



## *Hands of Compassion*

### READER 1

*“As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to [Jesus]; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them.”*

—Luke 4:40

### READER 2

In the Bible, the word “hands” appears almost 600 times. Often, the hands are associated with wickedness and violence and the creation of idols. God’s people repeatedly pray to be liberated from the “hands of the enemy.” But just as often — especially in the New Testament — hands are associated with healing and with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the gospels, Jesus lays hands on those who are sick and brings them to health. After the resurrection, the disciples continue his ministry, laying hands both on those in need and on those who they believe God has called to carry on Jesus’ work.

### LEADER

- What is to be the work of our hands?
- When future generations look back on our time, will we be associated with violence or with healing?
- Will our hands be remembered as hands that built idols or hands that served the Reign of God?
- What spirit will be passed on to those who come after us? Will it be a holy spirit? The Holy Spirit?

Let us pause today in prayer with our ancestors in the faith, asking God to help us discern the work that we are called to do with our hands.

*(pause)*



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### READER 1

Confronted with ever-expanding technology and innovation, we ask for the gift of wisdom.

### ALL

“Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.” —Lamentations 3:40-41

### READER 2

Observing the changes in both our nation’s government and its population, we ask for new insight and clarity.

### ALL

“Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.”

### READER 1

Facing changes in our church and our sponsoring congregations, we ask for hope and courage.

### ALL

“Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.”

### READER 2

In the midst of mergers and closures and new configurations, we ask for the gift of vision and a sense of peace.

### ALL

“Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven.”

O God, hear our prayer and show us what it means to be your compassion in this world. We entrust the work of our hands into your hands and know that it is safe there. For in your hands, all things flourish and come to fruition. We ask this in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.