

## SUNDAY INTERDENOMINATIONAL WORSHIP

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

Sunday, March 27, 2011

8:45 a.m.

### Gathering Music

**“God Welcomes All”**

Themba Community, South Africa, arr. John Bell

**“Spirits Rising Like the Wind”**

Lisa Levine

### Gathering Words/Call to Worship

Leader 1:

As a mother hen gathers her young around her

**So too does the Spirit of God shelter us in the shadow of her wings.**

Leader 2:

As a woman celebrates when the lost coin has been found

**So too does our God rejoice when she finds compassion in the hearts of her children.**

Leader 3:

As Mary recognized human need at the wedding feast in Cana and made it known to her child

**So is our God moved by the needs of her people and makes them known to us.**

**Come, let us worship God.**

(From *More Than Words*, by Janet Schaffran, CDP, and Pat Kozak, CSJ, published by Meyer-Stone Books. Used with permission.)

### Hymn of Praise “God, the Sculptor of the Mountains”

John Thornburg, Amanda Husberg © 1993 (words) and 1996 (music), Abingdon Press, admin.

### Women of Wisdom Scripture Conversation

*The voice of Wisdom is read from the pulpit, introduced by voice 1, which is read from the floor in close proximity to the front. The dancer beside, or very near Wisdom, reflects Wisdom’s speech, as well as reacting to other voices. The other voices, which interrupt Wisdom, read and respond to Wisdom from various locations within the room, which increase in proximity with each interruption, as each reader rises for their part and then take their seat. The movement continues as planned until the climactic moment when the voice from the Ezekiel storms out of the sanctuary. Everyone needs a bible to hold their script in so the gathered congregation understands this is not an “interpretation” of scripture, but direct scriptural references.*

#### Speaker List:

Wisdom – female

Speaker 1 – male or female

Speaker 2 - male

Speaker 3 – female

Speaker 4 – male or female

Speaker 5 – male

Speaker 6 – male  
Speaker 7 – male or female

Speaker 1:           It is Wisdom Calling,  
                          understanding raising her voice.  
                          On the crossroads she takes her stand;  
                          Beside the gates in front of the town,  
                          At the entrance of the portals she cries out:<sup>1</sup>

*Wisdom stands and moves to the pulpit as Speaker 1 sits down. The Dancer can rise to her place at this time, too.*

Wisdom:             To you, O people, I call,  
                          And my cry is to all that live<sup>2</sup>

*Speaker 2 rises from the back of the room, interrupting Wisdom by shouting from the crossroads walk way, or middle of the center isle. As he speaks, he points to the passage in his Bible.*

Speaker 2:           Women should be silent in the churches. For they are not  
                          permitted to speak but should be subordinate, as the law also  
                          says.<sup>3</sup>

Wisdom               To you, O people, I ...

*Speakers 3 & 4 call from the door or side isles. Speaker 3 is female and 4 is male. Speaker 5 joins this pair as these three speakers offering the Galatians text as a counter to 1 Corinthians. All address the congregation, rather than wisdom.*

Speaker 3:           If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at  
                          home.

Speaker 4:           For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.<sup>4</sup>

Speaker 5:           There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is  
                          no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

Wisdom:             To you, O people, I call,  
                          And my cry is to all that live.  
                          Take my instruction instead of silver and knowledge rather  
                          than<sup>6</sup>...

*Speaker 6 is a male and speaks from a corner of the chancel area. He needs to speak both to Wisdom, as well as the congregation.*

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<sup>1</sup> Proverbs 8:1-3

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 8:4

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor 14:34

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor 14:35-36

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 3:28-29

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 8: 4, 10

Speaker 6: Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the Head of the church, the body of which he is the Savior. Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be in everything, to their husbands.<sup>7</sup>

*Standing close to Wisdom, Speaker 1 gains support through physical proximity.*

Speaker 1: God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Now I ask, kindly listen.<sup>8</sup>

Wisdom: To you, O people, I call, Listen for I speak noble things; Uprightness comes from my lips<sup>9</sup>

*Speaker 4 & Speaker 6, sitting in different locations of the congregation rise in debate with Wisdom over Ezekiel 16:37b-41a. Each speaker becomes increasingly emphatic as they interrupt Wisdom.*

Speaker 4: I will gather them against you from all around, and will Uncover your nakedness to them,

Wisdom: Listen for I speak noble things

Speaker 6: I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed Blood are judged, and bring blood upon you in wrath and Jealousy. I will deliver you into their hands.

Wisdom: Listen for I speak noble things Uprightness comes from my lips.

Speaker 4: And they shall throw down your platform

Wisdom: Listen for I speak

Speaker 6: And they shall throw down your platform and break down Your lofty places;

Wisdom: Listen for I

Speaker 4: They shall strip you of your cloths and take your beautiful Objects and leave you naked and bare.

Wisdom: Listen

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<sup>7</sup> Ephesians 5:22-24

<sup>8</sup> Acts 2:17

<sup>9</sup> Proverbs 8:4, 6

Speaker 6: They shall bring up a mob against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords. They shall burn your Houses and execute judgments on you in the sight of many Women.<sup>10</sup>

*Silence... as Speaker 6 leaves room in deliberation, speaker 4 follows. The next 3 speakers rise in shock, but to offer gentler words.*

Speaker 5: Hate evil, and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it May be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious.<sup>11</sup>

Speaker 3: What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?<sup>12</sup>

Speaker 7: Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute.<sup>13</sup>

**Speakers 5, 3 & 7: Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an Ever-flowing stream.<sup>14</sup>**

Speaker 1: Strength and dignity are her clothing and she laughs at the Time to come, She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the Teaching of kindness is on her tongue.<sup>15</sup>

*Wisdom now gently interrupts Speaker 2, offering a voice of hope, rather than silence.*

Wisdom: To you, O people, I call

Speaker 2: Women should be silent in ... (Churches)

Wisdom: I, Wisdom, Live with Prudence;  
I attain knowledge and foresight.

Speaker 2: Women should be...(Silent)

Wisdom: Mine are counsel and resourcefulness:  
I am understanding; courage is mine.<sup>16</sup>

Speaker 2: Women ...

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<sup>10</sup> Ezekiel 16:37b-41a

<sup>11</sup> Amos 5:15

<sup>12</sup> Micah 6:8b

<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 31:8

<sup>14</sup> Amos 5:24

<sup>15</sup> Proverbs 31:8

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 8:12

Wisdom: My fruit is better than gold, fine gold, and my produce better than choice silver. I walk on the way of righteousness, on paths of justice.  
I endow those who love me with substance.<sup>17</sup>

(By Robyn Fickes)

## Proclaiming

### Sung Prayer for Illumination “Open My Heart”

Anna Hernandez

*During Open My Heart, leader for first reading moves to table in front, with earthenware pitcher filled with olive oil pre-set on table. 2-4 children are seated in front row holding empty earthenware bowls.*

### First Reading: 2 Kings 4:1-7

*Reader pauses after verse 5. Children bring bowls forward. Reader pours oil from pitcher into the bowls, sets them on table. Children stay at table until conclusion of reading. After reading, reader and four children move to front row of seats while music begins.*

### Music “Let Justice Roll Down” Mark Miller

During song, Gospel reading leader (or Peg if she will read Gospel lesson) moves to pulpit.

### Gospel Reading: Matthew 15:21-28 (or Mk 7:24-30?)

### Sermon

The Rev. Peg Chamberlin

### Hymn of Response

“For Everyone Born a Place at the Table,” Text: Shirley Erena Murray, Music: Brian Mann.

## Responding

### Prayers of the People

Leader 1: Let us now join our hearts in a bidding prayer, a sequence of petitions each of which will begin with an invitation to pray for a particular concern, followed by a time of silence in which you may offer your own silent prayers, and then [name] will pray aloud a spoken petition. Let us now turn out hearts to God in prayer.

Leader 1: Let us pray for peace in our homes, communities, nation, and world.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for peace.*

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<sup>17</sup> Proverbs 8:19-21a

Leader 2: We pray, O God, that your peace and love will be known by all, especially people who suffer intimate partner abuse, rape, torture, and gender based violence, and nations staggering under a culture of militarization and torn by war. We pray for your guidance as we create conditions of human dignity and justice that nurture peace.

Leader 1: Let us pray for those in need of healing.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for healing.*

Leader 2: We pray, O God, for your healing for all who suffer in mind, body or spirit. This day, we pray especially for the millions of men, women, and children living with HIV/AIDS, for the 500,000 women who will die in childbirth this year for lack of simple things we take for granted and could provide, for those who can't see a doctor when they need to, and for all who are sickened by environmental pollution and toxins. Strengthen us to strengthen others, we pray, as we work for health, wholeness, and healing for each other and for our earth.

Leader 1: Let us pray for those without enough to meet their daily needs.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for those in poverty.*

Leader 2: We pray, O God of the last and the least, for the billion people who live on less than a dollar a day and all who struggle to survive without enough food or shelter or health care or clean water or good schools or so many other things that they need. We pray for the children and adults who are trafficked and treated as commodities to use and abuse. Use us, we pray, to work so that your world reflects the justice and kindness you require of us.

Leader 1: Let us pray for those without a true home.

Leader 2: We pray, O God, for those who search for safe, sufficient, and permanent homes that offer an authentic welcome. We pray especially this day for refugees whose homes are crowded camps, for people who are incarcerated for whom home is a cell, for migrant workers and for immigrants who must leave old homes for new in search of income, food, and future. Remind us of your special concern for the stranger, and show us how to reflect your hospitality as we open doors for those on the outside and assure that all have a decent and true place to call home.

Leader 1: Let us pray for our Church.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for the Church.*

Leader 2: We pray, O God, that we will ever more faithfully be the Body of Christ, serving others as Jesus did, welcoming the child and the stranger, including those on the margins, taking women seriously, feeding those who hunger, and healing those in need of health and wholeness.

Leader 1: Let us pray for leaders in our community, state, nation, and world.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for those leaders.*

Leader 2: We pray, O God, that your justice and mercy will guide the hearts and minds of those in positions of responsibility, that they glimpse your vision for our world and are strengthened in their commitment to do what is right even when it is unpopular.

Leader 1: Let us pray for ourselves as we seek to build a just and peaceful world.

*A time of silence follows during which congregation members may add their own silent prayers for the gathered community.*

Leader 2: We pray, O God, that you grant us insight to know what to do, energy to keep going even when it is hard, companionship to support each other, and your powerful compassion and passion for justice especially for those on the margins.

Leader 1: O God, your child Jesus told us of a persistent widow who would not give up in the face of the unjust judge. Jesus told us about the need to pray always and not to lose heart, promising us that you will grant justice to your chosen ones who cry to you day and night. We trust this word: “God will quickly grant justice.” And so we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

(By Shannon Daley-Harris)

### **Offering**

*Contemporary images naming of the ways women have contributed). Include recorded music with images—perhaps Ben Harper “With My Own Two Hands” or “I Am Blessed to Be a Witness”*

### **Affirmation of Commitment**

Let us affirm our commitment to building a world in which women are honored, and all know security and sufficiency, peace and plenty, as we respond to the words of Proverbs.

*“She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong.” (Proverbs 31:17)*

**We celebrate the strength of women.  
We affirm our commitment to work for a world  
in which women’s strength is honored  
and all women know and can show their strength.**

*“She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.” (Pr. 31:18)*

**We celebrate the work of women.  
We affirm our commitment to ensure  
that women profit from their labor  
and work in safe and fair conditions.**

*“She opens her hand to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy.” (Pr 31: 20)*

**We celebrate the generosity and compassion of women.  
We affirm our commitment to respond with generosity to those in poverty  
and to reach out to those who are in need.**

*“Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.”* (Pr. 31:25)

**We celebrate the dignity of women.  
We affirm our commitment to work for  
a world that respects all women and is free from discrimination  
and for a future that all women may face with confidence and joy.**

*“She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”* (Pr. 31:26)

**We celebrate women not only for the work they do but the wisdom they share;  
for the kindness they show and the compassion they teach.  
We affirm our commitment to match our words and deeds,  
to act with wisdom and kindness.**

*“Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband too, and he praises her....”* (Pr. 31:28)

**We celebrate families and communities that value women.  
We affirm our commitment to work so that  
all communities and peoples honor women.**

*“Give her a share in the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the city gates.”* (Pr. 31:31)

**We celebrate women who reap and share the benefits of their hard work,  
and whose efforts and contributions are honored in the midst of our communities.  
We affirm our commitment to work so that all women benefit from their work  
and all communities recognize their contributions.  
May it be so; Amen.**

(By Shannon Daley-Harris)

## **Sending**

### **Blessing *Blessed Be Our Hands***

**Together:**     **Blessed be the work of our hands.**  
Left:            Blessed be these hands that touch life.  
Right:           Blessed be these hands that nurture creativity.  
Left:            Blessed be these hands that hold pain.  
Right:            Blessed be these hands that embrace with passion.  
Left:            Blessed be these hands that tend gardens.



Right: Blessed be these hands that close in anger.  
Left: Blessed be these hands that plant new seeds.  
Right: Blessed be these hands that harvest ripe fields.  
Left: Blessed be these hands that clean, wash, mop, scrub.  
Right: Blessed be these hands that become knotty with age.  
Left: Blessed be these hands that wrinkle and scar from doing justice.  
Right: Blessed be these hands that reach out and are received.  
**Together: Blessed be these hands that hold the promise of the future.  
Blessed be the works of our hands and hearts.**

(By Diann L. Neu from WATER, <http://www.hers.com> . Used with permission)

**Sending Hymn of Commitment** “So Let Your Little Light Shine” African-American Spiritual

**Benediction**

**Postlude**