

Blessed Are

REFLECTING ON THE BEATITUDES



CHURCH OF THE
SAVIOR

All-Church Retreat

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2023

MIDDAY PRAYER

Leader: O God, make speed to save us.

All: O Lord, make haste to help us.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.
Alleluia.

Leader: The Lord is full of compassion and mercy:

All: Come, let us adore him.

PSALM 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills; *
from where is my help to come?

² My help comes from the LORD, *
the maker of heaven and earth.

³ He will not let your foot be moved *
and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

⁴ Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel *
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

⁵ The LORD himself watches over you; *
the LORD is your shade at your right hand,

⁶ So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *
nor the moon by night.

⁷ The LORD shall preserve you from all evil; *
it is he who shall keep you safe.

⁸ The LORD shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *
from this time forth for evermore.

If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

All: Thanks be to God.

THE BEATITUDES**MATTHEW 5:1-12**

A presentation of the gospel story, followed by time for wondering.

THE 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.

COLLECT

O God, in the course of this busy life, give us times of refreshment and peace; and grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

Today, I invite you into a time of contemplation, into a space of peace and silence as we step outside of our often busy and noisy schedules for a few hours. This time is gift, a gift from God and a gift you've given yourself. And I wonder: what is this gift for you? Perhaps it's the gift of a slow, deep breath, or a sense of connection with God. Perhaps the gift seems disappointingly empty — but maybe this emptiness is itself an invitation to rest in the assurance offered by Jesus in the Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst, for they will be filled.

My prayer for you today, as you journey through this retreat, is that you will catch a glimpse of the kingdom life that Jesus shows us in the Beatitudes. Jesus does not promise that life will be easy; he does not promise that our difficulties will disappear when we begin to follow him. But the kingdom of God, which is here in part now and is coming in full, is a place of fullness and peace for all of us who follow Jesus.

A few notes as you enter the retreat:

- If you are a child, you will meet Pastor Mary in the foyer and go through the retreat with an adult.
- If you are an adult or a youth, you may move through the retreat at your own pace. The following pages have suggestions for prayer and contemplation for each station, but these are meant as guides rather than assignments. Notice where God is leading and follow that throughout the retreat.
- There are several spaces you may use during the retreat: the **response room**, located in the gym, with a variety of creative materials to use as you respond to God; **prayer ministers**, located in the youth room; **communal art** in the Young Children & Worship room; and spaces for **quiet reflection** in the sanctuary, fireside room, and outside around the fire pit.

And finally, thank you for extending grace and respect to each other as we practice retreating as a community with a wide variety of ages! May we learn from one another as we journey through this retreat together.

— Sarah Lindsay
Pastor of Adult Formation

QUIET REFLECTION

The sanctuary, Fireside Room, and the area outdoors around the fire pit are open for quiet reflection: you may read or pray anywhere you find comfortable, while being respectful of others in the space. Below are scripture passages for reflection and meditation, as well as a few suggestions for approaching these passages.

ENTERING THE SILENCE

It may take a few minutes to adjust to silence; the following suggestions can help you to enter into a time of reflection and contemplation.

- Take some deep breaths, noticing tension or anxiety in your mind and body and releasing it as best you can.
- Ask God to give you a brief prayer or phrase to express your intention, desire or need for this time. It can be as simple as “Help, Lord,” or “Peace,” or “Here I am.”
- Allow the silence to fill your mind and body as you focus on God’s nearness. Allow yourself to let go of whatever else comes to mind, perhaps using your brief prayer phrase to bring your attention back to God.

SCRIPTURE

Below you will find the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) in several different translations. As you read and meditate, you may want to use the steps of *lectio divina* or imaginative prayer to engage with the passages.

Steps for *Lectio Divina*:

1. **Silencio**: quiet your mind and heart and enter into God's presence.
2. **Lectio**: read the passage slowly, paying attention to the words or images that capture your mind. Hear what God is saying to you.
3. **Meditatio**: read the passage again, listening to God's invitation to you and pondering the words in your heart.
4. **Oratio**: respond to God, talking to God about the thoughts and feelings that have arisen in your reading.
5. **Contemplatio**: wait in the presence of God, allowing the words of the scripture to sink into your soul.

Practice of Imaginative Prayer:

- Imagine yourself in this scene as vividly as you can: what do you see? What do you hear, smell, feel? What emotions do you experience?
- As you imagine yourself in this scene, how do you experience Jesus' care for you?
- What might you say to Jesus? What might Jesus say to you?

Meeting God in Nature:

- Take a moment to see this part of creation as reflective of God. As you look at nature this way, what do you see around you that reminds you of the Beatitudes?
- Use the outdoor space to help you imagine that you are hearing Jesus speak the Beatitudes. As you imagine this, what do you notice?

Matthew 5:1-12, NIV

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

He said:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:1-12, First Nations Version

¹ When Creator Sets Free (Jesus) saw this great crowd, he went back up into the mountainside and sat down to teach the people. His followers came to him there, ² so he *took a deep breath*, opened his mouth, and began to share his wisdom with them and *teach them how to see Creator's good road*.

³ “Creator’s blessing rests on the poor, the ones with broken spirits. The good road from above is theirs to walk.

⁴ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who walk a trail of tears, for he will wipe the tears from their eyes and comfort them.

⁵ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who walk softly and in a humble manner. The earth, land, and sky will welcome them and always be their home.

⁶ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who hunger and thirst for wrongs to be made right again. They will eat and drink until they are full.

⁷ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who are merciful and kind to others. Their kindness will find its way back to them—full circle.

⁸ “Creator’s blessing rests on the pure of heart. They are the ones who will see the Great Spirit.

⁹ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who make peace. It will be said of them, ‘They are the children of the Great Spirit!’

¹⁰ “Creator’s blessing rests on the ones who are hunted down and mistreated for doing what is right, for they are walking the good road from above.

¹¹ “Others will lie about you, speak against you, and look down on you with scorn and contempt, all because you walk the road with me. This is a sign that Creator’s blessing is resting on you. ¹² So let your hearts be glad and jump for joy, for you will be honored in the spirit-world above. You are like the prophets of old, who were treated in the same way by your ancestors.

Matthew 5:1-12, New Testament for Everyone

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the hillside, and sat down. His disciples came to him. ² He took a deep breath, and began his teaching:

³ ‘Blessings on the poor in spirit! The kingdom of heaven is yours.

⁴ ‘Blessings on the mourners! You’re going to be comforted.

⁵ ‘Blessings on the meek! You’re going to inherit the earth.

⁶ ‘Blessings on people who hunger and thirst for God’s justice! You’re going to be satisfied.

⁷ ‘Blessings on the merciful! You’ll receive mercy yourselves.

⁸ ‘Blessings on the pure in heart! You will see God.

⁹ ‘Blessings on the peacemakers! You’ll be called God’s children.

¹⁰ ‘Blessings on people who are persecuted because of God’s way! The kingdom of heaven belongs to you.

¹¹ ‘Blessings on you, when people slander you and persecute you, and say all kinds of wicked things about you falsely because of me! ¹² Celebrate and rejoice: there’s a great reward for you in heaven. That’s how they persecuted the prophets who went before you.’

Matthew 5:1-12, NRSV

¹ When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he began to speak and taught them, saying:

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

RESPONSE ROOM

In the gym, you will find a variety of materials you can use to respond to God; below are some reflection questions for each response material. As much as you can, let go of the desire for perfection (or even competence!) and allow your act of creation to mirror and respond to God's creative power.

COLORING SHEETS

- Spend time noticing how the pencils or markers feel in your hand and on the page. What sensations are you experiencing?
- Notice the colors you are choosing and the areas you are coloring. How might this be a response to God? How might God be speaking to you through the colors and shapes you are most drawn to today?

SAND TRAY

- Take a few moments to touch the sand with your hands. How might you respond to God with the sand?
- Notice the designs you make. How might they be a response to God? How might God be speaking to you through the patterns that emerge in the sand?

COLLAGE

- How might you use colors, shapes, lines, or images to respond to God? Notice the material you are drawn towards: how are those choices speaking to God? How might God be speaking through those choices?
- As you create your collage, use the space and material freely, extending beyond the edge of the paper or into three dimensions.

SIGNING THE BEATITUDES

- What do you notice as you move your body through the signs for the Beatitudes?
- What are you noticing about the Beatitudes as you move your body through them?

PRAYER MINISTERS

Prayer ministers are available in the youth room to pray with you about whatever is on your heart, whether a need you carried into the retreat or something that arose as you moved through the retreat. Please be respectful of others' privacy if you need to wait for a prayer minister to become available.

REFLECTION

Use this space to reflect on what you heard and received in prayer.

COMMUNAL ART

In the Young Children & Worship Room, you have the opportunity to participate in a communal art project that reflects on the Beatitudes and what they mean in our lives. Take some time to consider the reflection questions below, then you may add a leaf to the Beatitudes tree.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Life is often messy and difficult, but the Beatitudes offer the hope that our difficulties have meaning, that we will see God and that God will be seen through us. Where do you most need this reassurance in your life? Where do you need the hope that life with God is worth the difficulties you are facing?
- Where do you see or do you need God's redeeming, renewing blessing for yourself?
- Where is God inviting you to come alongside his redeeming, renewing blessing for others?

ART INSTRUCTIONS

- After you have reflected on the questions above, choose a leaf and using one of the pens or markers, fill in this phrase: Blessed are those who _____ / They will _____
- Attach your leaf to the tree, and spend some time contemplating the other leaves that have been added. Let God speak to you through the blessings written by the community.

COMPLINE

Leader: Our help is in the Name of the Lord;

All: The maker of heaven and earth.

All: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

PSALM 31

¹ In you, O LORD, have I taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame: *
deliver me in your righteousness.

² Incline your ear to me; *
make haste to deliver me.

³ Be my strong rock, a castle to keep me safe,
for you are my crag and my stronghold; *
for the sake of your Name, lead me and guide me.

⁴ Take me out of the net that they have secretly set for me, *
for you are my tower of strength.

⁵ Into your hands I commend my spirit, *
for you have redeemed me,
O LORD, O God of truth.

READING

MATTHEW 11:28-30

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

REFLECTION

Take a few moments of silence to consider: what have you received today? How do you want to take what you have received into your week ahead and into your community?

PRAYER

Leader: Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit;

All: For you have redeemed me, O Lord, O God of truth.

Leader: Keep us, O Lord, as the apple of your eye;

All: Hide us under the shadow of your wings.

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.

CLOSING

Lord, you now have set your servant free *
to go in peace as you have promised;

For these eyes of mine have seen the Savior, *
whom you have prepared for all the world to see:

A Light to enlighten the nations, *
and the glory of your people Israel.

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Leader: The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us. Amen.



CHURCH OF THE
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Journeying Together: Loving God, Loving Others, Loving Life

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