Today is the sixth Sunday of the Easter season. The Easter season continues for 50 days and concludes with the Day of Pentecost.

Prayer for Peace

_Ring a bell or chime three times slowly._

_Light the peace candle._

_Holy One,_

_We thank you for the gift of peace that you left us as you promised so long ago. But Lord, we struggle with maintaining the peace within._

_We find that media bombard us with so much negativity it is hard not to worry about our world. At this moment, on this day, we want to set aside our worries and rely on you for internal peace._

_We want to strive for peace in our relationships, peace in our communities, and peace in this world. Help us, Lord. Help us stay in tune with your presence, your peace. Our prayer, Lord, is for your peace to remain within and spread afar. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen._

_Spiritual Practice
Centering Prayer_

_Read the following to the group:_

_As we come to the end of the Easter season, reflect on how you have been open to embracing resurrection in your life. Choose a word that reflects where you are in your spiritual journey now, for example: joyful, renewed, hopeful, whatever word is meaningful to you._

_During centering prayer we choose a focus word. We sit in silence breathing the word in and out. Today’s prayer word is the one you have chosen for yourself. Hold that word in your mind now._
Centering prayer is a method of meditation used by Christians to sit in silence with God. This prayer helps us experience God’s presence within us.

Slowly read the following instructions:

Sit with relaxed posture and close your eyes. We will spend three minutes in centering prayer.

We will breathe in a regular, natural rhythm. As you breathe in and out you will say your prayer word in your mind. You will continue breathing in and out, focusing only on your prayer word.

At the end of the three minutes in centering prayer, I will ring a chime, and we will sit for two minutes in silence, eyes closed, listening to the silence.

Begin the practice together, modeling the centering prayer as instructed above.

Say: Become aware of your natural breathing in and out. (Breathe a few times in and out.)

Say: Now silently add your prayer word. (Model: Breathe in and say hopeful quietly. Breath out and say hopeful quietly. Continue the centering prayer in silence. Discontinue saying the prayer word out loud after you model it the first time.)

After three minutes, ring a chime.

Sit quietly for two minutes.

When time is up share these closing instructions: Silently offer a brief word of thanks to God, take a deep breath, and open your eyes when ready.

When everyone’s eyes are open, share the following: How has this spiritual practice helped you (today or for those who have been practicing it through the weeks of Easter)?

Allow time for group members to share their thoughts and experiences.

Sharing Around the Table

John 14:15–21 NRSV

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

In the Gospel of John, the prevailing message is love. God reveals love through the ministry of Jesus and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Believers return Jesus’ love when they live in love.

Jesus’ love for his followers is assured through the presence of the Advocate or Comforter. Through this presence the faithful are not abandoned or orphaned. They live in loving relationship with the Divine and each other. In Community of Christ, loving or healthy relationships are defined by the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness (Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a).
The Spirit shares in ministry through mutual love of Jesus and disciples. Disciples join in as they live the message and ministry of Jesus in the world. Disciples do not require Jesus’ physical presence to experience his love. We know Jesus loves us because we are aware of the Holy Spirit’s continuing presence. As we follow Jesus’ commandments to love, we recognize that we are blessed by God’s gracious and generous presence.

Questions

1. When have you felt abandoned, alone, or in need of loving community?
2. How have you experienced the healthy relationship principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness?
3. How has your community been blessed and strengthened by the loving presence of the Spirit?

Sending

Generosity Statement

Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint. —Doctrine and Covenants 163:9

The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing, small-group ministries as part of your generous response. This offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

God of rejoicing, We share with joy-filled hearts in response to the presence of your Son. May the offerings we share bring joy, hope, love, and peace into the lives of others that they might experience your mercy and grace. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn

CCS 181, “Holy Spirit, Teacher, Friend”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on Group

- Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.
Light the peace candle.

Holy One,

We thank you for the gift of peace that you left us as you promised so long ago. But Lord, we struggle with maintaining the peace within.

We find that media bombard us with so much negativity it is hard not to worry about our world. At this moment, on this day, we want to set aside our worries and rely on you for internal peace.

We want to strive for peace in our relationships, peace in our communities, and peace in this world. Help us, Lord. Help us stay in tune with your presence, your peace. Our prayer, Lord, is for your peace to remain within and spread afar. This we pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.
Spiritual Practice

Centering Prayer

Read the following to the group:

As we come to the end of the Easter season, reflect on how you have been open to embracing resurrection in your life. Choose a word that reflects where you are in your spiritual journey now, for example: joyful, renewed, hopeful, whatever word is meaningful to you.

During centering prayer we choose a focus word. We sit in silence breathing the word in and out. Today’s prayer word is the one you have chosen for yourself. Hold that word in your mind now.

Centering prayer is a method of meditation used by Christians to sit in silence with God. This prayer helps us experience God’s presence within us.

Slowly read the following instructions:

Sit with relaxed posture and close your eyes. We will spend three minutes in centering prayer.

We will breathe in a regular, natural rhythm. As you breathe in and out you will say your prayer word in your mind. You will continue breathing in and out, focusing only on your prayer word.

At the end of the three minutes in centering prayer, I will ring a chime, and we will sit for two minutes in silence, eyes closed, listening to the silence.

Begin the practice together, modeling the centering prayer as instructed above.

Say: Become aware of your natural breathing in and out. (Breathe a few times in and out.)

Say: Now silently add your prayer word. (Model: Breathe in and say hopeful quietly. Breath out and say hopeful quietly. Continue the centering prayer in silence. Discontinue saying the prayer word out loud after you model it the first time.)

After three minutes, ring a chime.

Sit quietly for two minutes.

When time is up share these closing instructions: Silently offer a brief word of thanks to God, take a deep breath, and open your eyes when ready.

When everyone’s eyes are open, share the following: How has this spiritual practice helped you (today or for those who have been practicing it through the weeks of Easter)? Allow time for group members to share their thoughts and experiences.
“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them.”

In the Gospel of John, the prevailing message is love. God reveals love through the ministry of Jesus and the promise of the Holy Spirit. Believers return Jesus’ love when they live in love. Jesus’ love for his followers is assured through the presence of the Advocate or Comforter. Through this presence the faithful are not abandoned or orphaned. They live in loving relationship with the Divine and each other. In Community of Christ, loving or healthy relationships are defined by the principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness (Doctrine and Covenants 164:6a).

The Spirit shares in ministry through mutual love of Jesus and disciples. Disciples join in as they live the message and ministry of Jesus in the world. Disciples do not require Jesus’ physical presence to experience his love. We know Jesus loves us because we are aware of the Holy Spirit’s continuing presence. As we follow Jesus’ commandments to love, we recognize that we are blessed by God’s gracious and generous presence.

Questions

1. When have you felt abandoned, alone, or in need of loving community?
2. How have you experienced the healthy relationship principles of Christ-like love, mutual respect, responsibility, justice, covenant, and faithfulness?
3. How has your community been blessed and strengthened by the loving presence of the Spirit?
Generosity Statement

Faithful disciples respond to an increasing awareness of the abundant generosity of God by sharing according to the desires of their hearts; not by commandment or constraint.

—Doctrine and Covenants 163:9

The offering basket is available if you would like to support ongoing, small-group ministries as part of your generous response. This offering prayer is adapted from A Disciple’s Generous Response:

God of rejoicing, We share with joy-filled hearts in response to the presence of your Son. May the offerings we share bring joy, hope, love, and peace into the lives of others that they might experience your mercy and grace. Amen.
Communion Statement

Choose one scripture to read from this selection: 1 Corinthians 11:23–26; Matthew 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–39.

Invitation to Communion

All are welcome at Christ’s table. The Lord’s Supper, or Communion, is a sacrament in which we remember the life, death, resurrection, and continuing presence of Jesus Christ. In Community of Christ, we also experience Communion as an opportunity to renew our baptismal covenant and to be formed as disciples who live Christ’s mission. Others may have different or added understandings within their faith traditions. We invite all who participate in the Lord’s Supper to do so in the love and peace of Jesus Christ.

On this last week of the Easter season, let us remember the Resurrected Christ as we experience the Holy Spirit’s presence and share in Communion as an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community.

In preparation, let’s sing Community of Christ Sings 515, “In These Moments We Remember.”
Thoughts for Children

Jesus taught many lessons to help his disciples remember what was important. These things are called *commandments*.

The most important commandments are to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:29–31).

Let’s learn this scripture with motions. Follow me and repeat what I say. We will repeat it three times, so we can learn it really well. Everyone stand up. Ready!

Love God (arms reaching up)
With all your: Heart (hands over heart)
Soul (hands sweep upward from feet to head)
Mind (hands on top of head)
Strength (arms out as if “making a muscle”)
AND...
Love others (arms open wide)
As you love yourself (arms hugging yourself).

Repeat two more times. Thank the children for participating.