

St James Episcopal Church
HEALING SERVICE OF TAIZE
November 24, 2020

Gathering and Call to Worship

Song The Kingdom of God
 The kingdom of God is justice and peace,
 and joy in the Holy Spirit.
 Come, Lord, and open in us
 the gates of your kingdom.

Leader We gather here in your presence God,
All in our need and bringing with us the needs of the world.

Leader We come to you, for you come to us in Jesus.
All and you know by experience what human life is like.

Leader We come with our faith and with our doubts;
All we come with our hopes and with our fears.

Leader We come as we are because you invite us to come;
All And you have promised never to turn us away.

Let us pray together.

All Holy Spirit, fill this place as we come into your presence. We acknowledge that you are the creator of the universe, sustainer of life, and redeemer of human kind. Bring your healing light and power into our wounded hearts, bodies, minds, and souls. Clear the way for all of us to discover within ourselves the fullness of your power and all of your wondrous blessings. Amen.

Let us read responsively— Psalm 5: 1-8 (from Everyday Psalms by James Taylor)

O my God, hear me.
I'm crying out to you.
Listen to my whimpering in the night.
You are not afraid of the blackness,
so I call for you.
You hear my cries, and come to me.
Before dawn wipes away the darkness,
I drowse comfortably in your arms.

You are as open as the daylight;
no deceitful thought crosses your mind.

You will not associate yourself with anything underhanded.

**Those who brag of their own powers
reveal their inner emptiness;**

you give them enough rope
and they tie themselves in knots.

Anyone who lies to you risks destruction,
for you do not like being deceived.

**Because you are honest and open,
I know I have a place in your heart.**

I live in awe of you;

I reach out my arms towards you.

Pick me up and take me with you.

I want to go with you, wherever you are.

Scripture Reading from The Gospel of Luke (7: 24-34)

When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves.)

"To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not weep.'

For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon'; the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Meditation Reflection *“What are the Prophets?”* by Sr. Joan Chittister (from *The Cry of the Prophet: A Call to Fullness of Life*)

What this world needs most right now is a new generation of prophets. The problem is that we have lost all respect for them. In fact, we may not even recognize them when we see them.

Yet, it was precisely for times such as ours that God sent the prophets. It is surely time for this generation to rediscover them.

We aren't, after all, the only people who have gone through such social disorientation, such moral confusion. We aren't the only people in history who have put down our ideals in favor of our desires. We aren't the only people in the world who have wanted more comfort than challenge, more money than community, more power than equality.

The word “prophet” rings with a hard edge these days, a memory of denunciation that comes with a shudder and the urge to take a step backwards. We shrink from the very idea of the prophetic dimension of religion or, at best, relegate the idea of it to times past when God bent stiff necks with mighty swords. We shrink from the very thought of raising our voices above the crowd. We want a religion that chants but never howls, that prays but never brings the foolish standards of the Gospel to the issues of the time.

What a shame. All we prove in our sterile dash to be “polite” and “civil” and “reasonable” about faith is how little we know of prophets and prophecy these days. How little we understand the role of gospel critique in a world where people expect to talk religion but not to do it, who will define religion but do not want to steer by it, who will argue religion but do not want to apply it to the here and now, to the this and that, to modern life as well as to ancient myth. Prophecy we assume for times of mystical allegory but not for moments of major upheaval in our own worlds, great and small, public and personal.

We like to separate the prophets of the church from the people of the church. We like to separate ourselves from the demands of greatness. But the prophetic dimensions of the church, Scripture demonstrates in its greatest prophetic figures of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, and Ezekiel, are simple souls just like us: ordinary citizens, compassionate liver, justice-seeking and persistent idealists who move with courage

into places that everyone else takes for granted, and speak God's word in the midst of human chaos, loudly, clearly, courageously, whatever the levy it imposes on their own lives. Prophecy, in other words, is not a luxury; it is an essential dimension of the Christian life. We will not be forgiven our disdain of holy risk in the name of weakness.

A Litany for Healing

Leader Let us offer our prayers for God's healing, saying "Hear and have mercy."

Holy and Mighty, wellspring of abundant life: *Hear and have mercy.*

Holy Immortal One, protector of the faithful: *Hear and have mercy.*

Holy Trinity, the source of all wholeness: *Hear and have mercy.*

Blessed Jesus, your Holy Name is medicine for healing and a promise of eternal life: *Hear and have mercy.*

Jesus, child of Mary, you embraced the world with your love: *Hear and have mercy.*

Jesus, divine physician, you sent your disciples to preach the Gospel and heal in your name: *Hear and have mercy.*

Jesus, Son of God, you take away our sin and make us whole: *Hear and have mercy.*

Jesus, eternal Christ, your promised Spirit renews our hearts and minds: *Hear and have mercy.*

Grant your grace to heal those who are sick (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Give courage and faith to all who are disabled through injury, illness, or addiction (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Comfort, relieve, and heal all sick children (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Support and encourage those who live with chronic illness (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Strengthen those who endure continual pain, and give them hope (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Befriend all who are anxious, lonely, despondent, or afraid (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Give rest to the weary, and hold the dying in your loving arms (add names), we pray to you O God: *Hear and have mercy.*

Jesus, Lamb of God: *Hear and have mercy.*
Jesus, bearer of our sins: *Hear and have mercy.*
Jesus, redeemer of the world: *Hear and have mercy.*

We repent the wrongs we have done (silence).
We have wounded your love: *O God heal us.*
We stumble in the darkness: *Light of the world transfigure us.*
We forget that we are your home: *Spirit of God dwell within us.*
Hear us, O Lord of Life: *Heal us, and make us whole.*

Song *O Lord hear My Prayer*
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer
When I call, answer me.
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer
Come and listen to me.

Leader Compassionate God: You so loved the world that you sent us Jesus to bear our infirmities and afflictions. Through acts of healing, he revealed you as the true source of health and salvation. For the sake of your Christ who suffered and died for us, conquered death, and now reigns with you in glory, hear the cry of your people. Have mercy on us, make us whole, and bring us at last into the fullness of your eternal life.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

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 trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Benediction from (St Teresa of Avila)

Let nothing disturb thee.
Let nothing frighten thee.
All things are changing.
God alone is changeless.
Patience attains the goal.
One who has God lacks nothing.
God alone fills all our needs.

Song Let your Servant now go in peace

Let your servant now go in peace O Lord.
Now go in peace according to your word.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus forever and ever. Amen.