

## SERVICE SUNDAY 2016 Materials

### **Call to Worship**

*Amanda McLearn-Montz, BVS Unit #311*

One: When we feel crippled in our fear,

**All:** And the problems of the world seem too huge to bear,

One: Remind us, O God, that you are mightier than every evil.

**All:** Remind us that as long as we are a little faithful,

One: We can move mountains

**All:** And spark change among the nations.

One: Because with You in control,

**All:** Nothing is impossible.

### **Sending**

*Amanda McLearn-Montz, BVS Unit #311*

Let your faith in God be a spark that glows brightly,  
Let it drown out the darkness and evil of this world,  
Let it conquer your fears and worries,  
Let it grow into a blaze of holiness,

And set the world on fire with love.

### **Story**

*Amanda McLearn-Montz, BVS Unit #311*

A young minister was unsure of where God was leading him so he asked his mentor for advice. The older pastor picked a rosebud and told the young man to open it without tearing the petals. As hard as the young man tried, he could not do this task. The older minister then shared this poem with him:

“It is only a tiny rosebud,  
A flower of God's design;  
But I cannot unfold the petals

With these clumsy hands of mine.

The secret of unfolding flowers

Is not known to such as I.  
God opens this flower so easily,  
But in my hands they die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,  
This flower of God's design,  
Then how can I have the wisdom  
To unfold this life of mine?

So, I'll trust in God for leading  
Each moment of my day.  
I will look to God for guidance  
In each step along the way.

The path that lies before me,  
Only my Lord and Savior knows.  
I'll trust God to unfold the moments,  
Just as He unfolds the rose.”

Like these two pastors, always remember that a little trust and faith in God goes a long way.

### **Prayer**

*Amanda McLearn-Montz, BVS Unit #311*

Creator God, often we forget that our words and actions have an impact. We think they are too insignificant to make a difference. Remind us that even seemingly small actions can be powerful. Let us remember that a word can bring about justice, a smile can brighten someone's day, and a simple act of kindness can spread Your love. Give us strength, O God, so that we can show Your glory through the words we say and the things we do. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

### **Prayer**

*Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311*

The Prayer of St. Francis: “Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light, and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. Gratefully, in Jesus' name, amen.”

### **Sending**

*Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311*

May we long for holiness, strive for holiness, spread a blaze of holiness. We have power, may we use that for good and let that be contagious and infectious. For who are we not to be joyous and holy? We are called to be so.

Be the light unto the world,

Blaze for all to see.

Forever shall we shine with love,

Spreading joy and peace.

God calls us to be holy,

May we live to attain this call.

We are powerful and strong,

It is Christ we will share with all.

Amen.

### **Sending**

*Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311*

Leader: We came to worship.

**People: We go now to serve.**

Leader: We have been given the light.

**People: We go now to let it shine.**

Leader: We have been blessed by God's love.

**People: We go now to share it.**

Leader: We are Christ's disciples.

**People: We go now to witness to all.**

**Poem**

*Deanna Beckner, BVS Unit #311*

God, You amaze me

You amaze me in the times when I travel across the seas

Your creation is beauty and I stand in awe of the trees

You amaze me in the times when I stay around my home

Where loved ones care deeply and family stories are sewn

You amaze me in the times when I spend moments with friends

Where happiness is found, laughs are shared, and weird makes sense

You amaze me in the times when people open their doors

And welcome in suffering strangers during tragic wars

You amaze me in the times when a child comes into the world

Trying new things and living a life ready to be explored

You amaze me in the times when You love even the outcasts

For we should do the same, spreading eternal love that lasts

You amaze me all the time for You do some incredible things

May we lift Your name on high and let our praises ring

**Saint Patrick's Breastplate**

*Emma Berkey, BVS Unit #304*

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.  
I arise today  
Through a might strength, the invocation of the Trinity,  
Through belief in the Threeness,  
Through confession of the Oneness  
Of the Creator of creation.

**Scripture Reflection: I Peter 1: 13-16**

*Mark Pickens, BVS Unit #301*

This First Letter from Peter to Exiles, dispersed among many different areas among the known world of the time calls people to action. As strangers or resident aliens, living in places that are not their homes and are certainly not culturally parallel to what they consider to be "HOME," there is a lot of pressure to immerse and conform to the roles and practices of the dominant imperial society and rule. Standing out from among the local customs and practices would likely cause turmoil and even threats of life and perhaps, even death. Peter is addressing his fellow believers of the way that while they are strangers in a land that is foreign to them and are living among different cultures of people who may not take a liking to them, their job is to take care of how they act around them. They are to acknowledge their Christian Faith through their good deeds; through their obedience to the teachings of Jesus and the Apostles who witnessed the Life of Christ firsthand. As followers of Jesus, they are to incorporate their faith into shaping their behavior and conduct with all people; whether in private affairs or in the public civil sphere. Their public witness to the life and teaching of Jesus is to serve as a model on what it means to serve in a set-apart service to the Reign of God on Earth as it is in Heaven. In other words, Holiness is as much a social and incarnational reality that demonstrates the life of a person who proclaims that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior and not simply a declaration that is simply spoken without any action to defend it. As Christians living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we are not always in a situation where we may feel or think

that someone may try to threaten us or accuse us of believing in a Faith that may lead to Arrest, Trial, and Execution. Though there are contexts in our contemporary world, where this may happen, the reality is that it is so far removed from our comprehension that it is hard for us to fully understand it. For the original hearers and receivers of Peter's Letter, the Call to Act and Serve in such a profound and Holy-Centered way could in fact lead to them losing their lives for the sake of what they believe and what their beliefs led them to do. As a member of the Church of the Brethren, this is also a reflection of our own faith story and the history of how the Church of the Brethren was formed. Our spiritual mothers and fathers considered the cost and followed through in faith and obedience to the context in which they lived in eighteenth century Germany to what it must mean to proclaim openly that Jesus is the Christ and is their Lord and Savior. As a proud member of this faith tradition and legacy, I feel the inspiration through the study of the Scriptures and the guidance of the Holy Spirit as was the context throughout time and place to act in accordance to God's Call to Redemptive Service. Action is a part of the Life that we are called to live. Our conduct or behavior must reflect our faith through our good deeds; our public witness to the world and the testimony that even proclaims a message that makes us stand out as a set-apart people in the world: We are Holy because God is Holy.

### **Call to Worship**

*Mark Pickens, BVS Unit #301*

Leader: Gather us O Lord, as your people come together across this nation

**People: Gather us as your people to worship you.**

Leader: Gather us O Lord, as your people who are strangers in this land; set-apart from everyone else.

**People: Gather us as your people to worship you.**

Leader: Gather us as your people O Lord, stranger and member in one family of faith

**People: Gather us as your people to worship you.**

Leader: Gather us O Lord, from every language, tribe and race, and every nation or culture that is represented on the Earth.

**ALL: Gather us as your people to worship you.**

### **Unison Prayer**

*Mark Pickens, BVS Unit #301*

**Holy God, set your people apart as a Holy People for you are Holy and we desire to be so as well. As we gather as your holy church to seek your presence and be in your presence, may we find redemption and renewal through the salvation and selfless service of Jesus Christ for all of us as well as for all people. May we hear the call to act in response to our worship and to live our lives in further communion with you and with our fellow human beings. Grant us Grace and Peace as we live to give it to others around us who need it. Accept our gifts of worship and service this day and everyday of our lives. Through the Name of Jesus Christ, Our Holy and Risen Lord we pray. Amen.**

## **I AM HOLY: A Poem**

*Mark Pickens, BVS Unit #301*

I Am Holy, So You are to be Holy

God is Holy and has made Me Holy

If God is Holy and I Am Holy, are you not also made Holy?

If God is Holy and has made Me Holy,

Has not God also made You Holy?

If God is Holy, has made Me Holy,

God has also made You Holy

If God is Holy and has made You Holy

If God is Holy and has made Me Holy

God is Holy and has made Us All Holy

We are Holy because God is Holy.

## **Reflection**

*Rosemary Sorg, BVS Unit #304*

As I find my BVS service drawing to a close in 2 months, I feel rather fortunate that I could have served with BVS for the past almost two years. While there have been ups and downs in my time, I have been given the unique opportunity to explore the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland while working at two different projects. I have met people who have loved me and helped me grow as a person. I have learned skills I never thought I would learn: photography, bread baking, knitting, how to use public transport, and how to not get too lost so long as I have a map in hand; among other things. I have grown in my faith through regularly worshipping in a Catholic church in Ireland and then a Presbyterian church in Northern Ireland. I had no plan whatsoever to go to Ireland/Northern Ireland when I first applied to BVS, but I'm glad I did because I went where I was needed even if it wasn't where I originally wanted.

While working in NI, I have seen 5 new BVSers start their 2 years of service and I have to admit I am kind of jealous, and not just because they get to be in Belfast while I'm stuck in a village of about 2,800. Rather just seeing their excitement as they are beginning their BVS journey and are starting the next generation of BVSers in Europe. I wish them all the best as they go about the next two years of their lives.

## Reflection

*Estella Amador, BVS Unit #305*

24 November 2015

It is late night in Deutschland,  
I walk down the street towards the busstop,  
but not alone,  
my friend and I walk together,  
arms linked.  
Her brother tells me a joke,  
we laugh,  
I retort back in english,  
and their mother asks what the joke was in Arabic.  
We busy ourselves and wait for the bus to arrive,  
all of us know where we are going,  
because we all have the same address.  
We board the bus towards home.  
I speak Deutsch to the bus driver,  
I speak English to my two friends,  
they speak English back to me and Arabic to their mother.  
Around us,  
people make quick glances up.  
We arrive at our stop.  
As we begin walking,  
my friend and I again lock arms.  
My friend starts to laugh to herself,  
I ask what is funny.  
"No one has idea,  
that you are American,

I am Syrian,  
and we are friends"

I smiled,  
and looked away,  
too embarrassed to show the tears in my eyes.

I started to think about the differences between our countries,  
our homes.

What would my American friends say?

"Awesome"?

"Cool"?

or

"Get away from those people."

I pushed these thoughts aside.

I told myself I don't care.

I looked back,

I saw not a Syrian girl,

I saw not someone I was at war with,

I saw only my friend and her family.

Throughout my American life, I have been taught to fear my friend.

Now I have a service project that allows me to experience what so many Americans are conditioned to fear: Muslims and Islamic State.

There are no differences between us.

We are all brothers and sisters.

NO ONE IS ILLEGAL.

KEIN MENSCH IST ILLEGAL.