

NEXT CHURCH

2017 NEXT Church National Gathering
“Wells & Walls: Well-Being in a Thirsty World”
Monday Opening Worship
Liturgy

Call to Worship (Written & led by Sarah Are)

I love the days when I wake up to rain—
laced in thunder or simple and tame;
for it reminds me of my own dry bones,
so there I will lay and listen in hope.

Listen for water hitting the ground.
Listen for the splash of baptismal sounds.
Listen for the voice that spoke to the deep.
And justice that rolls like a mighty stream.

And quietly I pray, **give me a drink.**

Give me a drink, for creation is crying.
The Samaritan woman and Hagar alike—
alone in the desert, in the heat of the day—
they need a drink, so don't stop the rain.

Give me a drink, for my soul is drying
up like the Colorado river and the plains.
Farmers can't grow corn again.
Because we have sucked the water from the earth
Fracking oil, and forgetting your words.

So quietly I pray, **give me a drink.**

Give me a drink for the kids who are crying—
salty tears, the ocean level rising.
Ice is melting, Flint forgotten.
And they say water's the new King Cotton.
But I refuse to wave a white flag,

saying, this is it, no going back.
I refuse to give up, sleep in, give in.
So we gather here, protestors worn thin.

And earnestly we pray, give us a drink.
Give us a drink, God, wash our feet.
Rain down on us, wash us clean.
Give us a drink as we gather here.
Pour out your Spirit so we can hear.

And quietly I pray, give me a drink.
Quietly I pray, give them a drink.
Quietly we pray, **give us a drink.**
Until justice rolls like a mighty stream,
and light spreads over the face of the deep,
we will sing and continue to believe.
We will worship, and seek your peace.

Visual Prayer of Confession (Written by Lisle Gwynn Garrity; led by Sarang Kang)
Friends, we come to the well thirsty — thirsty for wholeness and wellness and
togetherness. But all of creation groans, and we feel its cries.

The desert is cracked dry, and we know we play a part in this mess. From Flint and
hurricanes, to rising tides, pollution, and the Rio games, we see the ways water has been
reckless and weaponized, sparse and oversized.

Let us now offer our silent prayers of confession — confession on behalf of ourselves,
others, or the whole world—as we confront images of creation thirsting and groaning,
places where we have allowed God’s living waters to run dry.

[Visuals compiled by Lisle Gwynn Garrity:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5Aay2kJ4DhZk5JWDJQUE85c2s/view?usp=sharing>]

Assurance of Pardon (Co-written by Sarah Are & Lisle Gwynn Garrity; led by Sarang Kang)

For it all started with water, way back in the beginning;
the deepest and darkest water — life-giving.
Water of the womb, water of the deep;
either way it broke, and life was set free.

So quietly we pray, give us a drink.
Until justice rolls like a mighty stream,
and light spreads over the face of the deep,
we will sing and continue to believe.
We will worship, and seek God’s peace.

Friends, may this good news sink into our hearts
and seep out like ripples on the surface of the sea:
In Christ we are forgiven, in Christ we are set free.
May grace rain down, for God washes us clean.

Let us join our hearts and sing.
(Musicians lead chorus)

Sung Response to Forgiveness (Becky & Nathan Bliss)
“Rain Down” chorus by Delirious

Affirmation of Faith

Litany compiled from Belhar Confession.

Liturgist 1: Slats Toole, Liturgist 2: Sarang Kang Liturgist 3: Sarah Are

ALL: We believe

Liturgist 1: that God has revealed God’s self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

Liturgist 2: that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;

Liturgist 3: that God calls the church to follow in this;

ALL: for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;

Liturgist 1: that God frees the prisoner and restores sight to the blind;

Liturgist 2: that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;

Liturgist 3: that for God pure and undefiled religion is to visit the orphans and the widows in their suffering;

ALL: that God wishes to teach the church to do what is good and to seek the right; **Liturgist 1:** that the church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need,

Liturgist 2: which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice,

ALL: so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

Prayers for the People (Led by Sarang Kang)

We invite you to join us in a time of contemplative, yet active, prayer, naming the people or places where God’s living waters are needed the most. We invite you to now take a strip of blue fabric from the middle of your table and to write one simple prayer on the fabric, continuing to pray for that person or place as you hear music played. When you are finished, you may place your prayer back in the center of your table to be collected and used later in our time together. Let us now offer our whole selves to God in prayer.