Quiet Worship, “You shall be like a Garden . . . ”

Saturday, 16 May 2020, in the Bushnell Room at 9:00 a.m.

Late May is both the time of Pentecost (in early June this year)—the beginning of the growth of the Church on earth—and the joyful beginning of the season of green growing and flowering things.

Our Gathering Music includes a Gregorian chant recorded by The Gregorian Schola of the Pittsburg Latin Community within the roofless walls of an ancient monastic church . . . on a hilltop . . . surrounded by a lush meadow . . . with songbirds in the background proclaiming their freedom.

Our two Sung Prayers from John Philip Newell’s Sounds of the Eternal—including “You shall be like a garden, like a deep spring where waters never fail”—were recorded in a wooden church in the Outer Hebrides . . . during a gale . . . so that the creaking of the rafters can also be heard in the background.

Let us come together this morning, thanking God for the goodness of the earth.

i thank You God for most this amazing
by e. e. cummings

i thank You God for most this amazing
day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees
and a blue true dream of sky; and for everything
which is natural which is infinite which is yes

(i who have died am alive again today
and this is the sun’s birthday; this is the birth
day of life and of love and wings: and of the gay
great happening illimitably earth)

how should tasting touching hearing seeing
breathing any—lifted from the no
of all nothing—human merely being
doubt unimaginable You?

(now the ears of my ears awake and
now the eyes of my eyes are opened)

Gathering Music

from “Illumination: Peaceful Gregorian Chants”

“Introit” and “Kyrie Eleison”
Opening Words

from Sounds of the Eternal: A Celtic Psalter, by John Philip Newell
The Pascal Candle iremainslighted

“In the silence of our hearts or in spoken words
let us give thanks for the gift of this day
and pray for the life of the world . . .

[A brief interval so that individual prayers may be offered, in silence]

Like light dappling through the leaves of a tree
and wind stirring its branches,
like birdsong sounding from the heights of an orchard
and the scent of blossom after rainfall,
so you dapple and sound in the human soul,
so you stir into motion all that lives.

In the early light of this day,
in the first actions of this morning,
let me be awake to life.
In my soul and in my seeing
Let me be alive to the gift of this new day,
Let me be fully alive. Amen.

[A brief period of calm and silence.]

A Morning Psalm for this day:

“God the Creator and Provider,” from Ps. 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul
    O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
    wrapped in light as with a garment. . . .

You make springs gush forth in the valleys;
    they flow between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal;
    the wild asses quench their thirst. . . .
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
    and plants for people to use,
to bring forth food from the earth,
    and wine to gladden the human heart,
oil to make the face shine,
    and bread to strengthen the human heart. . . .
I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
May my meditation be pleasing to him,  
For I rejoice in the Lord!”  

[A brief period of silence, for reflection on the Psalm]

A Sung Prayer  
from Sounds of the Eternal: Meditative Chants and Prayers  
by John Philip Newell

[Listen to the words, or hum them, or sing them quietly, as you wish]

“You shall be like a garden,  
like a deep spring where waters never fail. . . .”  

Isaiah 58:11

[Brief silence]

A Gospel Reading for this Day  
“Do Not Worry,” Matthew 6:25-30

Jesus said, “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear.  
Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?  
And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these.  
But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you . . . ?”

Great Silence:

The sound of the gong signals the beginning (one time) and the ending (three times) of this time for listening with the ears of our hearts, for seeking to rest in God’s embrace.  
[c. 10 min.]
Prayers of the People

from the Book of Common Worship

“Eternal God, your touch makes this world holy. Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the splendor of creation, and in the beauty of every human life.

Especially this morning we thank you
  for the beauty of green growing things throughout the land . . .
  for the sustaining love of family and friends . . .
  for the treasure stored in every person . . .
  and for the fellowship of faith in your church . . .

  Lord in your mercy . . . Hear our prayer

We dare to pray for others, God our Savior, claiming your love in Jesus Christ for the whole world, committing ourselves to care for those around us, in His name.

Especially this morning we pray
  for the people in countries ravaged by strife or warfare . . .
  for those isolated by sickness or sorrow . . . and those who face death . . .
  for those who cannot find work today . . .
  and for those who work in His name in every land . . .

  Lord in your mercy . . . Hear our prayer

Lord, listen as we now offer our individual prayers, in silence or in words.
  [each individual prayer ends with,   Lord in your mercy . . . Hear our prayer]

We know you hear our prayer, Lord. Listen also now as we join our voices
In the prayer taught us by your son, Jesus:

  “Our Father, who art in heaven,
   hallowed be thy name.
   Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
   on earth as it is in heaven.
   Give us this day our daily bread;
   and forgive us our debts,
   as we forgive our debtors;
   and lead us not into temptation,
   but deliver us from evil.
   For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
   and the glory, forever.   Amen”
A Closing Sung Prayer: from *Sounds of the Eternal: Meditative Chants and Prayers* by John Philip Newell

[Listen or hum or sing along as you feel called]

“Let me hear, let me hear, what you will speak
When I turn to you in my heart.”  *Psalm 85:8*

[A brief Silence.]

**Closing Words:** from *Celtic Treasure: Daily Scriptures and Prayer*, by John Philip Newell

“The blessing of heaven,
the blessings of earth,
the blessings of sea and of sky.
On those we love this day
and on every human family
the gifts of heaven,
the gifts of earth,
the gifts of sea and sky.”

Leave when you are ready