

## Youth Ministry Sunday: Way Finding June 2016

### Gathering Prayers

One For surely you know I have plans for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.

**All *Then when we call upon you and come and pray to you; you will hear us.***

One When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek for me with all your heart,

**All *You will let us find you!***

One I will let you find me, says the Lord. *Adapted Jeremiah 29:11-14*

### **OR**

One We are Way Finders longing for home! Our 'home' is the realm of God.

**All *It is where love and justice prevail, and we are called by God to make wherever we are as much like home as possible.***

One We dare not feel 'at home' in a world like this;

**All *where one-third of the people live abundantly, and two-thirds live in scarcity-two ghettos: One rich, the other poor.***

One In such a world we are refugees dwelling on either side of a dividing wall afraid to cross the boundary.

**All *Christ breaks down the dividing wall. "Home happens when the walls come down and the ghettos are no more, and we are all sisters and brothers.***

One The beginning of the way home is the way of sharing!

**All *Our footsteps down this aisle to share with others are the first short steps of the long journey "home."***

### **Collect:** *adapted from Touch Holiness*

We come to this service where we bring our needs and longings. Each of us has travelled different roads and conceived diverse thoughts this week. But underneath our differences lies the same basic need for love and acceptance. That's why we are here- to admit to each other our need for love. Let us celebrate in worship the most marvelous fact of the universe – God loves us and accepts us just as we are.

### **OR**

Jesus said, "Follow me." We don't always know what that means. We are on a journey of discovery. We are here because we want to be God's people; we are here because we are finding our way; we are here to celebrate our lives, and God's presence in this life. Let us worship God with great thanksgiving.

### Readings

Jeremiah 29: 10-14

Isaiah 30: 19-26

**Drama** *(these could also be read without the protest part)*

**Narrator**      **We are all way finders.** We are on a path through life that, if we let it, will lead us into deeper faith; will lead us into community with one another; will lead us to be true disciples of Christ; will lead us to live out our baptismal covenant; will lead us to Christ in the way of justice and peace. Listen to the story of some people who were also way finders, and in whose footsteps we now follow.

**Elder**            **My name is Abraham.** We have just come to this place called Canaan. It's not our home, but God has called us to live here. We've brought our belongings, but we haven't got many relatives with us who could look after us if we get sick. We're rather old you see.

**Protest**          Stop! Of course you can't stay here! There's no place here for anyone who can't look after himself. We've never heard of anything so ridiculous! God called you indeed!!! Where would we be if all the old people who can no longer work came to us? We didn't ask you to come! Go home and sort yourselves out!

**Runaway**        **My name is Jacob.** I'm running away because I've gotten myself in trouble at home. I couldn't possibly go back; my brother would kill me. Now I'm in this strange place. I'd like to stay here and get a job, but it's hard to know if you can trust new people. What will they think of me? Will they treat me fairly, or will they try to cheat me?

**Protest**          Move on somewhere else you good for nothing! We're decent people here and we don't want anything to do with the likes of you! You'll cause just as much trouble here as you did at home, and none of us will feel safe anymore.

**Youth**            **My name is Joseph.** My brothers have sold me as a slave to a man called Potiphar. They were jealous of me- and I have to be honest, I didn't always behave well towards them. That Potiphar's wife tells nasty stories about me. Will he believe me or her? I am the stranger here, and I worry that people will blame me for every bad thing that happens. Will I have any rights in this land?

**Protest**          What?! You can't expect us to believe a word you say if even your own brothers wanted to get rid of you! We've met your kind before, and we've got far too many foreigners here already. We're going to watch every single thing you do, because you can't be trusted and then we'll think about what to do with you.

**Risk Taker**      **My name is Moses.** I was standing up for one of my own people when I hit an Egyptian who was bullying us. The Egyptians think that if we hit one of them, that is as bad as committing a murder. So now I've had to go into hiding. What is going to happen to me? I'm terrified that they will catch me and kill me.

Protest: You hit an Egyptian?! Well that's the last straw! There's no place for a thug like you in a civilized country like this. We're going to send you back to your won country!

**Unemployed** **My name is Ruth.** I came here to Bethlehem with my mother-in-law, Naomi. We are widows. We have no children, and no money. Naomi is too old to work anymore. Will anyone give me a job, so that I can earn enough to feed us both? We don't want any charity. We could never take something for nothing.

Protest For goodness sake! Enough is enough! Are we the poorhouse of the world? Haven't we got enough poor people of our own? No, you can't stay here sponging off us!

**Outsider** **My name is Daniel.** I'm living here in the King's palace. We're a bit worried because my friends and I have a different religion, and we live in a different way from people around us. Will they accept that?

Protest Of course we won't! You're foreigners aren't you? If you want to live here, you'll have to behave like the rest of us. Why does your sort always have to be different?

**Stranded** **My name is Mary.** I've come to Bethlehem with my husband, Joseph. I'm having a baby and we're desperate to find me somewhere to stay for a while. My baby could come at any time now, and I need a warm room and a bed. We're very poor. Will anyone take us in?

Protest Now listen here once and for all. If you want anything in this world, you've got to pay for it! Haven't you got any shame? Bringing children into this world when you have no money to look after them! And then to expect handouts, huh!

**Refugee** **My name is Joseph.** I've had to flee as fast as possible with my wife Mary and our baby, Jesus because King Herod wanted to kill him. Now we've almost reached Egypt. Will the Egyptians let us into their country? What will happen to us if they send us back to Nazareth? I have to protect my family.

Protest Who knows and who cares? This family could be more trouble than they are worth. They could make life difficult for us all.

*Adapted from On Frequent Journeys, UCPH*

Narrator **We are all way finders . . .** just like these people from our bible stories.

You first saw them by the roadside standing with the crossroads, waiting ... listening ... watching

They walked in silence, small bundles on their backs clutching bits in their hands.

Fear on the faces of those women, men and children.

Frightened by the past, fearful of the future and what it holds.

Will no one understand their pain?

Will anyone open a door to receive them?

Look again and you will see familiar people ...  
Mothers and fathers,  
Sisters and brothers,  
Grandparents.

Listen and you will hear familiar sounds...  
Talking, crying, laughing.

Understand and you will know the stuff of which dreams are made...  
Love and laughter, security and safety,  
Peace and prosperity...  
Are their dreams too.

That which is joy to every human heart is what they seek too.  
The peace you long for is that same peace they strive for.

**We are all way finders.**

*Adapted from Sr. Patricia Mulhall. From "Who is my Neighbour? CAFOD, London, England*

**Affirmation of Faith**

In response to the word, let us stand as we are able, and affirm our faith:  
We are all held in the hollow of God's hand, loved children of the universe,  
born from the life which flows from God, freed to the fullness of God's creation with all its  
beauty and variety.

We are all worth dying for in Christ Jesus, all called to risen life in Christ's rising.  
The way of Jesus gives us footprints for our following and all our trials and longings are  
known in the frailty of Christ's birth among us and the courage of Christ's walking with us.

We are all called to new things in the Spirit, in the hope that stirs in unlikely moments, the  
home we find in the wastelands of our wanderings, the warmth we touch in the coldness of  
our need and the opening of our hearts to adventures in belonging or the gathering in of  
those without a home.

*From the Liturgy for Human Rights Sunday; On Frequent Journeys, United Church Publishing House*

**Prayers of the People**

Please add your own intercessions.

***Prayers linked to the dramatic reading***

*A bidding prayer where each petition is followed by silence so people can respond silently or  
aloud, with their own prayer. More petitions may be created as needed or wanted...*

Let us pray for people like Abraham, the old ones who are alone and afraid with no one to  
care for them; for the elders who are facing infirmness, and need to be uprooted from their  
homes and moved to a place with caregivers; for those who are facing a loss of  
independence and an unknown future.

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us pray for people like Jacob who run away from danger towards safety; for people who run away from parents or spouses who abuse them; for the unemployed and underemployed; for those with higher skills who scrub floors and make pizza to make ends meet...

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us pray for people like Joseph who find themselves in a new land and who cannot go home no matter what; people who face certain death; for people whose sexual orientation has made them an unwanted stranger to their family; for those who have nowhere to be, no family, no friends, no possessions.

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us pray for people like Moses who take great leaps of faith, who notice you in the burning bush and yet find themselves misunderstood and in uncomfortable places; like many First Nations people who find themselves in a prison far from home, who maybe did something wrong because they were feeling homesick and abandoned...

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us pray for people like Daniel who find themselves different from those around them, for those who lives feel like they face the lion's den on a daily basis; for the children living in 3<sup>rd</sup> world conditions here in Canada, no access to clean water, healthcare, adequate housing, for those who are in despair and those for who like is not a choice and seek to escape this harsh life and lack of hope...

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us pray for people like Mary, who is anxious to have a place to stay; for all single parents who cannot pay their rent, for those looking for a hostel, for those who live on the streets; for sex trade workers fighting to stay alive, who cry alone in their room at night for children they cannot find anymore...

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these people find their way.***

Let us prayer for people like Joseph who want the best for their family; those who are tired of running and hiding; for refugees; for those in exile; for migrant workers; for those who are victims of human trafficking who lose hope that they will ever be found or be safe and protected.

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help these elders find their way.***

Let us pray for ourselves, way finders on the path to home...

*Silence*

***We are all way finders, O God...help us find our way.***

*Adapted from On Frequent Journeys*

### **Confession and absolution**

One We are all on this journey together and sometimes we lose our way.

**All** *Wash me clean, O loving God,  
Forget the sprinkling with gentle showers  
Tip a bucket of your forgiveness over me  
Tumble me in the waves of your mercy  
Drench me in the sea of your love*

*Then hold me  
Wrap me round in the shawl of your grace  
Warm me and name me  
And set my feet on the road I must go.*

One God forgives us. Forgive yourself, forgive others and be at peace.

*Adapted from Praying for the Dawn, Wild Goose Publication*

### **The Peace**

Sisters and brothers, the way is long, let us go together in God's peace and love, and to share God's peace and love with those we meet along the way.

God's peace be with you.

**May we know God's love and peace. May we share God's peace and love always.**

### **Prayer over the Gifts**

We have come from afar and waited long and are wearied.

Let us sit side by side sharing the same bread,  
drawn from the same source  
to quiet the same hunger  
that makes us weak.

Then nourished by this meal let us stand together,  
let us share the same spirit, the same thoughts  
that once again draw us together in friendship, unity and peace.

*Prieres d'Ozawarnick, Canadian First Nation Liturgy. World Hunger Resource On Frequent Journeys UNCH*

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

The first time this story was told,  
Jesus promised that it was for all time  
that *whenever* the bread was broken  
and the wine was poured,  
*wherever* the story was told around the table  
he would be there.

Today we tell the story  
as its been told a thousand times over;  
we break the bread,  
and we pour the wine;  
sure, as we do,  
that we belong at this table  
and that Jesus is here with us.  
Jesus blessed you, God, for the food;

he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and said:  
this is my body, given for you all.  
Jesus then gave thanks for the wine;  
he took the cup, gave it and said:  
this is my blood, shed for you all  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
do this in remembrance of me.

Therefore, God, with this bread and this cup  
we celebrate the cross on which he died to set us free.  
defying death he rose again and is alive with you to plead  
for us and all the world.  
Send your Spirit on us now, that by these gifts we may  
feed on Christ with opened eyes and hearts on fire.

If we come to this table angry,  
**let this bread and wine be our peace.**

If we come to the table as sinners,  
**let this bread and wine be our grace.**

If we come to the table betrayed,  
**let this bread and wine be our wholeness.**

If we come to the table broken,  
**let this bread and wine be our hope.**

If we come to the table empty,  
**let this bread and wine be our life.**

If we come to this table lost,  
**let this bread and wine be our grounding.**

For this is the abundant holy table,  
enough to prepare us for the journey,  
enough to fill a hungry world  
enough to quench thirsty hearts,  
enough for all.

**Amen.**

*adapted from Hold This Space*

### **Prayer after Communion**

Lord, as we leave this place nourished and strengthened by this bread and wine  
Help us to remember that no one is a stranger to you  
and no one is ever far from your loving care.  
In your kindness watch over our elder ones and youth,  
the runaways, the unemployed and underemployed,  
the risk-takers and outsiders,  
the stranded and refugees and exiles.  
Those separated from loved ones, young people who are lost,  
And all who are far from 'home.'  
Bring them back safely to the place where they long to be  
And help us always to show your loving kindness  
To strangers and those in need.  
Help us to remember always that we are all way finders. Amen.

### **Blessing**

May the blessing of God surround us  
May angels and friends share our journey  
May we be wise and strong and creative  
May we celebrate life and hope.  
May God's image grow within us  
May laughter and courage heal us  
May the gospel of life sustain us  
All the days of our way finding through life.

*Praying for the Dawn Wild Goose Publications*

### **OR**

*People can be invited to touch their eyes, ears, etc. as the blessing unfolds or with a partner beside them*

I bless your eyes so that you will recognize injustices  
I bless your ears so you will hear the cry of the stranger  
I bless your mouth so that you will speak words of welcome to newcomers  
I bless your shoulders so you will be able to bear the weight of struggling for justice  
I bless your hands so that you can work together with all people to establish peace.

I bless each of you with the love of God, the peace of Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit to lead you on your way. (or in your way finding). Amen

*Adapted On Frequent Journeys*