

SEEKERS CHURCH
A Church of the Saviour Community
Easter 2020
Witnesses to Hope

GATHERING

ENTRANCE

REFLECTION

The Christian faith is one that does not pretend things aren't bad. This is a faith that does not offer platitudes to those who lost children this week to suicide or a tornado. This is not a faith that produces optimism. It is a faith that produces a defiant hope that God is still writing the story and that despite darkness a light shines and that God can redeem our crap and that beauty matters and that despite every disappointing thing we have ever done or that we have ever endured, that there is no hell from which resurrection is impossible.

Nadia Bolz-Weber,
"Sermon on Why Hope and Vapid Optimism Are Not The Same Thing," May 28, 2013
at <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/nadiabolzweber/2013/05/sermon-on-why-hope-and-vapid-optimism-are-not-the-same-thing/>

CANDLE LIGHTING

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: The Holy One calls us to celebrate and rejoice,
for Christ has lived and died and lives again today.

People: We come carrying memories
of yesterday's loss and fear.

Leader: The Spirit calls us to defiant hope
that there is no hell
from which resurrection is impossible.

People: We come to be witnesses
to the hope that is within us.

Leader: Today, we are witnesses to hope,
for Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen, indeed! Alleluia!

OPENING PRAYER

HYMN

SILENCE

PRAYERS

CONFESSION

Leader: Holy One, we long to be witnesses to hope.

People: Sometimes all we see is death, despair, and darkness.

Leader: We know that you are still writing the story of our lives.

People: Sometimes we want to control that story
and we get frustrated, depressed, and angry.

Leader: We confess that we fail to be witnesses to hope.

All: Forgive us, Holy One, when we are unable to hope.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

ASSURANCE

Leader: Despite the darkness a light shines.
There is no hell from which resurrection is impossible.
Christ is risen!!

All: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia! Amen.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAISE

INTERCESSION AND PETITION

COMMITMENT

All: O Holy One, we come today
to claim our relationship with you.
We pray for the commitment to grow together,
sharing the gifts you give us with others
here and in the wider world.

Forgive us for the hurt we have inflicted,
and help us forgive those who have hurt us.

Give us strength and discipline
to nurture our relationship with you;
to care for every part of your creation;
to foster justice and be in solidarity with those in need;
to work to end all war, and violence, and discord;
and to respond joyfully when you call,
freely giving our selves as you have shown the way.

We open our hearts to you and your creation
in the name of Jesus, who is the Christ. Amen.

HYMN

THE WORD

SCRIPTURE

SERMON

SILENT REFLECTION

OFFERING

COMMUNION

PREPARATION

Leader 1: This is the table of the heavenly feast,
the joyful celebration of the people of God.

Leader 2: We gather now as one body, joined around the table.
Here we celebrate God's presence among us,
united in Christ's spirit, broken and whole all at once.

All: Nourished and hungry, loved and loving,
sinner and forgiven, we make one circle
of knowing, believing, rejoicing, being,
as God lights and rests among us.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Leader 1: Persistent Midwife of Hope and Resurrection,
we thank you for your
witnesses to hope throughout the ages,
who continue to remind us
that your love endures forever.

People: We give you thanks for Jesus,
a faithful and profound witness to hope
through his life, death, and resurrection.

Leader 2: We give you thanks for your Holy Spirit,
whose persistent witness invites us
to be reborn into a living hope.

All: We give you thanks for your Holy Church,
where we learn, fail, and try again
to be your witnesses to hope.

BLESSING THE ELEMENTS

Leader 1: Christ invites everyone to eat the bread of life,
to drink the cup of the new covenant.

Leader 2: Jesus said, I am the bread of life.
You who come to me shall never hunger;
you who believe in me shall never thirst.

Leader 1: On the night he gave himself up, Jesus took bread,
and after giving thanks to God, broke it and said,
This is my body,
broken for the healing of the world.
Whenever you eat it, do so remembering me.

Leader 2: After supper, Jesus took the cup and said,
This is the cup of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for all.
Whenever you drink it, do so remembering me.

All: O Holy One, send down your Spirit
that these gifts of grain and grape,
and work of human hands
may be for us the body and blood of Christ.
Unite us with Christ forever
and bring us with the whole creation
to your eternal realm.

SHARE THE ELEMENTS

Please use what you have at home as you eat the bread and drink from the cup today.
If you do not have grape juice, use whatever is convenient.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND DEDICATION

All: God of abundance and mercy,
we give joyful thanks
for your eternal love and healing presence
in our celebration of bread and cup.
Bless this Body of Christ
that we may attend faithfully
to our call to be your servants,
with each other and throughout the world. Amen.

SHARED REFLECTIONS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

HYMN

BENEDICTION

Leader: And now, with good news of the empty tomb rising up within us,
we are called to witness to the hope
that leads us into resurrection.

Know that we are connected
through the Universal Body of Christ
as we reach out to offer healing presence
to this fearful, suffering world.
Christ is risen!

All: Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.