

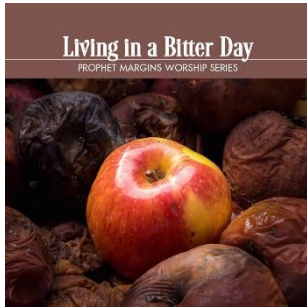
*As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God*

+++++

We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude

Welcome



Announcements/Joys & Concerns

We begin today with Hosea who shows us that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures is much more complex than such an adage of Law and order can describe. Here we have a God who calls for risky love. It is a love that responds lovingly even when hurt, even when not returned.

Here God's word this day...

Hosea 1:2-10

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

The Family of Hosea

2 When the Lord first spoke through Hosea, the Lord said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and have children of prostitution, for the land commits great prostitution by forsaking the Lord." 3 So he went and took Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4 And the Lord said to him, "Name him Jezreel,[a] for in a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. 5 On that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

6 She conceived again and bore a daughter. Then the Lord said to him, "Name her Lo-ruhamah,[b] for I will no longer have pity on the house of Israel or forgive them. 7 But I will have pity on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Lord their God; I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen."

8 When she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then the Lord said, "Name him Lo-ammi,[c] for you are not my people, and I am not your God." [d]

The Restoration of Israel

10 [e] Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which can be neither measured nor numbered, and in the place where it was said to them, "You are not my people," it shall be said to them, "Children of the living God."

So, how do we present that risky, prophetic love without falling into sentimentality?
By telling stories.

Who can tell of how someone never gave up on them, though they made bad choices repeatedly?

Who can describe caring for a parent who no longer recognizes them and even lashes out at them?

Who can relate a story of setting boundaries and sticking to them, even while holding out hope for transformation?

Better yet, who could tell of seeing that, observing someone loving like that?
Or who can talk about receiving that, experiencing that kind of risky love?

You see, a key element to this understanding of risky love is that we are also called to love those who are hard to love. We aren't given permission to cut off anyone here. We don't draw lines and say we'll love this one and not that one. And there is risk, of course, that is why it is called risky love. But we go forward with eyes wide open. We aren't fodder for abuse; that's not loving. Sometimes we are called to love from a distance. Sometimes to protect ourselves and others, we have to withdraw, but we can still love. We can still hope for transformation; we can still fervently pray for the other to fulfill all that God has in store for them. Hosea was called to love like that. And so are we.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Children of the Living God!

God loves us with the love of a parent.

Children of the Living God!

Despite our failings, God continues to save us.

Children of the Living God!

We are here to worship the God of love, justice, and grace.

AMEN.

OPENING PRAYER

God, Our Holy Parent, there are moments we feel as though we are separated from you, times where we have chosen our own agendas over you. As we gather to worship today, remind us that despite our wandering souls, you are still "home" to us. Thank you, nurturing God, for welcoming us into this space today. Amen.

***HYMN OF PRAISE UMH #75 "All People That on Earth Do Dwell"**

Attributed to: William Kethe (1561)

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Attributed to: Louis Bourgeois (1551)

**1. All people that on earth do dwell,
sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth
tell;
come ye before him and rejoice.**

**2. Know that the Lord is God indeed;
without our aid he did us make;
we are his folk, he doth us feed,
and for his sheep he doth us take.**

**3. O enter then his gates with praise;
approach with joy his courts unto;
praise, laud, and bless his name always,
for it is seemly so to do.**

**4. For why! the Lord our God is good;
his mercy is forever sure;
his truth at all times firmly stood,
and shall from age to age endure.**

We Hear God's Word

Gospel Reading..... Luke 11:1-13
New Revised Standard Version

The Lord's Prayer

11 He was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." 2 So he said to them, "When you pray, say:

Father,[a] may your name be revered as holy.

May your kingdom come.[b]

3 Give us each day our daily bread.[c]

4 And forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us.

And do not bring us to the time of trial."[d]

Perseverance in Prayer

5 And he said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived, and I have nothing to set before him.' 7 And he answers from within, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been locked, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything out of friendship, at least because of his persistence he will get up and give him whatever he needs.

9 "So I say to you, Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 11 Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for[e] a fish, would give a snake instead of a fish? 12 Or if the child asked for an egg, would give a scorpion? 13 If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit[f] to those who ask him!"

The Word of God for the People of God, **Thanks be to God!**

FAITH HYMN FWS #2196 "We Walk by Faith"

Author: Henry Alford (alt.)

Copyright: Public Domain

1 We walk by faith, and not by sight:
No gracious words we hear
of him who spoke as none e'er spoke,
but we believe him near.

2 We may not touch his hands and side,
nor follow where he trod;
but in his promise we rejoice,
and cry, "My Lord and God!"

3 Help then, O Lord, our unbelief,
and may our faith abound;
to call on you when you are near,
and seek where you are found.

4 That when our life of faith is done
in realms of clearer light
may we behold you as you are
in full and endless sight.

“Message”

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

God of Salvation,

We are grateful for the gift of your love.

A love that has no bounds, a love that keeps reaching out to us, calling us to you.

We are more than your people ... we are your beloved children.

You reiterate throughout scripture your readiness to hear us when we pray to you.

God, you are our father.

God, you are our mother.

God, you are our family.

God, you care for us and love us in ways we cannot comprehend.

Forgive us when we forget how much you love us.

Forgive us for times we are unfaithful to you, times we fail to do as you've called.

God, thank you for loving us in the most sacred and scandalous ways.

You are God, and we trust that you journey with us in all things.

We gather today in praise of your Holy name as we join our voices together in the words that Jesus taught us.

Our Father...

Departing Hymn FWS #2241 “The Spirit Sends Us Forth To Serve”

Author: Delores Dufner, OSB

Publication Date: 2003

Copyright: © 1993 Delores Dufner. Published by OCP Publications

Tune Information

Copyright: Public Domain

**1 The spirit sends us forth to serve;
we go in Jesus' name
to bring glad tidings to the poor,
God's favor to proclaim.**

**2 We go to comfort those who mourn
and set the burdened free:
where hope is dim, to share a dream
and help the blind to see.**

**3 We go to be the hands of Christ,
to scatter joy like seed
and all our days, to cherish life,
to do the loving deed.**

**4 Then let us go to serve in peace,
the Gospel to proclaim.
God's Spirit has empowered us;
we go in Jesus' name.**

BENEDICTION

May the Source of life hold you in the faith;
the Word of life speak clearly in truth around you;
and Breath of life, of grace, of wisdom,
sing in your inmost being this day and all your days. Amen.

***POSTLUDE**