Ordinary Time runs from Pentecost to Advent. This part of the Christian calendar is without major festivals or holy days. During Ordinary Time we focus on our discipleship as individuals and as a faith community.

Prayer for Peace

Ring a bell or chime three times slowly.

Light the peace candle.

Troubled waters, O Lord.

You know what it is to walk through troubled waters. You are the one who stilled the storm just enough to invite disciples to walk on the waves. You work not through peaceful waters but through disruption. What does it mean to think that healing comes when the waters are troubled; healing comes in the midst and even through the troubled waters?

Help us to understand that waters still and stagnant are not the places to which we are called. We are called to serve in disruptive times, changing times, portentous times.

Help us come to peace with our role and calling, here and now. Not peace with a stop sign or red light. Not a quiet, still, and stagnant peace. Not a quiet reflecting pool kind of peace.

But give us the gift of green light peace—the kind that allows us to navigate, to bridge, and if necessary to swim. Give us the kind of peace that says go, knowing that Christ goes with us, and we go together. Allow us to walk on water in faith or make us strong swimmers together.

We wade in, knowing God is troubling the waters ahead of us, making a way where there seems no way. We wade in the waters together with so many for whom this is
daily life. God’s going to trouble the waters. O Lord, trouble our waters, lead us to the river, bring us through.

Amen.

—Michele McGrath

**Spiritual Practice**

**Prayer for Peace**

Read the following to the group:

For today’s Enduring Principle we are focusing on the Pursuit of Peace (Shalom). Shalom for Community of Christ is defined as, “Led by the Holy Spirit, we work with God and others to restore shalom to creation.” By naming our Prayer for Peace for loved ones, the world, countries, and even those we disagree with, we are focusing our hearts on relationship and reconciliation. Read the following prayer for peace by St. Francis of Assisi:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy 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.
Amen.

Read the prayer again, having the group say each line after you say it.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace;
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
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Amen.

Invite group members to share about the hope they have for peace and reconciliation in their lives. Close with the following prayer:

Peace be to this house, peace be to all relationships, peace be to all the world. Amen.

**Sharing Around the Table**

**Exodus 17:1–7 NRSV**

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses, and said, “Give us water to drink.”
Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?” But the people thirsted there for water; and the people complained against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?” So Moses cried out to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.” The Lord said to Moses, “Go on ahead of the people, and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink.” Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”

Two months after the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and began their long journey, they camped in the wilderness near Mount Sinai. Their food supplies were gone. They were hungry, and they began to complain. In response, God sent quail and manna for them to eat. Later in their journey, when they had no water and became thirsty, they began grumbling. Moses became irritated. He asked them why they were testing the Lord by doubting God’s ability to care for them. They continued to complain and make accusations against Moses.

Moses usually prayed patiently for the people. This time, Moses complained to God about the accusations of his people. Then he followed God’s instructions. He went before the people with his staff to Mount Horeb. When he struck a rock there, water came forth. The scripture says God stood on the rock or was present with them.

The area has springs below the limestone rocks. One is called Massah, which means “test.” The other is called Meribah, or “quarrel,” to commemorate the way the Israelites quarreled with Moses.

The writer of Exodus presents the generation of Israelites in the wilderness in the worst possible light. People who are starving or dying of thirst naturally would cry out to God. Those whose future is uncertain naturally would despair and second-guess decisions they have made. Where is the line between negativity and legitimate concern?

In today’s world, grumbling and complaints are everywhere. People of faith often have as many complaints as those who do not know God. Yet God continues to bear patiently with humankind. God is present even in our frustration, loneliness, and despair. Such is the grace of God.

Questions

1. What events in your life reflect a wilderness journey? How have you felt God’s presence?
2. How does this story challenge people to change their negative attitudes and self-centered complaints? What does it say about desperate circumstances that prompt genuine lamentations and petitions to God?

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 our discipleship, As we navigate our world of debt and consumerism, help us to save wisely, spend responsibly, and give generously. In this way may we prepare for the future and create a better tomorrow for our families, friends, the mission of Christ, and the world. Amen.

Invitation to Next Meeting

Closing Hymn

CCS 49, “Wind upon the Waters”

Closing Prayer

Optional Additions Depending on the Group

- Communion
- Thoughts for Children
Prayer for Peace

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

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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.

We share in Communion as an expression of blessing, healing, peace, and community. In preparation let’s sing from Community of Christ Sings (select one):

515, “In These Moments We Remember”
516, “Coming Together for Wine and for Bread”
521, “Let Us Break Bread Together”
525, “Small Is the Table”
528, “Eat This Bread”
Thoughts for Children

Say: Sometimes life is pretty hectic. It can make us feel sad or overwhelmed. When we feel that way it can help to spend time with God. Sometimes, this requires us to practice mindfulness. This means we are aware of our surroundings, realize how we are on the inside, and can calm our thoughts and feelings—even when things are crazy.

One way we can practice mindfulness is by grounding ourselves using our five senses. Does anyone know what our five senses are? Affirm all answers. Make sure all five senses are named: sight, touch, smell, taste, and hearing.

Let’s try the grounding exercise. As we go through each step, you won’t need to move around or say anything out loud. Instead, use your sense to find things around you and make a list in your head.

First, I want you to find five things you can see around you. Name those things in your head.

Next, I want you to find four things around you and imagine what they would feel like to touch.

Next, close your eyes. Without making any noises, I want you to listen for three sounds in your surroundings.

Next, I want you to find two smells in your surroundings. If you can’t smell anything right now, look around you for smells you can imagine (for example, if you have a Communion set out, imagine the smell of warm bread).

Finally, I want you to close your eyes and think of one thing you really like about yourself. Invite participants to share their one thing.

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for time with God. Pray that everyone will feel God’s presence in their life even when things are scary or difficult.