

in the big love living liturgies

“Who Touched Me?” • Luke 8:43-48

Worship Service for Home or Small Group Use

prepared by Rev. Kathryn M. Schreiber

Preparations

- You may wish to arrange to worship distantly with others at the same time.
- Read through this service before beginning, especially for items needed.
- A “Christ Candle” can be any sort of candle or object which represents Christ’s presence.
- Choose songs to sing (our suggestions or your favorites). Assemble what you’ll need to sing.
- Ensure an uninterrupted place to worship.
- Decorate the space to welcome God’s presence, as we do at church.

Time for Children

“Out of the Bag: Hands! Wonderfully Made!” on YouTube channel: Kathryn Schreiber

Worship Service

Please adapt to make this worship service your own. Your intention is what is important.

We Gather

Invocation (unison)

Brother Jesus, we are feeling very vulnerable today.
 We are keeping our bodies away from other bodies.
 We are trying to slow down this invisible virus
 that hides among us, that flies through our sneezes,
 that hitchhikes on our hands.
 It is unsafe to touch and to be touched
 and yet, we need to be lovingly cradled.
 So we reach out to You, Eternal Christ.
 Feel our touch, Holy One.
 Do not be afraid of us. Amen.

Light the Christ Candle

Song for Welcoming the Holy Spirit

Suggestions:

“Come and Fill our Hearts” - Taizé Community, Bro. Jacques Berthier

“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” - Robert Robinson

We Unburden

Naming Our New Reality

If you are with others in person or via devices please discuss your experience of staying away from people and sheltering in place this week. If you are alone, speak out loud to God about this past week. Be honest. What has been hardest? What has been most surprising? What has been most rewarding? Name your truth no matter what it is. God is listening.

Silent Prayer

*In the quietude of your soul simply be in God’s presence, just as you are.
 Your mind will wander. Thoughts will come up.
 Be kind to yourself. Temporarily let go of following your thoughts.
 Sit in God’s presence, possibly repeating “Holy One” or “Dear Abba.”*

Act of Unburdening

Place pebbles or small items at the base of the Christ Candle thinking or speaking whatever you wish to offer to God for release. These “releases” need not be named. The soul knows what to give to God and God knows what to receive.

Blessing of Grace (unison)

Let us pray:

Before we uttered a word,
before we put a label on our discomfort
You, O Lord, knew what we were carrying
and called us forward to release
awaiting this moment
when You could fully unburden us.
Merciful One, Thank You. Thank You. Amen.

We Listen**Gospel Reading (responsive)**

*Our scripture reading is from the Gospel of St Luke 8:43-48 (NRSV).
This story also appears in Mark 5:25-34 and Matthew 9:20-22.*

Jesus had been travelling and performing many healing miracles drawing large crowds of sick people. Today, we are avoiding being near people, especially crowds. To reduce the spread of the coronavirus, we are also extremely limiting touch. In Jesus’ time, people would have been afraid of the Hemorrhaging Woman’s touch because she was sick. She was shunned. They would not have wanted to touch her or have her touch them. Let us pay careful attention to this sacred story, especially the parts where people are touched.

Because this passage is a conversation it is set up for three voices: Storyteller, Jesus, and Peter. One person may read in three different voices or three persons may each read a part.

Storyteller’s Voice:

Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years;
and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her.
She came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his clothes,
and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. Then Jesus asked...

Jesus’s Voice:

“Who touched me?”

Storyteller’s Voice:

When all the Disciples denied it, Peter said...

Peter’s Voice:

“Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.”

Storyteller’s Voice:

But Jesus said...

Jesus’s Voice:

“Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.”

Storyteller’s Voice:

When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden,
she came trembling;
and falling down before Jesus, (*cont’d*)

she declared in the presence of all the people
why she had touched him,
and how she had been immediately healed.
Jesus said to her...

Jesus's Voice:
"Daughter, your faith has made you well;
go in peace."

May God add a blessing to the reading and reflecting upon this Holy Word. Amen.

Reflection Upon Illness and Touch

Please turn away from watching the clock. Rest into the grace of Kairos time.

In Jesus' day illness was understood to be caused by sinful behavior. Illness was a divine punishment for wrongdoing. To be healed REQUIRED a spiritual change on the part of the sick person. Do you believe that?

The Hemorrhaging Woman had been socially isolated for at least a decade because people feared her moral condition. Yet, she was a VERY courageous person. She entered the large crowd, followed Jesus, and when she was beside him, she bent down and touched the edge of his robe. She was very cautious, but she did believe Jesus could heal her. She believed he could remove the spiritual curse put upon her as divine punishment.

Did it surprise you when Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" or when Peter told Jesus such things were bound to happen. Jesus explained to Peter this wasn't an ordinary bumping into someone in a large crowd, rather... "I noticed that power had gone out from me." Jesus named that something extraordinary had just happened and wanted to know who had touched him.

When the woman revealed herself, she probably expected to be punished again. Yet, Jesus affirmed and blessed her and said it was her faith which healed her. Can you imagine what a gift Jesus's words must have been to her?

*Let this story rest lightly upon your soul. What might God be saying to you, to us, today?
Listen to the sounds of nature or special music before moving on.
When your reflection time is done, simply say: "Amen."*

We Pray

Prayers of Petition

Lift up your joys and concerns in prayer. If your community shares prayer requests or a Pastoral Prayer, include them at this time.

Song for Prayer

Suggestions:

"I Want Jesus To Walk with Me" - African American spiritual, tune: SOJOURNER

"Kum ba Yah" - by Marvin Frey

The Lord's Prayer (unison)

Imagine the sanctuary where you usually worship. Let the memory of your Beloved Community fill your soul and let us pray together the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

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 debts as we forgive our debtors. 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.

We Give Thanks

Offering

Do something to show your love of God. Write a check or make an online donation, write a note to someone who doesn't text or use email, put something beautiful beside the Christ Candle. (Please see the Donation note at the end of this document)

Song of Gratitude

Suggestions:

"Gloria Patri"- Doxology

"There is a Balm in Gilead" verse: Don't ever feel discouraged -African-American spiritual

We Continue in Hope

Affirmation of Faith (*unison*)

We are the Hemorrhaging Woman.

We are the Crowd.

We are Peter and the Disciples.

Let us reach out toward Jesus.

Let us courageously believe in Him.

Let us take from Jesus what we need
to be healed of both illness and judgement.

Amen.

Song of Hope

Suggestions:

"Precious Lord, Take My Hand" - Thomas A Dorsey

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" - E Hoffman, A Showwalter

Benediction

May we reach out to the Living Christ

Hearing Jesus say to us,

"Beloved, your faith has made you well;
go in peace."

(this concludes the service)

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Online music: <https://hymnary.org/> YouTube: google by title AND one of the authors

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