



# Dreams and Visions Vespers

## Opening Words

call and response

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.  
the light no darkness can overcome.  
Stay with us Lord, for it is evening,  
and the day is almost over.  
Let your light scatter the darkness  
and illumine your church.

## Centering

Teach breath patterns

Song: Be Still and Know That I am God

Meditation: connect to yourself  
connect to your fellow congregants in this holy space  
connect to your neighbors  
connect to the nation and the world

## Space Making

Voice: This is a holy space.

Voice: God is present here.

Voice: We light these candle as a reminder of God's presence among us,  
the light of the world.

Voice: The light shines and nothing can overcome it.

Voice: Though we are far from one another, we are together in this  
moment.

Voice: Wherever we are, God's light will be with us.

## Listening to the Community

What is your name and what are your pronouns?  
Where are you today?  
Where do you see God?  
twinkle to show support!

[hands held out] \_\_\_\_\_, we hear you.  
[hands held out] **Your story is heard.**

Responsive Verse:  
call and response:

Behold, now is the acceptable time;  
now is the day of salvation.  
Turn us again, O God of our salvation,  
that the light of your face may shine on us.  
May your justice shine like the sun;  
and may the poor be lifted up.

Song: "I Am Here in the Heart of God" Erin McGaughan, arr. Chanda Rule

## Thanksgiving for the Light

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

[continue with sung prayer for the light, ELW]

## Word

**Psalm 139**  
read responsively

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
**you discern my thoughts from far away.**

You search out my path and my lying down,  
**and are acquainted with all my ways.**  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
**O Lord, you know it completely.**  
You hem me in, behind and before,  
**and lay your hand upon me.**  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
**it is so high that I cannot attain it.**

Where can I go from your spirit?  
**Or where can I flee from your presence?**  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
**if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.**  
If I take the wings of the morning  
**and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,**  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
**and your right hand shall hold me fast.**  
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
**and the light around me become night',**  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
**the night is as bright as the day,**  
**for darkness is as light to you.**

For it was you who formed my inward parts;  
**you knit me together in my mother's womb.**  
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.  
Wonderful are your works;  
**that I know very well.**  
My frame was not hidden from you,  
**when I was being made in secret,**  
**intricately woven in the depths of the earth.**  
Your eyes beheld my unformed substance.  
In your book were written  
**all the days that were formed for me,**  
**when none of them as yet existed.**  
How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God!  
**How vast is the sum of them!**  
I try to count them—they are more than the sand;  
**I come to the end—I am still with you.**

The word of God for the People of God.  
**Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel Reading

John 9

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

## Reflection on the Reading

Led by \_\_\_\_\_

Response from Congregation  
[congregation shares their own reflections]

## Musical Meditation

Salem Mattaniah Kamalu Brown

Responsive Verse:

Jesus said, I am the light of the world.

**Whoever follow me will never walk in darkness.**

## Prayers

Response: **Lord Have Mercy**

**O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your**

**hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.**

### **Needs**

Does anyone need anything we can provide?

### **Offering**

You are invited to give some of what you have to support the work of the church in the world.

You can give at [www.dreamsandvisionsbaltimore.org](http://www.dreamsandvisionsbaltimore.org)

### **Announcements and Celebrations**

#### **Next Time**

How is this going? What else do we need for our spiritual lives and community connection? Let Emily know in the chat.

Who would like to write a prayer or offer a scripture reflection next Wednesday?

Next Vespers: Sunday, March 29 at 7pm

## **Blessing**

[everyone holds hands up]

Go forth into the world in peace;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted;  
support the weak;  
help the afflicted;  
honor everyone;  
love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,  
be amongst you and remain with you always.

# INTIMACY AND CONNECTION IN ONLINE WORSHIP IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

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## MOURN

- Many of us are spiritual leaders because we love creating ritual spaces of intimate connection, in person. Our job looks very different now.

## BE HUMAN

- Everything we would do in person, we need to find our way to online.
- Smiles, laughter, and waves are some of the most valuable experiences during this time. Leave space for people to joke, connect, and be silly with each other.
- We can share pieces of our home life, like hold our pets up to the screen, or turn the camera and show off the seedlings we just planted.

## ACKNOWLEDGE THE MOMENT

- This is an unprecedented and uncertain time. Our congregants will need us to name and frame what we're collectively experiencing.
- You don't have to understand the moment yourself to do this. Simply saying, "This is a scary and uncertain time, and we don't know what will happen. I'm here to listen to you. And we will be a community together, whatever unfolds," is enough.

## FOCUS WORSHIP ON EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

- Make a list of the other most pressing emotional needs that your congregation is experiencing. It might be isolation, anxiety, or trauma responses. Each community will be different. Base your worship practices on these emotional needs.
- For instance, if your congregation has lots of kids who are bored, give them a project to work on and show off at next week's worship service. Or if your congregation has many people who are highly anxious, include meditation practices and share ways they can continue to develop these practices at home.

## TELL STORIES

- Being seen and heard are two great needs that many will experience during this time, especially those who live alone.
- Leave room for people to communicate how they're feeling, and tell stories about their day.
- This could be a time to get to know one another better, and take our minds off the crisis. Ask each congregant to share what their most prized possession was when they were a kid, or who the most important person in their life was growing up. These stories can be connected to your scripture passage
- Help people feel heard by including a simple response to each story shared. At Dreams and Visions I say, "[Name], we hear you." And the congregation chimes in, "Your story is heard." Recently we've added a hand gesture, so the person

## USE YOUR VOICE, EXPRESSION, AND GESTURES

- Without physical touch, our voice and facial expressions become our primary tool of intimacy. Let your feelings and intentions come through.
- We can also set up our computers to show our shoulders and hands, that that we're able to use gestures to communicate.

## CREATE RITUAL SPACE

- Find ways to make a special space for worship in each person's home. You could ask them to create a little "chapel" at home." Or, just have them light a candle or set out a sacred object. Setting each candle in the frame of your screens is a wonderful way to feel connected and create beauty.
- Say a prayer together to create that holy space, setting it apart from our daily life of work. Our spaces have become multipurpose as many of us work from home, so even creating space mentally is helpful.

## KEEP IT SIMPLE, REPETITION IS GOOD

- This time will be a time of trauma. Traumatized minds and hearts need predictability and repetition.
- Saying the same Psalm or prayers each work will give people something to lean on. A mantra for when times are tough will work wonders.
- Our minds are scattered during this time of uncertainty. Less is more.
- Our people will likely need spiritual and emotional nourishment, not academic challenge. Work from your heart and not your head.

## KEEP TOUCHSTONES FROM IN-PERSON WORSHIP

- Returning to the idea that our congregants are experiencing trauma, familiar words and practices are soothing.



- Replicating your entire Sunday liturgy online is probably not helpful, but keeping the basic patten and some key components will be grounding. For instance, our congregation always sings a “centering song” at the beginning of worship, which I’ve retained in our online worship.

## NURTURE PARTICIPATION

- Do anything you can to get people involved. Watching a face on a screen loses our attention quickly, so find ways to engage.
- Simple call and response phrases drawn from scripture peppered throughout work well.
- Invite congregants to read readings, pray prayers, or offer reflections. You can do this in the moment or ahead.
- Simple call and response songs can work on zoom! Have one singer sing the “call” part and another singer “echo” back. Everyone else can be on mute, and sing with the “echo” singer. There are some wonderful songs to try on the [Music that Makes Community](#) website.
- Include announcements and celebrations as a part of worship. People will enjoy sharing their small victories or the day, or inviting people to participate in something they’re working on.
- Experiment with hand gestures that congregants can see on their screens. It might be “twinkle fingers” or different signals to show approval. Have fun with it! Laughter is needed.

## HOLD SPACE

- Online, it’s easy to rush from one moment to the next. Remember that we’re in worship mode, not business mode.
- Leave space for silence between moments of the liturgy.
- Take time to breath in and out, and allow people to hear you do doing so. Model contemplative presence and practice.
- If emotions emerge, hold space for them as you would in a physical space. Allow the gathered assembly to hold them, together.