

THOSE WHO *will not keep silent* DREAM

1st sunday after christmas

INTERACTIVE LITURGY

*for the First Sunday
After Christmas*

For Zoom Worship or an
Intimate In-Person Gathering

Written by Sarah Are

We invite you to implement this liturgy as-is, or adapt it for your context.
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INTRODUCTION

This year (2020), the Sunday after Christmas falls just two days after Christmas Eve. During any lectionary year, this first Sunday after Christmas can create an exhausting week for clergy and church staff. Therefore, this liturgy is designed to offer rest for church leadership so they can also be present with their families and loved ones throughout the Christmas season. This interactive liturgy is designed for either an intimate in-person service, or a worship service via Zoom.¹ Please use and adapt this order of worship to fit the needs of your community and context, including announcements, Holy Communion, and music based on your own traditions and norms.

Supplies

- * An Advent wreath or candle with a lighter or matches.
- * A cell phone or computer to use briefly to send a message of peace to someone you love.
- * A Bible.
- * Post-It Notes, 3 for each person.
- * A pen or pencil for each person.
- * A copy of the poem, "Swell," by Sarah Are, for each person.

AN INTERACTIVE LITURGY FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

CALL TO WORSHIP

Supplies: An Advent wreath or candle with a lighter or matches.

To begin, invite a worship leader to light a candle in your worship space. Or, invite all members worshipping from home to light a candle. They can light a candle on their Advent wreath if they have one at home. If worshipping via Zoom or in a format where call/response is not viable, adapt this call to worship into an opening prayer, read by one individual.

¹ This liturgy was first released in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic when most churches in the US are worshipping online. If you pre-record your online worship, adapt the service for interactive moments with your community, either by offering live commenting or a chat feature.

CALL TO WORSHIP (CONT.)

One: Here on the heels of Christmas,

All: We speak of love.

One: We speak of joy.

All: We speak of candle light and fireside.

One: We speak of dreams being fulfilled.

All: We speak of "glorias" and angel choruses.

One: We speak the words, "Do not be afraid."

**All: Here on the heels of Christmas,
We are called to speak, for the world needs a light.**

One: A light shines in the darkness, and the darkness does not overcome it.

All: Let us worship and listen. Then, let us speak. Amen.

BE THE CHURCH

Supplies: Cell phone or computer.

Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."² Our scripture passage for today tells the story of young Jesus being blessed in the temple by his community of faith. Two prophets, Anna and Simeon, proclaim praise and blessings for Jesus. The church is the people, and we cannot do faith without one another. Knowing that, take a moment to text or email someone in your faith community. Think of the people who have served as Anna and Simeon in your life—pointing out good news and Jesus when they see it. Send those people a message of peace or a short blessing, giving thanks for them.

A TIME FOR CONFESSION³

If you are worshiping via Zoom, invite one member of your community to read this prayer out loud, with the words shared on the screen. May their voice symbolize the voices of the entire community.

When I was in seventh grade, my youth pastor asked the group the question,
"Where have you seen God today?"

Thinking that this must be a trick question, I began mentally racing through my day,
trying to imagine what he could possibly mean.

Where had I seen God today? We had spent the day on a hiking trail!

All I had seen were people and nature.

As my panic settled into my gut and I was unable to answer the question,
one of my peers began speaking.

She spoke of the beauty of the sunrise and how the gift of another day felt holy.

Then another friend spoke of the little girl we passed on the trail who had given her a wildflower—
an act of random kindness to a complete stranger.

² Matthew 18:20. NRSV.

³ Since the introduction to this prayer is more personal and written in first-person, you might begin the prayer by saying something like, "Family of God, I invite you into a time of confession by first hearing this story by pastor and writer Sarah Are." Alternatively, you might re-write the introduction from your own perspective, pulling from your own experiences of looking for glimpses of God in everyday life.