
May 2016

COSROW Connections

A letter for Annual Conference COSROW leaders



Rev. Leigh's Corner

As we prepare for General Conference across our United Methodist connection, we will be recognizing 60 years of full clergy rights for women in The United Methodist Church and 40 years of clergywomen serving as delegates to General Conference. Perhaps we are so accustomed to seeing women in our pulpits and at the decision-making table that we have started to take it for granted. We might even have a tendency to think that women have accomplished all they can in the Church.

However, nothing is further from the truth. Clergywomen continue to make about 76% of what their male counterparts earn. They are routinely appointed to smaller churches. Only two of our 100 largest United Methodist Churches can boast of having a woman pastor. One annual conference reports that women are more likely to earn minimum salary than men by a ratio of 2:1. The instances of sexual misconduct and harassment continue to escalate. **In a denomination where 58% of the US members are women, we consistently continue to elect significantly more men than women to General Conference.**

The discrimination is not limited to women, but people of color receive the same treatment. The large majority of our delegates to General Conference continue to be white and upper middle class, a trend that has continued throughout our history. **Amid all of this marginalization, there is a continued push to eliminate the work of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women and the General Commission on Religion and Race.**

So, while it may seem like a small thing, **using language that embraces all that God is and all that the Church can be, continues to be important** in our United Methodist liturgy, hymnody, and practice. Expansive and inclusive language embraces all that God is. It draws the circle wide to include **all** people of every gender, race and hue. It plows over the lies of patriarchy and allows the truth of God's infinite embrace to be known.

We hope you will continue to introduce expansive language in your church and promote it in your everyday life. Be well.

The Lord's Prayer

When it comes to expansive language, perhaps the most sacred and challenging obstacle is using that language in the Lord's Prayer, ironically, also known as the "Our Father." Many people, particularly those of my generation, who support our churches, are committed to the male images of "Father" and "kingdom" used in the beloved prayer. In many congregations, you may not ever consider making it more expansive.

However, here are some thoughts, by no means exhaustive, about how a more inclusive Lord's Prayer might become part of your liturgical practice.

First, **consider asking people to pray the prayer in their first language or the language of their heart.** This gives permission for individuals to speak the prayer in the manner they find the most comforting and comfortable. I have heard pastor's begin the prayer by saying "Our mother/father who art..." Other worship leaders begin the prayer with "Our God" or "Our Parent".

Second, **consider the "kingdom" language.** Most frequently, worship leaders change this to "kin-dom" suggesting the beloved community, as opposed to the reign of a male monarch. "For yours is the 'kin-dom,' and the power..." (For more information about the use of "kin-dom", refer to our February 2016 edition.)

Some clergy might wish to adopt one of many other translations of the Lord's Prayer. For the next few editions, we will publish some of those to provide a sampling of alternatives.

In the end, however, **it is your judgment that determines whether or not introducing expansive language to this sacred prayer will bless the worshipping community.**

Expansive Liturgy for June, Year C

June 5, 2016

**Scripture Reading for the
Third Sunday of Pentecost
1 Kings 17:8-16 (17-24)**
(Rev. Annie Brittan)

Then the word of the Source of Life came to Elijah and said, "Now go to Zarephath, a village of Sidon, and stay there. I have commanded a widow there to supply you with food." So Elijah went to Zarephath. Upon arriving at the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. Elijah called out and asked, "Could you bring me a little water in a jar for me to drink?" As the widow was going to get the water, Elijah called out again, "And please bring me a piece of bread." The widow replied, "As the Spirit of Life lives, I don't have any bread- only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a couple of sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my child. We will eat it-and then we will die." Elijah said, "Don't be afraid! Go home and do what you said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me; and then make something for yourself and for your child. For this what the Spirit of Life, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day it rains on the land.'" The widow went away and did what Elijah had instructed. And there was food every day for Elijah and for the widow's family. The jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the Spirit of Life spoken by Elijah. Sometime later, the widow's child became ill. The child grew worse and finally stopped breathing. The widow said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, prophet? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my child?" "Give me your child," Elijah said. Elijah took the child from the widow's arms and carried it to the upper room and laid the child on the bed. Then he cried out to the Source of Life: "Why did you bring such a tragedy even upon this widow I am staying with, by causing the child to die?" Then Elijah stretched out over the child three times and called out, "I pray, Holy One, let the breath of life return to the body of this child." The breath of life returned to the child's body, and it revived. Elijah lifted up and carried the child to the widow, saying, "See, your child lives!" The widow said to Elijah, "Now I know for certain that you are a prophet, and that the word of the Spirit of Life is truly on your lips."

(from The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation by Priests for Equality. Further edits by Annie Brittan)

**A Call to Worship for the
Third Sunday after Pentecost**

(Rev. Leigh Goodrich)

One: A widow losses her only son,

Many: And God heals.

One: Not because God is just,

Many: Because God is merciful.

One: Not because the widow is deserving.

Many: Because God is loving.

One: Today we come to worship God

Many: A God of healing, mercy and love. AMEN

June 12, 2016

**A Call to Worship for the
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

(Rev. Annie Brittan)

One: You are our hiding place, Loving Spirit!

Many: You offer us protection in the midst of trouble.

One: We are surrounded by songs of freedom.

**Many: Let us join in the song of faith, the song of justice, and the
song of our liberation! Let us celebrate the Love
that leads us!**

**A Prayer for the
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

(Rev. Leigh Goodrich)

**All: Most gracious and forgiving One, we come this day to worship
your holy presence among us. We come humbly as those in need of
forgiveness. We come meekly as those asking for mercy. We come
owing you all that we have and all that we are. Allow us to come
closer so we might encounter your mercy. May we wash your feet
with our tears, dry them with our hair, kiss them with our mouths and
anoint them with our finest oil. For you merciful One, are our only
hope in this life and the next. AMEN.**

**A Responsive Reading for the
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost**

(Rev. Leigh Goodrich)

One: A woman stands behind you, rabbi.

Two: A woman of ill repute.

MANY: WHAT WILL YOU DO?

One: People whisper about her.

Two: There are many rumors.

MANY: WHAT WILL YOU SAY?

One: Will you greet her?

Two: Will you let her near you?

MANY: WILL YOU TURN HER AWAY?

One: Her tears fall on your feet!

Two: Shoo her away!

MANY: SEND HER AWAY!

One: But the rabbi allows her to wipe away the tears.

Two: The rabbi allows her to kiss his feet!

MANY: DO YOU LOVE HER TOO!

One: The rabbi allows her to anoint him with perfume.

Two: The rabbi invites her to follow him.

***MANY: LIKE YOU INVITE MARY OF MAGDALA, JOANNA, AND
SUZANNA!***

One: Like you invite the others,

Two: Like you invite us

ALL: AMEN.

June 19, 2016

A Prayer for the

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Juneteenth)

(Rev. Annie Brittan)

Holy and Loving Presence, today we acknowledge once again the day on which enslaved people in Texas finally heard the words of emancipation, long after many other enslaved people in southern states had celebrated government-granted freedom. We recall that justice delayed is justice denied. We affirm the rights of all people in this world: to freedom and self-determination, to resources, to assembly, to equal justice. We mourn systems of power that privilege some and prevent others from equal access to rights and resources. Whirlwinds and earthquakes have not, of themselves, brought about justice. May we, like Elijah, listen, and listen, and listen for the gentle whisper that propels us out of our self-centered concerns and fears, and into just witness, just actions, and just relationships. May we find, and treasure, the freedom of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with the Source of Life and Love. Amen.

A Prayer for the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost (Father's Day)

(Rev. Leigh Goodrich)

**Blessed Parent, Father and Mother,
We set this Sunday aside to remember our fathers.
Fathers present in our youth
Who formed and nurtured us,
Attended our school events,
Cooked our dinner and heard our prayers.
Fathers partially present
Who guided and taught us when they could.
Fathers absent for reasons we understand,
And some reasons we will never know.
We give thanks for mothers, aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings
and strangers,
Who parented us when our own fathers were unable.
Most remarkably, we give thanks to you, our God,
Who acts as both father and mother,
Nurturing, encouraging, present with us,
In both childhood and adulthood.
We ask for your comfort on this day,
As we celebrate our fathers, both present and absent,
And give thanks for the blessing that parents bring.**

AMEN.

June 26, 2016

A Prayer for the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

(Rev. Leigh Goodrich)

God who is always changing, yet is forever unchangeable, you know how difficult change is for us. We love the comfortable and familiar. New adventures and different environs frighten us. We long for "the good old days." Yet, you are the unchanging changer. Your Spirit pushes us toward change. Elisha watches as Elijah disappears in a whirlwind and asks for the gift of spirit to guide him through a new life. Jesus tells us to put our hand on the plow and never look back. Forgive us when we longingly look back. Give us courage to face a new day with determination and resolve. Remind us that when we trust you, amazing One, we are capable of more than we can ever imagine. AMEN

What Should We Be Doing Now?

May is a good time to think about:

1. General Conference is THIS MONTH in Portland, Oregon. **If you are a delegate, review the legislation from GCSRW**, particularly the resolutions regarding an inclusive UMC (petition # 60163 in General Administration) and pornography (petition #60164 in Church and Society 1). You can also go to our website to find more information about GCSRW supported legislation.

2. If you will not attend General Conference, **make arrangements to live stream the event online [here](#).**

3. **Finalize your Annual Conference COSROW event.** If you need anything, you may still be able to contact our office to get additional materials.

4. If you are a member of the Detroit/Western Michigan, Texas or New York Annual Conference, **plan a moment to celebrate the work of your retiring Bishop!**

5. **Prepare materials for your monitors for your Annual Conference.**

- i. Observe how often women and people of color are included in worship, present, speak at a microphone, or are acknowledged on the floor.
- ii. Note the use of expansive language.
- iii. Listen for resolutions that support or hamper women.
- iv. Go to our website www.gcsr.org for tips on monitoring and useful tools.

Still have questions? Call our office and ask for Leigh Goodrich, [312-346-4900](tel:312-346-4900), or email her at lgoodrich@gcsr.org.

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