



**An Ecumenical Service of Remembrance and
Witness
For those who have died from COVID-19
Wednesday October 28, 2020
7:00 PM
Livestreamed from the United Parish of Upton**

48 My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people.

49 My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite,

50 until the Lord from heaven looks down and sees. . . .

55 I called on your name, O Lord, from the depths of the pit;

57 You came near when I called on you; you said, 'Do not fear!' . . .

[Lamentations 3:48-50, 55, 57]]

Musical Prelude

Gathering (Mother Judith)

You are no longer strangers and sojourners, but citizens together with the saints and members of the household of God. [Ephesians 2:19]

Bidding Prayer (Mother Judith)

Eternal God, we praise you for the great company of all those who have finished their course in faith and now rest from their labor. We praise you for those dear to us whom we name in our hearts before you. [Pause] To all of these, grant your peace. Let perpetual light shine upon them; and help us so to believe where we have not seen, that your presence may lead us through our years, and bring us at last with them into the joy of your home not made with hands but eternal in the heavens; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Service of Light (Rev. Lourey)

Marty Haugen

The Candles in the sanctuary are lit while these words are sung.

Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.

Stay with us now, for it is evening, and the day is almost over.

Let your light scatter the darkness, and shine within your people here.

*Joyous light of heav'nly glory, loving glow of God's own face,
you who sing creation's story, shine on ev'ry land and race.
Now as evening falls around us, we shall raise our songs to you.
God of daybreak, God of shadows, come and light our hearts anew.*

*In the stars that grace the darkness, in the blazing sun of dawn,
in the light of peace and wisdom, we can hear your quiet song.
Love that fills the night with wonder, love that warms the weary soul,
Love that bursts all chains asunder, set us free and make us whole.*

*You who make the heaven's splendor, ev'ry dancing star of night,
Make us shine with gentle justice, let us each reflect your light.
Mighty God of all creation, gentle Christ who lights our way,
Loving Spirit of salvation, lead us on to endless day.*

Psalm 141

musical setting by Marty Haugen

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you, / the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

O God, I call to you, come to me now / O hear my voice when I cry to you.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you, / the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

Keep watch with me, God; deep in my heart / may the light of love be burning bright.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you, / the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

All praise to the God of all, Creator of life; / all praise be to Christ and the Spirit of love.

Let my prayer rise up like incense before you, / the lifting up of my hands as an offering to you.

The Lessons

A Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (40:1–8) (Pastor Dan)

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her

that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,

that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all the people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."
A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

Canticle: A Song of Lamentation [1:1, 4, 12; 2:19; 3:17-26; 5:21]

¹How lonely sits the city that once was full of people!

How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations!

She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal. . . .

⁴ The roads to Zion mourn, for no one comes to the festivals;

all her gates are desolate, her priests groan; her young girls grieve, and her lot is bitter. .

¹² Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow.,,

¹⁹ Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches!

Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord!

Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children,

who faint for hunger at the head of every street. . . .

¹⁷ My soul is bereft of peace; I have forgotten what happiness is;

¹⁸ so I say, 'Gone is my glory, and all that I had hoped for from the Lord.'

¹⁹ The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! . . .

²⁰ My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.

²¹ But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

²² The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;

²³ they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

²⁴ 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.'

²⁵ The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

²⁶ It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. . . .

²¹ Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored; renew our days as of old—

Psalm 23 (All)

The Lord is my shepherd; / I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: / he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, / I will fear no evil:

for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of those who trouble me, /

thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: /

and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. (KJV)

A Reading from the Gospel of John [14:1–4, 18–19, 25–27] (Rev. Lourey)

[Jesus said,] "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going. I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid."

The Remembrance (Rev. Steve)

Naming *The life and death of the deceased may be gathered up in the reading of a memorial or appropriate statement, or in other ways, by the pastor or others.*

One of the losses of this time is our ability to name, and thereby make real to us, all the people whose lives have been lost because of COVID-19. This has come about because our fears about these perishable bodies make it hard to share information about how we suffer with each other—hard, because suffering scares us, disease makes us anxious, death is something we tend to want to stay far away from. But tonight we draw near to grieve differently. Tonight, we do not grieve as those who have no hope, but as those who believe that what is perishable in these bodies of ours must give way to that which is imperishable. Or, as Thornton Wilder puts it, we are all just waiting for the eternal in us to come out clear. So now we name those we know, to honor their fight to remain in this life, and we offer our respect to the many whose names we do not, and will not, know.

Witness *Pastor, family, friends, and members of the congregation may briefly voice their thankfulness to God for the grace they have received in the life of the deceased and their Christian faith and joy.*

We honor Renee Abrams

We honor Ruth Doyle

We honor the fifteen souls who passed at Golden Pond

We honor...

We offer respect to the 1,158 people who have died of COVID-19 in Worcester County.

We offer our respect to the 2,252 people who have died in Middlesex County.

We offer respect to all the 9,881 people who have died in the Commonwealth of MA.

We offer our respect to the 226,000 people who have died in these United States.

We offer our respect to the 1,160,995 human beings who have died around the world.

Reading Covid Poem

- Laura Kelley Fanucci

When this is over, / may we never again / take for granted

A handshake with a stranger / full shelves at the store / conversations with neighbors

a crowded theatre / Friday night out / the taste of communion / a routine checkup

the school rush each morning / coffee with a friend / the stadium roaring / each deep breath

a boring Tuesday / Life itself.

When this ends, / may we find / that we have become / more like the people / we wanted to be

we were called to be / we hoped to be / and may we stay / that way—better / for each other

because of the worst.

Musical Meditation

God of mercy, hold us in love. / Help us, comfort us, all of our days.

Marty Haugen

Keep us, hold us, gracious God.

The Prayers

Rev. Steve: Eternal God, your mercy is without end, and your steadfast love never ceases: Accept our prayers for all you have died from complications of the coronavirus and receive them into the land of light and joy, into the company of your saints; for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

A Litany: Out of the Depths We Cry Out to You in the Face of the Coronavirus

Mother Judith: Creator God of the universe, God of a thousand names and faces, divine source of health and wholeness, whose compassion embraces the entire community of Earth: behold your fearful people all over the world as we confront the coronavirus.

Out of the depths we cry to you, O God.

Holy God, hear our voices. Let your ear be attentive to our cries as we pray for all who may be affected by the virus:

Pastor Dan: For all health caregivers – nurses, physicians, aides, EMTs, paramedics, technicians and therapists; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Mother Judith: For hospital and nursing home medical staff, assistants, and housekeepers who have close contact with patients and for the patients themselves; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Rev. Steve: For all who travel for their daily work over land and sea and through the air—flight attendants, pilots, ship captains and sailors, bus drivers, passengers and long distance truck drivers; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Mother Judith: For all who handle money—bankers, supermarket, village market and convenience store cashiers; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Pastor Dan: For all who pump gas and serve customers at Interstate rest areas; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Pastor Dan: For restaurant workers—bartenders, coffee shop baristas, cooks, servers, chefs, and dishwashers; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Rev. Steve: For hospitality workers—hotel and motel receptionists, servers and housekeepers; out of the depths, O God– **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Mother Judith: For daycare center staff who cuddle and comfort children and for all children; out of the depths, O God— **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Pastor Dan: For teachers and professors, coaches and cafeteria workers at schools and universities across the world and students everywhere; out of the depths, O God— **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Rev. Steve: For the homeless huddling for warmth over steam grates and under urban bridges; out of the depths, O God— **We cry to you. Protect them.**

Rev. Steve: For the poor, the lonely, the vulnerable, migrants, and the isolated elderly who have no protectors; out of the depths, O God— **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Mother Judith: For all who eat the bread of life, drink from the common cup and pass the sign of peace; out of the depths— **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Pastor Dan: For all who have tested positive, all who are waiting for test results, and all who are quarantined; out of the depths— **We cry out to you. Protect them.**

Mother Judith: For all who have died of the coronavirus, now free from pain and suffering. May the God of hope carry them all the way home, and comfort their families and friends; out of the depths—**We cry out to you. Protect them.**

*God of mercy, hold us in love. / Help us, comfort us, all of our days.
Keep us, hold us, gracious God.*

Rev. Steve: Loving God, hasten the day when the virus will have run its course; quicken scientists to develop medications and vaccines; call out the best instincts of your people—love, neighborliness, compassion, and a sense of caring for every member of your beloved community on Earth. We pray out of the depths to you, O God of hope. **Amen.**

Mother Judith: God of us all, your love never ends. We pray to you for one another in our need, and for all, anywhere, who mourn with us this day. To those who doubt, give light; to those who are weak, strength; to all who have sinned, mercy; to all who sorrow, your peace. Keep true in us the love with which we hold one another. In all our ways we trust you. And to you, with your Church on earth and in heaven, we offer honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

Pastor Dan: Now may the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, according to the riches of God's glory, grant you to be strengthened through God's Spirit in your

inner being, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. **Amen.**

Mother Judith: Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

*God of mercy, hold us in love. / Help us, comfort us, all of our days.
Keep us, hold us, gracious God.*

Closing Prayer

Rev Lourey: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ, and asleep we may rest in peace.

Lord, you now have set your servant free * to go in peace as you have promised;
For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, * whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations, * and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Blessing:

Rev Lourey: In the name of Our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier:

When you come / to the place between.

When you have left / what you held / most dear.

When you are traveling / toward the life / you know not.

When you arrive / at the hardest ground.

May it become / for you / a place to rest.

May it become / for you / a place to dream.

*May the pain / that has pressed itself / into you
give way / to vision / to knowing.*

May the morning / make of it / an altar, / a path, / a place to begin/ again.

Blessing for the Place Between

*Jan Richardson, *The Cure for Sorrow**

Dismissal

Rev. Steve:

Let us know peace.

For as long as the moon shall rise,

For as long as the rivers shall flow,

For as long as the sun shall shine,

For as long as the grass shall grow,

Let us know peace.

- A Cheyenne Prayer

Mother Judith: Let us go forth to be Christ's hands and heart in the world. **Thanks be to God.**

Musical Meditation