

A SERVICE OF HEALING FOR A CONGREGATION

After the painful loss of a pastoral couple and a time of conflict resolution and healing, the Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard, Illinois, participated in the following service. Interim pastors Gerald and Martha Smith Good, along with other congregational leaders, planned and led the service which took place on a Sunday morning in May, 1999.

HERE WE ARE! A Service of Healing and Moving On

Hymns for gathering

Music for meditation

Call to Worship

We gather as pilgrims on a journey of faith.

**We come seeking the cloud of your presence,
and your pillar of fire,
as we travel on an uncharted course.**

*Shine in our hearts, O God,
with the light of your love.*

*Make your presence known
through Jesus the Christ, our Healer,
and our Redeemer. Amen.* (adapted from #661)

Invocation Prayer

Hymn of Praise "I stand amazed in the presence" #528

Choir "Set My Feet on Solid Ground"

Scripture Reading Mark 5:21-34

Sharing our prayer concerns

Offering

Sermon "Reach Out, Be Healed"

Hymn of Response "Oh, have you not heard" #606

Opportunities for Healing (see below)

Hymn for the Journey "Come, come, ye saints" #425

Litany and tree planting outside: A recognition of "Here We Are!" (see below)

Opportunities for Healing and Moving On

Prayer Flags: On a table in the foyer you will find fabric on which you may write a prayer for yourself or the congregation. It may be a petition, a confession, or a prayer of praise. These flags will be hung in the sanctuary and will remain as a reminder that God's Spirit continues to move among us. The idea of prayer flags, which are an ancient religious tradition, is that as the flags wave in the breeze, our prayers are carried to God. Prayer flags were chosen for today as one way to symbolize our intention of moving on and of claiming the presence and guidance of God's Spirit as we journey into the future.

Anointing with Oil: Two persons will wait at the front of the sanctuary to hear your requests for healing around the pain of the past. You are free to state your wish with the understanding that your request will be kept in strictest confidence and that a special prayer will be offered on your behalf along with anointing with oil.

Letting Go: A paper is available at the back of the sanctuary where you may write whatever it is that you wish to release. Or, if you wish, you may write on the back of this insert. A shredder is there for you to shred your written material symbolizing your letting go of whatever you have written. It has been suggested that this waste can be put into the earth where the tree is being planted.

Hand washing: A basin and water are available if you choose to wash someone's hands as a symbol of a reconciled relationship.

Litany for Tree Planting
by Martha Smith Good

On the third day God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it." It was so, and God saw that it was good. God provided hospitable land, fertile soil, water and sunshine. The vegetation grew and it was good.

Many years later a vision was born to grow a Mennonite congregation in Lombard. God watched over planting a tree in Lombard, Illinois, and it was good. LMC's tree has been standing and growing for almost 50 years. This tree has flourished, it has languished, it has experienced wounding, and it has grown -- producing fruit. This tree has gathered scars but it has not died, and it is good. This tree has been well rooted in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, it has been like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It did not fear when heat came. Its leaves have remained green. It has been a tree yielding its fruit in its season. Its leaf has not withered.

Today we plant this tree to symbolize that God is about to do a new thing among us. We will go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills will burst in song before us, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. We will be a tree of life to those who embrace us; those who become a part of us will be blessed.

As the tree lives in harmony with the earth, so may this tree demonstrate our desire to be in harmony with God and with each other. As this tree is planted with its imperfections, so may we recognize our own imperfections and commit ourselves to nurture each other as we also nurture this tree.

*Gerald and Martha Smith Good
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