

PRAISE PRAYER AND PREACHING

Friday, May 3, 2019

Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Assembly

GATHERING SONGS

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY LAMENT

O God of promises,

we didn't expect to be here.

We deeply desired to follow you, to be your church,

so we built beautiful buildings,

planned elaborate services,

created committees and workgroups and teams,

had fellowship together,

invited children to Sunday school,

baptized and married and buried...

but somewhere between your Great Commission and our enthusiasm,

we lost your vision of beloved community.

Now, we struggle to maintain our beautiful buildings,

and they pull our focus and our resources away from your mission.

Now, our volunteers are tired and our committees unfocused,

and we would rather keep old habits alive

than imagine something new.

Now, we look within our congregations and lament the absence

of children, of our loved ones and lifelong friends, of generational groups,

but we are afraid to walk out our doors

and get to know the neighbors we do have.

O God of promises,

we didn't expect to be here.

For the ways we blamed our communities and our cultures,
for our attachment to institutions and buildings
that clouded our vision of your gospel,
for our failure to work together outside our congregations,
**we are sorry,
and we seek forgiveness.**

But you, O God --
you who called our ancestors out of captivity,
you who fulfilled your promises to your people,
you who wore humanity and walked among us,
you who gave your life for us --
in you there is always a future.

In you, we become a new creation.
We are your baptized people, your Easter people, your resurrection people.
**You call us into a future we do not know,
but we know we will get there with you.**

You wrap your grace around us
and you keep encouraging us
to create your beloved community wherever we find ourselves,
in our congregations and outside them,
among people we know and people we don't,
between those who look like us and speak our languages
and those who don't.
In you there is always a future.

O God of promises,
we may not have expected to be here,
**but we trust that right here
is exactly where you need us to be.**
Amen.

PRAYER

WE HAD HOPED

Luke 24:13-21 - Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.'

PRAYER

RESPONSE

SONG

WAS IT NOT NECESSARY?

Luke 24:21-27 Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him.' Then he said to them, 'Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?' Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

PRAYER

RESPONSE

SONG

STAY WITH US

Luke 24:28-29 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them.

PRAYER
RESPONSE
SONG

EYES OPEN and HEARTS BURNING

Luke 24:30-32 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'

PRAYER
RESPONSE
SONG

RETURNED and MADE KNOWN

Luke 24:30-32 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?'

PRAYER
RESPONSE
SONG

PRAYER

BLESSING

SONG Baptized and Set Free ELW 453

OPENING OF ASSEMBLY

Bp.: As in one body we have many members,
so we, who are many, are one body in Christ.

Where two or three are gathered in my name, says the Lord,
I am there among them.

Live a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called,
with all humility and gentleness,
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.

Let us pursue what makes for justice and peace,
and for mutual upbuilding.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

O God, you open the hearts of your faithful people
by sending into us your Holy Spirit.

Direct us by the light of that Spirit,
that we may have a right judgment in all things
and rejoice at all times in your peace,
through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

I declare this assembly to be in session

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

