

June 14 GCC UCC Outdoor Evening Worship

Words of Welcome and Hope for All of us We Re-Gather in Person

Opening Prayer (Unison)

God, we've waited. We've been patient, impatient, cranky, and sometimes even downright ornery, overwhelmed, and disquieted. We've been short with our loved ones. We've gone for so long without so many parts of our lives we've assumed to be normal, natural, and unending. Tonight we pause, slow down, take note of our new fresh beginnings. Teach us to be mindful of others who have lost so much more and who have suffered so deeply, sometimes in silence without any community support. Show us compassion, for those lives that are forever touched and changed by the loss of loved ones and affected by continuing, sometimes life-long complications from this pandemic. Help us to re-emerge into your light of shared living in hope and joy in each other's presence. Help us practice the art of patience, the spirituality of gratitude, and the prayer-full attitude that heals so many wounds. Amen.

Psalm 103:1-5 (adapted from NRSV)

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.

People: **Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all God's benefits.**

Unison: **It is God who redeems our lives from the pit and who crowns us with steadfast love and mercy,**

Pastor: Affirmation of Our Faith: Romans 8:38-39 (NRSV)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Our Lord's Prayer (Unison)

Psalm 61:1-3

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,

to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.

Prayer (Unison)

Gracious God, we are so often full of ourselves. Don't we too often in some manner assume that it is our right to govern ourselves, enrich ourselves, promote ourselves, and attempt to impose our views of how others should act in our presence?

And yet, here we are, frightened by a thing so small it can't be seen under most microscopes. It's not even an animal or a plant. It's a virus, a mere parasite, dependent on our own living cells to replicate. And yet it has shuttered our schools, cancelled our flights, and emptied our churches. It has consumed the attention of our leading scientists, wrenched our politics out of shape, dominated our conversations, and scared the daylights out of us. So many have and are dying around our world and so many have and are now suffering from this little speck that needs our bodies to live.

The chasms separating us have widened with degrees of mistrust and misunderstandings between us. In some ways we are afraid of each other. Anger roams freely just under the surface of so many persons.

Great and quiet source of peace, quiet our fears. We do know you will be in our future to hold us there in that unfolding space of your love.

As we regather in your holy name may we regain a sense of community in which others are a blessing and in each other's presence may we find you present to each of us. Hold us God, heal us Living Christ, guide us Holy Spirit into your sacred realm with and through the presence of each other. Amen.

Moments for Reflection and Silence

Time for Us to Share our Hopes for the Community Re-Gathering

A PRAYER FOR THE START OF A NEW DAY (Unison)

**Oh Lord, you who keep watch over our lives:
We arose from our beds this day by your grace,
We face the tasks of this day by your grace,
We embrace all the unpredictable and
uncontrollable things of this day by your grace,
We receive all the gifts of this day by your grace,
And we hold lightly, and joyfully,
the outcome of this day by your grace.
Bless us all as we re-gather in your holy name with utter gratitude.
In the name of the One Jesus our Christ, our healer, redeemer, and teacher.
Amen.**

Special Music

Ken Littlefield

A PRAYER FOR RENEWED HOPE (Unison)

**Oh God, you who make us new, again and again,
enliven the thoughts of our minds,
revitalize the cells of our bodies,
and cause a fresh outburst of praise to surge in our hearts,
so that we might taste the Life that is truly life this day.
In the name of the One whose face is like the shining sun.
Amen and Amen!**

Benediction