept the gifts of our hearts, our imaginations and our purse. We give what we have for the spread of the gospel. We pray you bless our efforts and we believe you will increase the abundance of their effect. This we pray in the name of Jesus, the Christ, Amen.

Charge and Blessing

Brothers and sisters – all of us may be distinguished by wrinkles. BUT—There are no wrinkles in our spirits. The fabric of our souls is wrinkle-free. Let us go out and live with joy, with humor, love, and generosity. Let us dance in the wisdom we have learned and earned. *May the blessing of God, the creator, fill us with imagination and creativity, may the Son renew our joy in the resurrection, and may the Spirit burn brightly in and through each of us!*