

Service of Lament & Healing

IN HONOR OF NEX BENEDICT



Hosted by the Circles of Color & St. Peter's, Seattle

MARCH 12, 2024

6:30PM



Ethnic Ministries Circles of Color

St. Peter's
 Episcopal
Parish

Beloved,

We gather tonight in communal lament and anguish at the loss of life and the senseless violence and harmful rhetoric impacting the LGBTQIA2S+ community across the nation. We gather in the wake of the death of Nex Benedict, a beloved child of God who carried the burden of difference. We gather with heavy hearts, wondering about the safety of the children in our families, our communities, our nation, and across the globe. We gather tonight with the longing to protect our trans- and non-binary siblings, to see our children and youth grow up in a world where being different doesn't lead to harm or death.

For those gathered here who identify as LGBTQ, as 2-Spirit or non-binary – we hope the space provided in this liturgy gives you a channel for all you carry with you. You are seen, you are loved, and you carry an innate dignity that no one can take away from you. This liturgy is intended to be a container for holy lament and sacred healing.

This liturgy was compiled by queer folk for queer folk. For those gathered here who identify as allies, you might find yourselves experiencing discomfort during parts of this liturgy. We invite you to hold that discomfort with curiosity, to stay with it for a while and to bear witness to the collective pain represented here. We hope that the thoughts and prayers you offer here tonight are catalysts to acts of solidarity in the world in which we live and the systems that govern our lives.

During the service, we will have intentional moments of silence (begun and ended by the ringing of a bell). You are invited to assume the posture that feels most comfortable, that best expresses what you bring and that for which you long. There will be time for expressing these prayers and longings through ritual action at various stations in the room. And there will be an opportunity for healing prayer with anointing and laying on of hands. You're invited to engage in these practices at the level of your own comfort.

Thank you for the gift of your presence and prayers this evening. The church will remain open for an additional hour after the service for you to continue to pray, reflect, and engage in the ritual stations. Please respect others' need for quiet and continued prayer. When you're ready, depart in silence.

In the peace of Christ,

Nat+
Priest-in-Charge
St. Peter's Episcopal Parish, Seattle

WELCOME | THE REV. NAT JOHNSON

Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that we are on the unceded ancestral lands of the Duwamish people. The Duwamish people are still here, and with gratitude we pay our respects to them as they continue to honor and bring to light their ancient heritage.

GATHERING SONG | GO IN PEACE

Sam Baker

Go in peace, Go in kind-ness, Go in love, Go in faith, Leave the
day, the day be-hind us, Day is done, Go in grace, Let us
go in-to the dark Not a-fraid, not a-lone, Let us hope by some good
plea-sure, Safe-ly to ar-rive at home. Let us
hope by some good plea-sure Safe-ly to ar-rive at home.

“CALL TO WORSHIP FOR THE WEARY AND WARY”

ADAPTED FROM LITURGIES FROM BELOW: PRAYING WITH PEOPLE AT THE END OF THE WORLD BY CLAUDIO CARVALHAES

Presider Jesus said, ‘Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads’ (Matthew 11:28).
So we come, with all our weariness and wariness.
Our weariness with injustice,
Our weariness with fake news,

People Our weariness with a world that seems determined to be hostile rather than welcoming.

Presider Our wariness of what it might mean to truly live out our call,

People our wariness of how vulnerable our desire for openness might make us, our wariness of how safe it is to trust where trust has so often been misplaced.

Presider Come, and find not just rest for your souls but channels for your rage.

OPENING COLLECT

FROM BLACK LITURGIES: PRAYERS, POEMS, AND MEDITATIONS FOR STAYING HUMAN BY COLE ARTHUR RILEY

Presider Let us pray.
Silence is kept. Then the Presider prays.

God who burns within, We have buried our anger in commands that you never gave it. We’ve judged it as evil, willfully ignoring that our rage refracts a Maker who demonstrated an emotional anger in the prophets and an embodied anger on the day you overturned tables of injustice. We have exalted being nice and calm as a pinnacle of character, repressing that which stirs our souls so deeply we must shout. So many have wielded language of civility against the oppressed in attempts to mitigate their own discomfort and guilt. For, to face the depths of their anger is to be implicated in the systems and situations that have birthed it. Release us from the kind of niceness that only serves and protects the oppressor. And help us to also be gentle with the trauma that may have alienated us from the truth of what we feel. Awaken our collective rage in defense of dignity in the world. Provide safe friends to hear and hone the private emotions that have been silenced for so long. Together, we will no longer abandon ourselves. Make us people of holy fury. **Amen.**

SACRED SILENCE

We sit or kneel in sacred silence, begun and ended by the ringing of a bell. During this time, you're invited to pray, to reflect on the lives lost due to violent hatred, to welcome the rage, grief, or fear you bring with you this night, knowing our God does not shy away from the anger and lament that we feel but holds us in steady and faithful arms.

THE FIRST READING | LAMENTATIONS 3:46-66

⁴⁶ All our enemies

have opened their mouths against us;

⁴⁷ panic and pitfall have come upon us,
devastation and destruction.

⁴⁸ My eyes flow with rivers of tears
because of the destruction of my people.^[a]

⁴⁹ My eyes will flow without ceasing,
without respite,

⁵⁰ until the Lord from heaven
looks down and sees.

⁵¹ My eyes cause me grief
at the fate of all the young women in my city.

⁵² Those who were my enemies without cause
have hunted me like a bird;

⁵³ they flung me alive into a pit
and hurled stones on me;

⁵⁴ water closed over my head;
I said, "I am lost."

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

⁵⁶ you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"

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

⁵⁸ You have taken up my cause, O Lord;
you have redeemed my life.

⁵⁹You have seen the wrong done to me, O Lord;
judge my cause.

⁶⁰You have seen all their malice,
all their plots against me.

⁶¹You have heard their taunts, O Lord,
all their plots against me.

⁶²The whispers and murmurs of my assailants
are against me all day long.

⁶³Whether they sit or rise—see,
I am the object of their taunt songs.

⁶⁴Pay them back for their deeds, O Lord,
according to the work of their hands!

⁶⁵Give them anguish of heart;
your curse be on them!

⁶⁶Pursue them in anger and destroy them
from under the Lord's heavens.

SONG OF LAMENT | O LORD HEAR MY PRAYER

Ostinato Chorale

O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call an - swer me. O Lord, hear my prayer, O
Lord, hear my prayer. Come and lis - ten to me. O

Text: Psalm 102; Taizé Community, 1982
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
© 1982, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

PSALM 10:1, 12-19

Said responsively.

Why do you stand so far off, O Lord,
and hide yourself in time of trouble?

**Rise up, O Lord;
Lift up your hand, O God;
do not forget the afflicted.**

Why should the wicked revile God?
Why should they say in their heart, "You do not care?"

**Surely, you behold trouble and misery;
you see it and take it into your own hand.**

The helpless commit themselves to you,
for you are the helper of orphans.

**Break the power of the wicked and evil;
search out their wickedness until you find none.**

The Lord is King for ever and ever;
the ungodly shall perish from his land.

**The Lord will hear the desire of the humble;
you will strengthen their heart and your ears shall hear.**

To give justice to the orphans and oppressed,
so that mere mortals may strike terror no more.

COLLECT

Leader Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

SACRED SILENCE

We share in sacred silence, begun and ended by the ringing of a bell.

THE SECOND READING | ISAIAH 41:1, 10-13

¹Listen to me in silence, O coastlands;
let the peoples renew their strength;
let them approach, then let them speak;
let us together draw near for judgment.

¹⁰do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you; I will help you;
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

¹¹All who are incensed against you
shall be ashamed and disgraced;
those who strive against you
shall be as nothing and shall perish.

¹²You shall seek those who contend with you,
but you shall not find them;
those who war against you
shall be as nothing at all.

¹³For I, the Lord your God,
hold your right hand;
it is I who say to you, "Do not fear,
I will help you."

SONG OF PRAYER | TAKE, O TAKE ME

Ostinato Refrain

Take, O take me as I am; sum - mon out what I shall

be; set your seal up-on my heart and live in me.

Text: John L. Bell, b.1949
Tune: John L. Bell, b.1949
© 1995, Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

PRAYERS OF LAMENT

ADAPTED FROM "FACING PAIN: A SERVICE OF LAMENT," COMMON WORSHIP, CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Leader Holy One, the weight of grief bears heavily upon us, but it is a load we need not bear alone. Let us offer our burden to Jesus, Lord of life and of death, of the present and of the future.

We bring before you, Lord, our confusion in the face of shock, our despair in the face of tragedy, our helplessness in the face of death.

People **Lift from us our burden, and in your power, renew us.**

Leader We bring before you, Lord, the tears of sorrow, the cries for help, the vulnerability of pain.

People **Lift from us our burden, and in your power, renew us.**

Leader We bring before you, Lord, our sense of frustration, our feeling of powerlessness, our fears for the future.

People **Lift from us our burden, and in your power, renew us.**

Leader We bring before you, Lord, our frustrated hopes, our unfulfilled desires, our unfettered sadness.

People **Lift from us our burden, and in your power, renew us.**

Leader God of the desolate and despairing, your Son Jesus Christ was forced to carry the instrument of his own death — the cross that became for us the source of life and healing. Transform us in our suffering that in the pain we bear you might be for us a fount of life and a spring of hope; though him who died for us yet is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

SONG OF PRAYER | WHAT WONDEROUS LOVE IS THIS

ANN STRICKLAND

What won-drous love is this? What won-drous love is this?

3
What won-drous love is this? — O my soul. O my soul.

THE HOLY GOSPEL | MARK 8:31-9:1

³¹ Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again. ³² He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. ³³ But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”

³⁴ He called the crowd with his disciples and said to them, “If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ³⁵ For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. ³⁶ For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? ³⁷ Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? ³⁸ Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” ^{9:1} And he said to them, “Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power.”

HOMILY | THE REV. NAT JOHNSON

SACRED SILENCE

We share in sacred silence, begun and ended by the ringing of a bell.

LIGHTING OF THE CANDLES

ADAPTED FROM “FACING PAIN: A SERVICE OF LAMENT,” COMMON WORSHIP, CHURCH OF ENGLAND

We rise in body or spirit as we share the light of Christ with one another.

Presider We light our candles to remind us that when Jesus was raised from the dead, God defeated the power of death and caused Christ’s light to shine amidst the shadows of this world.

SONG OF ILLUMINATION | HAVE YOU SEEN JESUS, MY LORD

John Fischer

C E7 F A \flat C G7

Have you seen Je - sus, my Lord? — He's here in plain

C E7 F A \flat C G7 C

view. Take a look, o - pen your eyes; — He'll show it to you.

Am Em F G7

1. Have you ev - er looked at the sun - set With the sky mel - low - in'
 2. Have you ev - er stood at the o - cean With the white foam at your
 3. Have you ev - er looked at the cross With a man hang - in' in
 4. Have you ev - er stood in the fam - ily With the Lord there in your

C Am Em

red, And the clouds sus - pend - ed like feath - ers? Then |
 feet, Felt the end - less thun - der - in' mo - tion? Then |
 pain, And the look of love in His e yes? Then |
 midst; Seen the face of Christ on each o - ther? Then |

F Fm C G7 C

say _____ you've seen Je - sus, my Lord.
 say _____ you've seen Je - sus, my Lord.
 say _____ you've seen Je - sus, my Lord.
 say _____ you've seen Je - sus, my Lord.

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

ADAPTED FROM THE REV. M JADE KAISER, ENFLESHED

To the One who is Love, we bring the prayers of our communities. Where we share in joy or concern, let us respond together, “God, hear our prayers.”

We pray for all the queer, trans, and intersex children and youth across the globe. For the ones who are struggling with feelings of isolation and shame. For those who have no safe place or people to retreat to. For those who must be teachers to the adults in their lives. For those who are unsafe in their communities. For those who have tasted death because of their difference, especially Nex Benedict.

God, hear our prayers.

We pray for our elders whose labor we are indebted to. For the ones who never tasted the freedom they fought for. For the ones who were forced to the fringes of their own movements. For the allies who suffered beside us, casting their lot with us in true solidarity. For the ones forgotten and betrayed.

God, hear our prayers.

We pray for all those who hunger for justice and liberation today. For the ones who lay down their lives for their friends. For the ones who tell the truth. For the ones who take risks, who dream, who feed and pray, who fight for bread and roses, both. For the ones who are eager to learn and grow and offer their gifts to the work of enfleshing your dreams.

God, hear our prayers.

We pray for all who are suffering in the church and the world at the hands of white supremacy. For those imprisoned by the state. For those whose land has been taken. For the earth that groans beneath us. For those without food or housing. For those who have yet to repent.

God, hear our prayers.

For your presence within and around us, in our highs and lows, our hope and our despair, God, we give you thanks. Hear our prayers and deepen our willingness to show up with and for one another, sharing in each other’s burdens and working for one another’s protection and care.

Amen.

SONG OF HEALING | ALL SHALL BE WELL

ANN STRICKLAND



A READING FOR HOPE AND HEALING: REVELATION 21:1-5; 22:1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home^[a] of God is among mortals.

He will dwell^[b] with them;

they will be his peoples,^[c]

and God himself will be with them and be their God;^[d]

⁴he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for^[e] the first things have passed away.”

⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.”

Then the angel^[a] showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life^[b] with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; ⁴they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

HEALING PRAYER

FROM "A CELEBRATION OF HEALING AND WHOLENESS," COMMON WORSHIP, CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Leader Be with us, Spirit of God;
People nothing can separate us from your love.
Leader Breathe on us, breath of God;
People fill us with your saving power.
Leader Speak in us, wisdom of God;
People bring strength, healing and peace.
Leader The Lord is here.
People God's Spirit is with us.

RITUAL AND PRAYER STATIONS

During this time, you are invited to pray or reflect in a posture most comfortable for you. There are also stations around the room at which you can express your fears, longings, and prayers for healing through ritual, or by receiving anointing and laying on of hands. Detailed instructions or suggestions are found at each station. A single ring of the bell will signal one more minute of station time and a double ring will signal the conclusion of this time.

STATION 1: HEALING PRAYER WITH ANOINTING

Near the altar steps on the pulpit side. Ministers are available to pray with and for you and provide anointing with laying on of hands, if desired.

STATION 2: BODY PRAYER

Prayer cards are located in the foyer.

STATION 3: BURIAL DEVOTIONS

To honor the life of Nex Benedict and all other transgender, gender-non-conforming, and queer youth who have died, carnations are available to lay on the low altar or around the icon.

STATION 4: PRAYING THROUGH ICONS

At the high altar. Candles are available to light and assist you in praying through the Icons.

STATION 5: REST

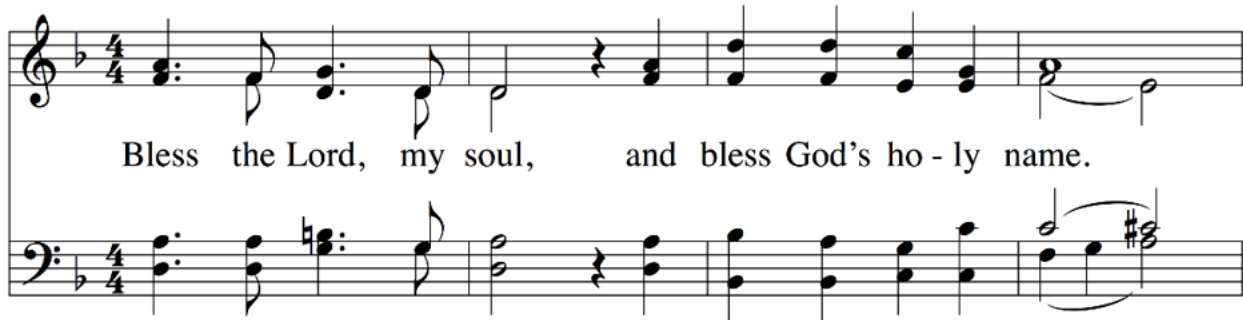
At the front, piano side of the church.

STATION 6: PRAYING IN COLOR

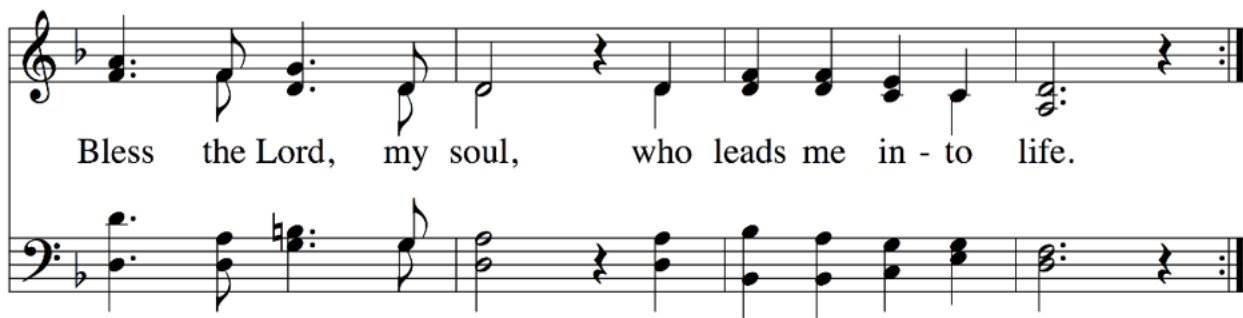
In the foyer. Blank paper or templates are available for your doodle prayers.

SONG OF BLESSING | BLESS THE LORD, MY SOUL

Ostinato Refrain



Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's ho - ly name.



Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me in - to life.

Text: Psalm 103; Taizé Community
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994
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BENEDICTION

FROM BLACK LITURGIES: PRAYERS, POEMS, AND MEDITATIONS FOR STAYING HUMAN BY COLE ARTHUR RILEY

Presider May the God who made all things and holds together all things remind you of your making. May you rest in the immanence of your own worth, knowing you have nothing to prove and everything to love. Constant as the moon, which is tethered to us by unseen forces, which is suspended above us in the dark and the light, let our dignity remain, be it visible or invisible to those below. And may we remember, the same dignity that holds us, so too holds together every person and piece of the cosmos at once and evermore. Go, in honor, to claim all that you are worthy of.

People May it be so.
