

# in the big love living liturgies

“A New Thing” • Isaiah 43:15, 18-21

## Worship Service for In-Home or Remote Group Use

*prepared by Rev. Kathryn M. Schreiber*

### Worship Note

*As we continue the selfless practice of Sheltering in Place, as we witness new losses and new gains, as we begin to adjust to living differently - our souls may be restless, forlorn, confused, over excited, or numb. This service is one of a series designed to tend the pandemic-stressed soul.*

### Preparations

- You may wish to arrange to worship distantly with others at the same time.
- Read through this service beforehand to assemble 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 your space to welcome God’s presence, as we do at church, with special decorations if celebrating Earth Day during this service.

### Time for Children

“Out of the Bag: In God’s Hands” 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**

Holy One,  
You cut new trails  
where there are no paths.

Source of All Life,  
You deliver fresh water  
where the rivers have gone dry.

Almighty God,  
You call us away from a damaging past  
into a future where a New Thing is emerging.

Praise be to God! Amen.

#### **Light the Christ Candle**

#### **Song for Welcoming The Creator**

*Suggestion: “For the Beauty of the Earth” - F Pierpoint, DIX (#56 Chalice; #444 HOL)*

### **We Unburden and Gather Hope**

#### **Naming Our New Reality**

*If you are with others in person or via devices please share what is on your minds and in your hearts. If you are alone, speak out loud to God. How has it been for you and your loved ones this*

*week? Who did you most enjoy spending time with? What deeply comforted your spirit? What continues to be challenging? Be honest. 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 "Creator" or "Ruler of the Universe."*

### **Acts of Unburdening and Affirming**

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

### **Blessing of Grace**

There is no place that we can go  
that God has not been before.  
There is no experience that we can have  
that God has not imagined.  
There is no feeling that we can feel  
that God does not comprehend.  
Into our evolving human mysteries  
God is consistently ahead of us  
offering us a better way forward,  
leading us into a blessed future. Amen.

### **We Listen**

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:15, 18-21 (*New Revised Standard Version*)

I am the Lord, your Holy One,  
the Creator of Israel, your King.

Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth,  
do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.

The wild animals will honor me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,

to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

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

### **Reflection Upon God's Faithfulness during Mysterious Times**

*(If your pastor has prepared a sermon, please read/view it now.)*

*Today's scripture passage comes from the writings attributed to the Prophet Isaiah. This collection of texts in the biblical book of Isaiah is a sequence of three documents written in different places at different times.*

Chapters 1-39, known as “First Isaiah” is set in Judea following the death of King Uzziah (ca. 738 BCE)\* and covers the next four decades through a succession of military aggressions. “Second Isaiah,” chapters 40-55, finds the Israelites toward the end of their exile in Babylon (597-539 BCE). In “Third Isaiah,” the concluding chapters of the book, chapters 56-66, the exiled Israelites have returned home and are trying to rebuild despite very harsh conditions.

Our reading today is set in Babylon where the people dreamt of a return to Judea, but NOT a return to the painful and corrupt trials, tribulations, and violence of the past. They dreamt of God doing a “New Thing” and of a new way of being God’s people in God’s promised land. As we journey through this global pandemic, we are wondering: “Why is this happening to us?” “God, why are You doing this to us?” “God, what are we supposed to do to make things better?” Long have human beings turned to their gods whenever dangerous natural disasters occur. When we are powerless, we turn to the powerful. We want, and need, divine intervention. We also seek meaning amid frightening mysteries.

As Christians, we follow a Messiah who often thought us to blend prayer AND action - to be concerned about hungry, poor people AND to actually feed them. To petition God for heavenly mercy AND to work for earthly justice. An embodied Christian faith is one that includes human beings in the responsibility loop for both damage and repair, co-workers with God.

This international pandemic is revealing much about our mistakes, weaknesses, and sins as human beings, especially collectively as nations and regional organizations. This virus is revealing many layers of vulnerability in the systems and practices we have created. Currently, we are in a type of exile as we shelter in place. Like the exiled Israelites in Babylon we dream of a different future.

Today’s passage from Second Isaiah celebrates a God that is making a way “where there is no way.” A God who is not restoring a broken past, but a God who leads all creatures into a better future. What “New Thing” does God desire for planet earth? What good will come out of this time of challenge, revelation, and deconstruction? What is springing forth? What will we be praising God for a year from now? What will the oceans and wildlife, forest and skies celebrate?

### **Song for Reflection**

Suggestions: “Tough the Earth Lightly” - S E Murray, TEDERNESS (#693 Chalice)  
 “We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky” - R Duck, HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING (#684 Chalice)

## **We Pray**

### **Prayers of Petition**

Today as we lift up our prayers let us do so with and for non-human beings. What might our neighborhood trees, birds, and bodies of water speak to God about? Our household animal and plant companions? Let us build a prayer together lifting up all creation’s joys and concerns.

### **Song for Prayer**

Suggestion: “Shelter Me” - Mike Joncas. Copyright 2020. The Jan Michael Joncas Trust.  
 YouTube: [https://youtu.be/1EbCgi\\_7gQs](https://youtu.be/1EbCgi_7gQs) (music and lyrics PDF’s attached)

### **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 the Creator. Feed the birds, water the plants, play with the household pet. Make a donation of time, talent, or treasure to benefit the non-humans. Sing your praise of God for this magnificent home - planet Earth. (Please see the Donation note at the end of this document)

### Song of Gratitude

Suggestions: “All Things Bright and Beautiful” - C F Alexander, ROYAL OAK (#61 Chalice; #514 HOL)

## We Continue in Hope

**Poem of Hope** “Go to the Limits of Your Longing” by Rainer Maria Rilke

Read poem or listen to “Sent Out” Song by Rev. Will Burhans <https://youtu.be/R-I130x1RYM>

God speaks to each of us as he makes us,  
Then walks with us silently out of the night.  
These are the words we dimly hear.  
You, sent out beyond your recall.  
Go the limits of your longing.  
Embody me.  
Flare up like a flame  
And make big shadows I can move in.  
Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror.  
Just keep going. No feeling is final.  
Don't let yourself lose me.  
Nearby is the country they call life.  
You will know it by its seriousness.  
Give me your hand.

### Song of Hope:

“This is My Father's World” - M D Babcock, TERRA BEATA (#59 Chalice; #512 HOL)

### Benediction

Julian of Norwich was given a vision:  
She saw a small round ball in her hand  
appearing to be much like a common hazelnut.  
God told her it was everything that is made.  
And she perceived it had three properties:  
    “The first is that God made it.  
    The second that God loves it.  
    And the third, that God keeps it.”  
But Julian was concerned that such a small thing  
was so very vulnerable.  
God reassured her that everything rests  
in the protective care of God's loving presence.

We are held by a loving and caring Creator.  
Go forth with peace and hope. Amen.

✠ this concludes the service ✠

### Footnotes:

\*BCE = “Before the Common Era” and CE = “Common Era” replacing BC = “Before Christ” and AD = “Anno

*Domini*” (Latin: “In the year of the Lord). This year is 2020 CE. The date 1 BCE was 2021 years ago. 738 BCE would have been 2,758 years ago.

**Online Chalice Hymnal:** <https://hymnary.org/hymnal/CH1995>

“Shelter Me”: GIA Publications is offering a free score through end of March 2021 at [www.onelicense.net](http://www.onelicense.net).

**YouTube Music Videos:** search by title AND one of the authors for best results

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