

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY GATHERING

15th March, 2023

Topic:

Reclaiming the Feminine Face of God



Photo taken from the Hubble Space Telescope

ORDER FOR WORSHIP

GATHERING

Welcome and Introduction

We light the candle

One: If ever there was a time for a candle in the darkness, this could be it.

All: We need a spark of hope to kindle the flame of love, ignite the light of peace, and feed the flame of justice.

The candle is lit

Acknowledgement of Country

We recognise and give thanks that we humans are creatures of the Earth, living in an ecosystem comprising flowers, trees and insects; land, waters and mountain ranges.

We honour the Kurna people who were the first peoples to be custodians of this fragile ecosystem in which we now live.

Acknowledgement of Diversity

We recognise our diversity, and in terms of the Uniting Church's Safe Church Policy, we acknowledge that this is a safe place in which all people can worship together, irrespective of race, creed, age, ability, sexuality, cultural background, or any other distinguishing feature.

CELEBRATING

Celebration of Life

One: We gather here to celebrate life's beauty and find healing for its pain, to wonder at the mystery that gave us birth, and to listen for the wisdom that guides us in the quietness of this moment.

We come and celebrate the richness and diversity of life.

All: Amen.

HYMN 'It is so grand'

Suggested tune TiS 161 Woodlands

It is so grand - the cosmos with its store
Of galaxies and stars; we stand in awe;
The constellations, nebulae and more,
So limitless, no human can explore.

It is so grand - the beauty of the earth -
Abundant life; all species seek re-birth;
We look at nature; she responds with mirth;
And then we wonder at her dazzling worth.

It is so grand - the body, soul and mind -
So complex yet exquisitely combined;
Belief, thought, deed - effectively entwined
Reveal the miracle of humankind.

It is so grand - the virtues we hold dear -
Soft kindness, goodness, gentleness sincere,
Faith, hope and love which constantly appear;
And grace, compassion which helps conquer fear.

The 'God beyond' is always on display;
The 'God within' sustains us all each day;
The 'God between' in all our interplay;
We are so blest; we need to kneel and pray.

*George Stuart
Used with permission*

For Reflection

Litany for International Women's Day

One: God of our years, our lives are in your hands.
We remember today our female ancestors,
who throughout time have used their gifts
of power, love, and the strong minds you gave them
to change the world.

We call upon the example of these ancestors to help us discover within
ourselves our gifts.

We remember Sarah, a strong woman of faith
who answered God's call to forsake her homeland
and to put her faith in the promises and covenant of God.

All: We give thanks for her display of faith.

One: We remember Esther, Deborah, and Rahab,
who by acts of individual courage saved their people.

**All: We give thanks for their sound minds and courage acting for the
greater good.**

One: We remember Mary Magdala, Johanna, Mary,
and the other women who followed Jesus, and who were not believed
when they announced the resurrection.

All: We give thanks for their love and faith in the face of skepticism.

One: We remember Phoebe, Priscilla, and all
the women leaders of the early church.

**All: We give thanks for their power and sound minds that spread the
gospel and inspired congregations.**

One: We give thanks for the love and creativity of women who were first in their field.

All: We give thanks for their power of leadership and their creative thinking.

One: We remember Florence Nightingale, theologian and nurse educator, who raised the menial role of nurse to the level of a profession in 19th century England.

All We praise valiant women

One: We remember Caroline Chisholm, who was responsible for improving conditions on immigrants' ships and providing a caring home for young immigrant women cast adrift in nineteenth-century Sydney.

All We praise valiant women

One: We remember Indira Gandhi, prime minister of India, the world's largest democracy, who was elected twice to that position and assassinated while in office.

All We praise valiant women

One: We remember all women of accomplishment who achieved despite the odds, in science, the arts, religion, law, health, education, economics, athletics, the home, and in the socio-political fields.

All: Inspired by this witness of our sisters in faith, let us be encouraged to give of our best efforts, knowing that all are equal in the sight of God.

Hymn TiS 696 'A prophet woman broke a jar'.

Suggested tune 'Constance' MHB 423

EXPLORING

Presentation

Rev Marion Millin

'Reclaiming the Feminine Face of God'

Discussion

AFFIRMING

PSALM 121

One: I lift my eyes to the hills. From whence comes my help?

All: My help comes from the Holy One, Creator of heaven and earth.

One: The Holy One will not allow your foot to stumble; your Guardian will never sleep. No! Israel's Guardian will neither slumber nor sleep. The Holy One is indeed your Guardian, your shade at your right hand,

All: so that the sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

One: The Holy One will guide you from every evil, and protect your very being.

All: The Holy One will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth, forever.

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS AND OURSELVES

One: As we consider our world, and the places of trouble, and places where many struggle, we look to the hills and ask: from where will help come?

All: We remember you, Holy One, our help from this time and ever more.

One: In places near and far, people are exiled from home— floods and fires, earthquakes, volcanoes, tsunamis, hurricanes and tornadoes, war, invasion, occupation, and we ask: from where will help come?

All: We remember you, Holy One, our help from this time and ever more.

One: In places near and far, people are trapped at home, with illnesses of many kinds, less mobile for many reasons, abused, neglected, vulnerable, isolated, lonely, alone: and we ask: from where will help come?

All: We remember you, Holy One, our help from this time and ever more.

One: In places near and far, our environment is suffering droughts from lack of rainfall; rising seas, from melting icecaps; floods from heavy rain; forests are razed by greed, beaches and riverbanks clogged by our junk: from where will help come?

All: We remember you, Holy One, our help from this time and ever more.

One: And where is the Holy One? The Holy One is within us, hope's spark of light. When we ask from where will help come, we remember you, hope with us, within us, through us.

All: Amen.

Hymn TiS 182 'Bring many names'

SCATTERING

Parting Words

One: May the Holy One be our keeper, our shade, our hope, our light.
May the Holy One be our disrupter, the wind blowing us into new life.

Let us continue on our journey, knowing the Holy One is with us, now and evermore.

**All: Walk beside us, live within us,
lead us home. Amen. May it be so!**

The candle is extinguished

Notices

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