

## Feminist Liturgy for May 6, 2018

### Opening Words

I want to begin by gratefully acknowledging that we are living, working, and worshipping on Treaty 6 territory, and that we respect the histories, languages, and cultures of First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant communities.

I'd also like to thank everyone who is joining us live on Facebook! I'm grateful for your presence and I hope you'll enjoy this liturgy which has been prepared to fill a large void in the hearts of many of us who are people of faith or philosophy but find inadequate expression within traditional churches. We are women, people of color, sexual minorities, theists and nontheists, as well as anyone who has found traditional liturgy painful and sometimes even damaging to our sense of self and our deeply held faith. At the same time, I want to welcome those who may not describe themselves as having a faith. As a person who herself inhabits that strange territory between what the world calls "faith" and "no faith", I want to recognize the people who may be joining us not out of spiritual conviction but out of solidarity. I'm so glad you're here.

Just one last quick note before we start. Though I do use feminine language about 90% of the time, this is not to assert that God is female. I believe, like many others, that any God that "exists" is likely not gendered. The reason I use feminine language is simply to aid in a shift that is not yet possible for some of us if we skip right to gender neutral language. For many of us, gender neutral language, while accurate, also still has the power to be imagined exclusively as male simply through cultural conditioning (think of words such as doctor, officer, etc.) Though I wholeheartedly celebrate gender neutral services, my goal here is to create a space in which we can gain spiritual insight by openly stripping God of the tyranny of androcentrism. Only then, I believe, can we make our way toward meaningful gender-neutral worship. That said, use whatever words you like! This service is for all of us.

**Officiant:** Merciful God,

you have prepared for us

riches beyond imagination.

Pour into our hearts such love for each other,

that we, may obtain your promises,

which exceed all that we can desire;

through our brother Jesus Christ,

who is alive and lives with you and Sophia,

one God, now and for ever.

### ***The Invitatory***

### **Venite**

(Adapted from Psalm 95:1-7)

Come, let us sing to our Mother;

let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before her presence with thanksgiving

and raise a loud shout to her with psalms.

**All:** Our Mother is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us worship.

For our Mother is a great God,

her love is present through all creation.

In her hand are the caverns of the earth,

and the heights of the hills are hers also.

The sea is hers for she made it,

and her hands have moulded the dry land.

**All:** Our Mother is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us worship.

Come, let us pray and give thanks,

and be joyful before our Mother.

For she is our God,

and we are the people of her pasture and the

sheep of her hand.

Oh, that today you would hearken to her voice!

**All:** Our Mother is full of compassion and mercy: O come, let us worship.

Glory to the Mother, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. Amen. Alleluia!

### ***First Reading***

**Officiant:** The first reading is from Acts 10:44-48.

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.

Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

**Officiant:** Here ends the reading.

### **Psalm 98**

God has made known her salvation.

Sing to God a new song, for she has done marvellous things.

With her right hand and her holy arm has she won for herself the victory.

God has made known her victory; her righteousness has she openly shown in the sight of the nations.

She remembers her mercy and faithfulness to the house of Israel, and all the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

Shout with joy to the God, all you lands; lift up your voice, rejoice, and sing.

Sing to God with the harp, with the harp and the voice of song.

With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy before God.

Let the sea make a noise and all that is in it, the lands and those who dwell therein.

Let the rivers clap their hands, and let the hills ring out with joy before God, when she comes to judge the earth.

In righteousness shall she judge the world and the peoples with equity.

## **Second Reading**

### **A Reading from the First Letter of John**

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is

the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

1 JOHN 5:1-6

### **The Proclamation of the Word**

**Officiant:** The Holy Gospel of our Brother Jesus, According to John

Jesus said, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

JOHN 15:9-17

### ***Reflection and Sharing***

(The gathered share a moment of silence and then reflection on today's readings.)

## ***Affirmation of Faith***

### **Adaptation of the Apostles' Creed**

I believe in Love,

the Mother of all people,

Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in the goodness of Jesus Christ, her Son, our Brother.

He was conceived by the power of Sophia

and born of Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated beside the Mother.

I believe in Sophia, the Holy Spirit,

the church gathered throughout the world,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

And life everlasting. Amen.

***Intercessions and Thanksgivings***

The gathered present their prayers of thanksgiving and need after which the people say...)

**All:** Mother, hear our prayer.

***The People's Prayer***

**Officiant:** Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray:

**All:** Our Mother who walks with us,

hallowed be thy name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our lack of compassion

as we forgive those who lack compassion toward us.

Save us from our own sin,

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

***Dismissal***

**Officiant:** Let us bless our Mother.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Officiant:** The grace of our brother, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the friendship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

**All:** Amen.