

Creating Sanctuary

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CALL TO PRAYER

LEADER: We stand on holy ground and in our gathering we create sacred space.

ALL: Let us bless our God.

LEADER: Where two or three gather in God's name,

ALL: God is present with us.

(An opening song may be shared, such as "Gather Us In" by Marty Haugen, GIA Publications.)

REFLECTION ON SCRIPTURE

Let us listen to a reading from the Gospel of Luke (10:25-37)

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test Jesus and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?" He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." He replied to him. "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.

But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, "Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back." Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim? He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise." This is the Gospel of the Lord.

RESPONSE: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

(Time for quiet reflection)

REFLECTION ON THE PARABLE

We have always listened to the story with the ears of the Samaritan, thinking of ourselves helping people as we travel about on our busy adventures. But think about the inn and think about the innkeeper. For while many of us come and leave here on the way to somewhere else, a congregation's [or hospital's or skilled nursing center's] narrative is much more like that of an innkeeper and the sanctuary [or hospital or nursing home], an inn.

— From *Deeply Woven Roots* by Gary Gunderson (Augsburg Fortress) 1997

PRAYER

LEADER: Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and find life burdensome."

ALL: May we create a place of healing and rest for all who come to us.

LEADER: Prisoners and refugees, addicts and the seriously ill seek a place of safety and refuge along their bruising journey of life.

ALL: May we create a place of healing and rest for all who come to us.

LEADER: People whose hearts are filled with the love of service to others come here to offer their gifts.

ALL: May we create a place of healing and rest for all who come to us.

LEADER: Our space is a beacon of hope to our community, a trusted place where the broken and downhearted may come.

ALL: May we create a place of healing and rest for all who come to us.

ALL: Welcoming God, from the time of Abraham who welcomed angels unaware, you call us to offer hospitality and refreshment to the stranger and those in need. May our institutions be like the inn in the story of the Good Samaritan, places of rest and healing. May we see ourselves instead of the Samaritan and innkeeper, sharing in service to those in need. Move our hearts with the power of your Spirit to act in constant love towards those in search of a safe, healing place. Amen.



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