

Service Sunday 2021 Worship Resources

Call to Worship

One: God is doing a new thing.

All: Yes! We sense it coming!

One: We thought we were lost, that there was no way out.

All: But God is making a way, showing us new paths and hidden highways.

One: We thought this place was barren desert, nothing growing, nothing surprising.

All: But God has shown us streams of living water, new possibilities, startling opportunities.

One: We hear God calling us:

All: Come on! Step out! Take the risk.

One: And we are answering:

All: Yes! We are following you! We are praising you, God, and we will go where you send us.

- *Dana Cassell, Brethren Volunteer Service (BVS) Unit 277*

People: Dry stream beds and empty places, needs are so great.

One: The cup of cold water, well-spring quenching thirst;

People: Weary hands and tired feet, empowered by the Spirit.

One: Calloused hands, tender hearts, this is ours to do.

People: Meeting Christ in new springs of hope.

One: In lush meadows from arid fields,

All: Harvests of verdant love for fellow humans.

God shows us the path to meeting Christ all around us.

- *Jim Grossnickle-Batterton, BVS Unit 252*

1: Do you hear that?

2: Do you see that?

3: Do you feel that?

All 3: God is always on the move, creating in new and unexpected ways.

1: The sound of a rushing river in the dryness of the desert...

2: The sight of cleared paths in an untamed wilderness...

3: The promise of hope when all seems hopeless...

All 3: Things that seem impossible, and yet... God is always one step ahead of us.

1: Creating something out of nothing, challenging our assumptions, bringing life out of death.

2: God is doing a new thing! Pay attention!

3: You won't want to miss this.

- *Lauren Seganos Cohen*

One: The world is full of those who are persecuted, oppressed, and marginalized.

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: And all are your people and your children: the privileged, the marginalized, and everyone in between.

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: We largely live lives of comfort, security, and plenty

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: Meanwhile so many go without and are underserved

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: And yet, you are doing a new thing

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: Creating new paths in the wilderness for those calling to you for deliverance

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: Your new paths lead to justice and Shalom for the least, the last, the lost of our society

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

One: You call us to be a part of the new thing you are doing

All: Lord, give us eyes to see

Together: Lord, give us eyes to see. Give us hearts that love and seek justice for our brothers and sisters whom society values little. Use us to do the new thing you are doing. Motivate us to "Make a way in the desert and paths in the wilderness" both for your glory and our neighbor's good.

- Josiah Ludwick

Prayers

Prayer of Invocation

God of wilderness places, make us thirst for your justice. The waters of baptism fill our dry stream beds. You give us longings to see fairness and equity for all your children. Help us feel the aching emptiness of human need from day to day. Help us to see our needs bound up with our neighbor's needs. Awaken our compassion today and tomorrow to give and receive the love of Christ in service freely given. Hear our songs of praise in each hand held, each meal shared, each bed prepared, and each story told. Grant us mercy and strengthen us to serve in love. Amen.

- Jim Grossnickle-Batterton, BVS Unit 252

Creative God, we give you thanks that you are always up to something new. When we think we've tried it all, when we are out of energy, or fresh ideas, or even hope, you always have something up your sleeve. Help us to pay attention to the new things springing up around us, large and small. Help us to see the world through your eyes. We pray these things in the name of Jesus: our Savior, Teacher, and Friend. Amen.

- Lauren Seganos Cohen

Ever-present Spirit,

This past year has brought us unexpected challenges and life-altering changes. Most of us have traversed through unforgiving terrains in this season. Some of us still haven't made it out of the wasteland. We miss our loved ones, and we grieve the loss of countless people who have lost their lives due to this pandemic and injustice. We pray for those who have not been keeping their neighbor's good in mind. The messiness of our lives makes us feel like the path ahead will be endless and full of obstacles. The light on our path is scant and our trust sometimes wavers. How, God, will we find our way out? We are lost in this wilderness; trapped by a thick fog blocking our view. The changes and challenges we've faced have happened so quickly that we feel like we can't catch up. It feels almost as if we're trudging through a muddy trail that never ceases. Maybe what we're supposed to discover in these moments won't be revealed to us until we're miles out of the wasteland, but until then, God, help us to find some respite in the thick of it all. Give us the strength to keep moving our achy feet and tired bodies. As much as we long to help others, give us grace to focus on our own health and well-being in the times that we are knocked down by distress and disarray. Give us the humility to ask those around us for assistance when we need it. When we have the strength to get up again, bring us those who are weary so we can encourage them. Remind us to look for newness sprouting up around us even when it's difficult. You are the Gardener; plant hope in us so we can find moments that keep us moving forward. The wilderness is daunting, but may your light guide us through our darkest treks.

Amen

- *Amelia Gunn, BVS Unit 325*

O God, we come before you in all our brokenness. We ask you for the courage to step out and to create new paths, to walk where others have not ventured before. We ask you for persistence to press into dismantling injustices. Teach us to speak with kindness and to act with compassion. Guide us as we trek onto new pathways. Amen.

- *Pauline Liu, BVS Unit 319*

God, you ask us to learn and to prepare ourselves, but you also require us to take risks and to act. While we know that action is a necessary part of the deal, we can find ourselves trapped by fear of the uncertainty. We ask for courage to take the first step, even if we are unsure where the next will lead, and for reminders that we do not walk alone. Help us step out. Amen.

- *Alton Hipps, BVS Unit 325*

In this time of fear, Lord, may we find courage in seeking you.

In this time of isolation, Lord, may we be community to each other.

In this time of limitation, Lord, may we step out in trust to find new paths.

In this dark winter, Lord, may we find light in serving others.

In this year of sorrow, Lord, may you do a new thing in us.

- *Sara Cook, BVS Unit 246*

Poems

Christmas Sonnet from our church family
(reflections on caring for asylum seekers)

Let me count the ways we're daily caring
Building trust and opening hearts in hope
Sheltering others in need by sharing
Extending a hand and helping to cope

Lost and tired and desperate we meet
Uncertain and ignorant how we dare
to welcome and harbor and oft to greet
Believing it's the way to show our care

Just briefly you'll stay in this little home
Teach us tell us and help us now create
waiting, working, learning ready to roam
Before departure we will celebrate

God blessed you, kept you and sent you to us.
Your path now leads onward now take the bus.
- *Judy Stout, BVS Unit 319*

If we stay silent when people are suffering,
If we stand aside when people are mistreated,
If we keep silent about the dehumanization of people,
If we ignore the work that Christ has called us to do,
Then we all suffer.
Then we are mistreating our brothers and sisters.
Then we are perpetuating injustices.
Then we are failing as Christ's coworkers.
- *Pauline Liu, BVS Unit 319*

Stop.
Put down what you are doing and pay attention.
This old, stuck-in-a-rut way of living is no good.

Strike a match and let the fire within you burn.
See how your dry bones ignite with new life.
God has made you a living sacrifice ready to transform the world.

All you need to do is pack a bag, grab your favorite sweater, and follow the compass placed on your heart.

Call a friend when you get lost, rest when you are weary, and celebrate each step you take, for the journey lasts a lifetime.

God has given you a spirit that is powerful and a map to show you the way as you take the first step out, seeking new paths.

- *Hannah Shultz, BVS Unit 307*

Christ be with me

Christ before me

Christ behind me

Christ in me

Christ beneath me

Christ above me

Christ on my right

Christ on my left

Christ where I lie

Christ where I sit

Christ where I arise

Christ in the heart of every man

who thinks of me

Christ in the mouth of every man

who speaks of me

Christ in every eye that sees me

Christ in every ear that hears me

Salvation is of the Lord.

- *St. Patrick's Breastplate*

Benedictions

We are called to seek-

Seek out the needs we can fill, the pain we can relieve, the injustice we can correct

We are called to listen-

Listen for the voices of our neighbors in every neighborhood, city, country, continent

We are called to decide-

Decide to give love when it is uncomfortable, inconvenient, awkward, painful

We are called to step-

Step into new places, providing the soothing water of peace where the earth is dry and barren

We are called to learn-

Learn from our missteps and humbly share our trials with those around us, so they too can benefit from our experiences

We are called to reach-

Reach out to offer help when we can, and receive it when we ourselves are in need

We are called to grow-

Grow in our understanding of the world, of ourselves, of the complex Divine Spirit

- *Cara Hudson, BVS Unit 322*

Lord, give us eyes to see the wonderful new work you are about doing in the world. Give us excitement to be a part of that work. Give us the tools to accomplish the part you have for us to play. Give us the courage to say, "Yes," to step out of what is known and to trust that you are with us all along the way. You are the God that "makes a way out of no way", and we yearn to be a part of the new thing you are about doing here and now. Send us forth to be your hands and feet, creating new paths in the wilderness; paths of equity, justice and Shalom for all people. Amen.

- *Josiah Ludwick*

Relax. Slow your breath. Listen to the sounds of natural silence. Listen to the birds and the wind around you. Rest your body, soul, and mind. Give yourself the space to take a break and rest as you continue on your new path forward.

- *Chad Whitzel, BVS Unit 325*

Go in the spirit of love, looking to bring abundant joy to those around you. Go in the spirit of hope, searching for new paths that make you come alive with excitement. Go in the spirit of servanthood, seeking opportunities to make the world a more just and peaceful home.

- *Hannah Shultz, BVS Unit 307*