

CULTIVATING & LETTING GO

A SERVICE OF
HEALING & WHOLENESS
WRITTEN BY SARAH ARE

We invite you to implement this service as-is, or adapt it for your context. Either way, please attribute credit as follows: Liturgy by Sarah Are | Film & Art by Lisle Gwynn Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

ABOUT THE SERVICE:

This service is designed to provide worshipers with a space to pray and reflect on the needs in their lives, whether they are seeking healing or wholeness for themselves, a loved one, or the earth. Incorporating many hands-on exercises for reflection, the service should last about 50-60 minutes.

The service moves through three movements:

1. The first movement intends to set the space—drawing us out of our ordinary rhythms and inviting us into holy ground.
2. The second movement emphasizes God’s power and presence in our lives, reminding us that God is bigger than our greatest needs. This is an important part of a service of healing and wholeness because too often we are afraid to ask God for the impossible for fear that it may not happen. Instead of asking God for healing, we tend to ask only for comfort. However, “playing it safe with God” in the face of suffering does not provide the healing space many need. Therefore, this section emphasizes relinquishing our fears to put trust in God’s ability.
3. The third and final movement incorporates visual reflection and invites us to rest in hope—trusting that this is not the end of our story, but still the beginning.

SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Blank pages with writing prompts (inserted in bulletin or as loose pages to pass out) and pens for a time of written reflection in Movement One. See formatted writing pages included in download. If you format your own pages, include the following writing prompts (with space underneath to write or draw a response):
 - *What burdens are you carrying?*
 - *What truth(s) would you like to share with God?*
 - *What is your prayer for this evening, or this season in your life?*
- Materials for prayer stations in Movement Two:
 - **Prayer station #1:** Oil for anointing (or water and a bowl for a remembrance of baptism) and individual prayers administered by Deacons.
 - **Prayer station #2:** Twine with clothespins clipped every five inches or so to drape across the Communion table or to hang somewhere within reach in your sanctuary (accessible for worshipers to pin prayers during the service). Include markers or pens and index cards for worshipers to write prayers on the cards and clip them onto the twine.
 - **Prayer station #3:** Candles, tapers, lighters (or wood lighting taper sticks) for worshipers to light candles during the service. One easy set-up is to fill a metal tray or deep baking sheet with sand and place tall taper candles and/or tea lights in the sand. If you want to avoid using a lighter, light a Christ or peace candle prior to the service and include wood lighting taper sticks for worshipers to light the unlit candles.
- A screen and projector to show the short film, “The Lesson of the Fig Tree” in Movement Three. If you do not have access to a screen/projector, we encourage you to print the image, “Where the Fruit Lies” in your bulletin and incorporate it into a short visual meditation.

WORSHIP LEADERSHIP:

- You will need at least 4 readers (you can have up to 8) to offer our creative scripture readings. Distribute these readings ahead of time to your leaders and invite them to practice together as a group prior to worship.
- During the prayer stations in Movement Two, you may wish to have individuals or Deacons in the back of the sanctuary to welcome worshipers for individual prayer and/or anointing.

ABOUT THIS LITURGY OUTLINE:

- *Italicized lines* are notes for worship leaders.
- Unbolded lines are to be spoken by worship leaders and, when appropriate, printed in bulletins or projected on screens.
- **Bolded lines** are to be spoken by the congregation and printed in bulletins or projected on screens.
- We expect you to fill in music that is best for your context. We encourage you to incorporate songs with themes of healing that have a meditative, introspective, or even hopeful tone. You may consider using Taizé songs for congregational singing that feels meditative and soft.

OPENING QUOTE

“Thus says the Lord . . .
Do not remember the former things,
or consider the things of old.
I am about to do a new thing;
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”
—Isaiah 43:16a, 18-19

INTROIT

WORDS OF WELCOME

We invite you to welcome people into the space, explaining the flow and intent of the service. We recommend using a tone of sincerity and hopefulness, and encourage you to draw from the “About the Service” notes as needed.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Gather us in—

All: The lost and the lonely.

One: Gather us in—

All: The seeking and doubting.

One: Gather us in—

**All: For healing, for hope, for new life we pray—
Gather us in.**