



Dramatic reading (continued)

All: The Lord “will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

One: We are the sum of justice. We are here to be the light of God in the world. We are here to use our voices to expose systems of oppression and suffering. We are to use our collective strength to be bands of love and witnesses for peace, kindness, and good. We must use our wisdom, knowledge, resources, and privilege to advocate for all—no matter gender, race, orientation, or affluence.

All: The Lord “will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Let us gather together so that our bodies, minds, and spirits will speak! Let the power of our voices be a wellspring for love so that the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, the imprisoned remembered, and the homeless welcomed. Let the pounding of our feet dismantle oppression, and create a spirited rumbling for justice in the land.

One: Let us find justice within ourselves. For this is the prophetic Word and Wisdom of God.

All: God is here and comforts the poor, the oppressed, and the broken-hearted. We are here in the midst of the crisis, disaster, and suffering. We are here—present, prayerful, and purposeful amidst God’s people. We are here because, with God’s help, we are the ones we have been waiting for.

Amen.

Call to worship

All: Praise the Lord!

Group One: We praise you, God of love, and we bless your name forever and ever.

Group Two: Every day we will bless you, and praise your name.

One: Great are you, Lord, and worthy to be praised

Two: Your greatness is unsearchable

One: You are near to all who call on you

Two: To all who call on you in truth

All: Praise the Lord!

Prayer of confession (unison)

God of love,

you created us to love you and one another. We confess that we have sometimes limited that love to words, and failed to reveal your love by our actions. We have failed to recognize Christ in the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked, the sick, and the incarcerated. Too often, we have turned away from you, failing to share with our sisters and brothers who are in need.

Forgive us. Turn our hearts, and guide us to follow you anew.

Words of assurance

One: The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

All: The Lord is good to all, and has compassion for all creation.

Litany

One: O God of promises, you remind us again and again that you are present with your people. When our hearts are broken,

All: You are here.

One: When we wait in worry to hear about a diagnosis,

All: You are here.

One: When we lose the ones we love,

All: You are here.

One: Where anyone is hungry or thirsty,

All: You are here.

One: When we feel like strangers,

All: You are here.

One: Where anyone is sick or in need of care and company,

All: You are here.

One: When people are in prison

All: You are here.

One: When anyone needs clothing,

All: You are here.

One: Loving God, you are here with us when we suffer. Empower us to be with others as they suffer, our neighbors both near and far. You are here, God, in the midst of suffering—and we want to be where you are.

All: Amen.

Dramatic reading of Matthew 25:35-40

All: For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in,

One: Can we hear with the ears of Justice? Hear the clattering sounds beneath the pots and pans in kitchens where more than hot meals are stewing for the greedy? For those who prepare the feast are the victims of greed and extortion, themselves hungry and starving for restitution from overstuffed bellies who refuse to share their crumbs.

All: I needed clothes and you clothed me,

One: Can we be moved by justice to clothe the factory worker with fair wages as she mends garments for large businesses that profit from her toil?

All: I was sick, and you looked after me. I was in prison, and you came to visit me.

One: Can we escape the stench of injustice? The smell of forced labor, debt bondage, and slavery-like practices must fill our nostrils just as it chokes the life out of children, women, and men who are deprived of liberty, freedom, and independence.

All: “Then the righteous will answer [the Lord], ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’”

One: Where is Love in Justice? In the courage of those who use their freedom to fight for the liberation of those who are oppressed. In the truth-telling of those who use their pens to author policy and legislation, creating tough consequences for those who commit crimes against humanity.