

Word

A reading from the Gospel of John

(John 3:22-36a)

After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized —John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison. Now a discussion about purification arose between John’s disciples and a Jew. They came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” John answered, “No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.’ He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.” The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life.

Word of God! Word of life! **Thanks be to God!**

Meditation: Bible study followed by discussion

Leader: *Ms Sally Azar*

We sing as we gather together for prayer...

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is divided into two parts: 'Leader' and 'All'. The lyrics are: 'Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing, through the Word in - vit - ing, Ne - no, ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la - ku - i - ta we - we,'. The second system also has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 'of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort, and joy. joy. ne - no la wo - ko - vu, te - na je - ma. ma.' The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes in the bass clef.

Leader *All*

Lis - ten, lis - ten, God is call - ing, through the Word in - vit - ing,
Ne - no, ne - no la - ke Mu - ngu la - ku - i - ta we - we,

of - fer - ing for - give - ness, com - fort, and joy. joy.
ne - no la wo - ko - vu, te - na je - ma. ma.

Prayer

Intercessions

God, Creator, you embrace all humanity, all creation is in your tender care. Strip away all that impedes us from rejoicing in that splendid universal communion you have created. In your mercy,

Open our hearts and doors...

God, child with Mary and Joseph, you fled violence and found refuge in Egypt. God, our only refuge, protect those fleeing war and violence, especially the people of Yemen and other places we name now out loud or in our hearts... In your mercy,

Open our hearts and doors...

God, tumultuous voice resounding and silent whisper consoling, break down the walls we build out of fear, disrupt our comfort so that we see in peoples of all faiths, our neighbor to be welcomed and embraced. In your mercy,

Open our hearts and doors...

God, bend what is inflexible in us, refresh and enliven our witness to the gospel and your church that it not be bound by egoisms, materialism, or self-interest. In your mercy,

Open our hearts and doors...

God, you alone are our refuge and strength, grant us to live in solidarity, caring and supporting every neighbor in need. In your mercy,

Open our hearts and doors...

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils and joys unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We pray to God, our light and salvation, in the words Jesus taught us, each in our own language.

Our Father in heaven...

We sing... "Mayenziwe"/ "Your Will Be Done" (*South Africa*)

Xhosa: Ma - ye - Ma - ye - nzi - we 'nta - ndo ya - kho. Ma -
English: Your will Your will be done, be done on earth. Your
Spanish: Que se Que se ha - ga, tu vo - lun - tad. Que
French: Que ta Que ta vo - lon - té soit faite. Que

ye - Ma - ye - nzi - we 'nta - ndo ya - kho. Ma -
 will Your will be done, be done on earth. Your
 se se ha - ga, tu vo - lun - tad. Que
 ta Que ta vo - lon - té soit faite. Que

ye - nzi - we 'nta - ndo ya - kho. Ma - ye - nzi - we 'nta -
 will be done, be done on earth. Your will be done, be
 se ha - ga, tu vo - lun - tad. Que se ha - ga, tu
 ta vo - lon - té soit faite. Que ta vo - lon - té

ndo ya - kho. Ma - ye - nzi - we 'nta - ndo ya - kho.
 done on earth. Your will be done, be done on earth.
 vo - lun - tad. Que se ha - ga, tu vo - lun - tad.
 soit faite. Que ta vo - lon - té soit faite.

Blessing

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement – Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer – grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Romans 15:5-6) Amen.