

Revitalization Initiative Opening Worship
Vital Congregations

Call to Worship

Psalm 95

Leader: O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**People: O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For the Lord is our God, and we are the people of God's pasture, and the sheep of God's hand. O that today you would listen to God's voice!**

Opening Sentences of Scripture:

Voice 1: Jesus said: I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. *John 8:12*

Voice 2: The king will say to those on his right hand: Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited. *Matt. 25: 34-36*

Voice 3: God is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for God's good pleasure. *Phil. 2:13*

Presbytery Leader: The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life into which we enter through baptism. It is possible because in Jesus Christ we have been set free from the bondage of sin and death.

Prayer for Revitalization: (Unison)

Loving God,

Author of all vitality and life; Creator of all wonder and mystery;
Tear open the heavens, let loose the Spirit's power; may the living Christ reign and redeem. Reveal to our hearts the dawning of your revitalization in every church and person; in every community & throughout the ends of the earth.

Give us courage to walk in the vitality of being *lifelong disciples*, whose lives are willing and ready to boldly follow Christ. Grant to us a life wise to walk in relationship with all people; that all people might know the Good News of Christ's love through *authentic evangelism*. Help us to be Christ's Church: passionately convicted to *focus outward*; to join the Holy Spirit at work in the neighborhood; to show Christ to any who are in need. May we *empower* all members of your body to share their gifts and *lead in service* to your Kingdom. Daily transform our hearts that we might live in *caring relationships*, where compassion and mercy, grace and peace, bring all people into the family of God. May your name be glorified, may our lives be transformed, by the *Spirit who inspires our worship* and reveals the wonder of your Holy Sabbath day. Lord, in all our life together, may we live in *healthy relationships*, centered on the righteousness of Christ Jesus. May we live a vital life in community together bearing witness to the love of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. May we shine bright as brothers and sisters of Christ until all people, throughout every nation and neighborhood, know of their place in the household of God's beloved family.

Lord, revitalize your Church, to the Vital Life that that is ours in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Dwelling In the Word

Isaiah 43:10-21

10 You are my witnesses, says the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me.

11 I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. 12 I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses, says the Lord. 13 I am God, and also henceforth I am He; there is no one who can deliver from my hand; I work and who can hinder it?

14 Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: For your sake I will send to Babylon and break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans will be turned to lamentation. 15 I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King. 16 Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, 17 who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior; they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick: 18 Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. 19 I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. 20 The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, 21 the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

What do you hear in the passage? Underline words or phrases that speak to you?

What challenges you in this passage?

How does this passage speak to you? Your call?

What message of Revitalization and Vitality do you hear?

What questions does this passage leave you with?

Reaffirmation of Baptism

Presbytery Leader: The grace bestowed on you in baptism is sufficient because it is God's grace. By God's grace we are saved, and enabled to grow in the faith and to commit our lives in ways which pleased God. I invite you now to reclaim the grace given you in baptism by reaffirming your baptismal vows:

Leader: Trusting in the gracious mercy of God, do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil and its power in the world?

People: I do.

Leader: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior, trusting in his grace and love?

People: I do.

Leader: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love?

People: I will, with God's help.

Leader: Do you renounce all evil, and powers in the world which defy God's righteousness and love?

People: I renounce them.

Leader: Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God?

People: I renounce them.

Leader: Who is your Lord and Savior?

People: Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.

Leader: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love, to your life's end?

People: I will, with God's help.

Affirmation of Faith (Unison)

Brief Statement of Faith

In life and in death we belong to God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel, whom alone we worship and serve.

In sovereign love God created the world good and makes everyone equally in God's image male and female, of every race and people, to live as one community. But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator. Ignoring God's commandments, we violate the image of God in others and ourselves, accept lies as truth, exploit neighbor and nature, and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care. We deserve God's condemnation. Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.

We trust in God the Holy Spirit, everywhere the giver and renewer of life. The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith, sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor, and binds us together with all believers in the one body of Christ, the Church. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture, engages us through the Word proclaimed, claims us in the waters of baptism, feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation, and calls women and men to all ministries of the church. In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture, to hear the voices of peoples long silenced, and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace. In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit, we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks and to live holy and joyful lives, even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth, praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Prayers of the People & The Lord's Prayer

This time is open for pastors and church leaders to lift up specific prayers for their context, congregations, and themselves. It is an opportunity to pray for revitalization and vital life in Christ, whether silently prayed, written down, or said aloud in the prayer time. A presbytery leader will conclude the prayer time by leading all in The Lord's Prayer

Doxology

Gloria Patri

Benediction