

ECV @ Home

A LITURGY FOR MARCH 15, 2020

A Call to Worship

Psalm 29:2 exhorts us to “ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name, worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.” In worshipping God through music, we recognize that God is good and powerful, worthy of our time, attention, and affection. Play as many as these songs as you’d like. If you play an instrument, you can also find the chords and lyrics [here](#).

1. [Hosanna \(Praise Is Rising\)](#)

2. [House of God Forever](#)

3. [There Is No Striving](#)

4. [You Provide](#)

Opening Prayer

Good and gracious God, you have told us that when we ask for wisdom, you give it generously. Lord, grant us the wisdom to walk in your way: turning from fear, loving life, valuing others more than ourselves, making the best use of the time you have given us. Let our worship of you today be the beginning of wisdom.

The seriousness of the global pandemic we are facing need not be a distraction from Lent. The way we respond to moments of urgency and strain more clearly reveals what is in our hearts. Preparing to make wise decisions and love our neighbors more generously requires preparing one’s heart and mind. Lent remains a season for us to engage even more deeply with the reality of our hearts, so that we might turn them towards God’s truth and live in the fullness of his love. **In order to let God’s truth dwell in us richly, we will spend time this week, as has been our practice, using two ancient Christian practices:** a form of prayer called **the examen**, and a way of reading Scripture called **lectio divina**.

The examen is a form of prayer that Christians can use at regular intervals to reflect back on what God has been teaching them. In light of Matt’s message last Sunday about the lie that we can’t be vulnerable, try the following steps for this week’s examen prayer:

1. **Slow down**, become aware of God’s presence, and invite the Holy Spirit to fill your mind.
2. **Review the last week**, asking yourself where you have been tempted to believe the lie that you can’t be vulnerable.
3. **Ask God if there are things you need to repent of**, and places where you need to reaffirm the truth of God’s grace and sufficiency.
4. **Choose one particular moment or lesson that stands out**, and pray about it.
5. **Close by giving thanks to God for graciously directing your attention.**

Lectio divina encourages us to read Scripture while expecting that God is going to say something particular to us while we read. This week, we'll be reading 1 John 1:5-10, our original scripture for this Sunday's message, together. Here is an example of what it might look like to read John's letter in this way.

- 1. Pray**, inviting the Holy Spirit to shine a light on the text through your own thoughts and experiences.
- 2. Read through 1 John 1:5-10 slowly**, pausing to note any words or images that seem to particularly catch your attention.
- 3. Take a few minutes in silence to listen to God** with the text fresh in your mind.
- 4. Read through 1 John 1:5-10 a second time**, slowly, and as you do, ask yourself where you see God's truth at work in this passage.
- 5. Spend a few minutes praying** that God would give you wisdom and insight about the words or images that have stuck with you.

Intercessory Prayer

Christian churches facing the plague in the 14th century often began their prayers with a request: "Jesus of Nazareth, look down on us." It was a reminder that Jesus had lived a human life and understood the strain of illness. At the same time, it reminded them that Jesus was seated at God's right hand, able and willing to intercede on their behalf. In the same way, we want to pray for Jesus' intercession today. Let these words serve as prompts to you as you pray for our church, city, country, and world. Feel free to add your own words to the end of the prompts if you would like.

Jesus of Nazareth, look down on our church and give us peace, courage, and understanding about how to care for one another and our neighbors . . .

Jesus of Nazareth, look down on our city and give strength to our health care workers and protection to the most vulnerable . . .

Jesus of Nazareth, look down on our country and give humility to our leaders and wisdom to our people . . .

Jesus of Nazareth, look down on our world and give healing to the sick and freedom to those who feel trapped . . .

Commit to Action

As we near the end of the liturgy, here are a few prompts for action.

- *Continue to live wisely and to heed advice from health professionals even as we live with hope, asking God to rid of us fear and panic.*
- *Think through how you can responsibly and generously bless someone in our church, particularly someone who might be alone, struggling with fear, or vulnerable to sickness.*
- *Neighbor well! Reach out to your physical neighbors by e-mail, text, letter drop off, or in-person with responsible distance and ask if you can serve them in any way and continue or establish deeper relationship with the ones Jesus commanded us to love.*
- *As you likely know, folks over 60 are the most vulnerable to COVID-19. Please call people you know in your life in this category to offer hope, to pray, to bring peace to folks who might be uncertain and unafraid.*

Closing Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, and give us hearts free from falseness and captive to grace. Give us confidence in love and courage in obedience. Give us more of you, that we might love as you love. Amen.

Psalm 29 ends with “The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.” This week, experience the peace of the Lord in a time of anxiety and give it away generously.

Note: For the foreseeable future, we will be publishing home liturgies regardless of the status of our Sunday gatherings. If you would like to offer suggestions, have original contributions (songs, poems, prayers) or would like to be part of crafting these liturgies in other ways, please e-mail patrick@elmcityvineyard.org. This week, ECV will share more ways for us to be together - to be the Church - in this time.



Elm City Vineyard Church
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