

Resources shared by Rev. Stephen Bascom at the January Ministry Day.
Steve gives permission to share in worship in your local churches.

Scriptural reflection based on Eugene Petersen's translation of Psalm 36:5-10

*God's love is meteoric, God's loyalty astronomic,
God's purpose titanic, God's verdicts oceanic.
Yet in God's largeness nothing gets lost;
not a person, not a mouse, slips through the cracks
How exquisite your love, O God!
How eager we are to run under your wings,
To eat our fill at the banquet you spread
as you fill our tankards with Eden spring water.
You're a fountain of cascading light,
and you open our eyes to light.*

Prologue to Peace and Reconciliation

When we speak of a *Way Forward*, we tend to sketch it with the definition of our own conviction and point of view. Surely God, we tell ourselves, must see things as we do! Yet near the edges of our certainty, we hear a voice (*Can it be God's voice?*), saying, "Forget the former things. Do not dwell on the past. Now I am doing a new thing. Do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland..."

Reconciliation with God

When we sing, "Let peace begin with me," we admit that we cannot give peace that we have not experienced within. If we are at war with ourselves or are unable to accept ourselves as God created us, we cannot give peace to others. It is more than sitting still and being quiet. We know much too well the feeling of being still, yet seething with inner anger. It is only when we love the 'self' God made that we are free to harmonize with the rest of God's created world.
Sound a tone of healing.

Family Harmony

For those who have experienced family ties that are strong, healthy and nurturing, the feeling of belonging may be taken for granted. For those who have not experienced such a gift, 'family' may be the source of pain or sorrow. We cannot know peace if we are upset with someone close to us. How tragic it is when a family relationship is severed or strained over a misunderstanding or violation of trust.

If you are troubled by family disharmony, perhaps yours or that of another, breathe a prayer of forgiveness into the fractured family.
Sound a tone of healing.

Family of Faith

In John 17, Jesus prays that his followers, the Church, would be one. Yet how divided we are! Rather than complement, we compete. Instead of building one another up, too often we talk one another down. We assume that we have the truth and others do not. How silly.

If you know someone who feels alienated from the body of Christ, the Church, pray for a gift of reconciliation.

Sound a tone of healing.

Community Village

During this past year, our district has been pierced with violent acts of tragic proportion. These have made headlines, but there have also been acts of grace and compassion. Thank God for those who are first responders in times of crisis and for those who show courage and compassion when trouble comes.

If you know of someone in our District community who is hurting, offer a prayer for intervention and recovery.

Sound a tone of healing.

National Healing

Racial tension with law enforcement. Acts of protest by this one or that one. Strident tension between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots.' Red states vs. blue states. Immigration problems. To 'wall' or 'not to wall.' Inner-city strife. The social problems are many and over-whelming.

How do we find peace in a pluralistic country like ours? What does it say on our national coin? *In God We Trust*. O, that we might become one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all!

I invite you to offer a prayer for national health.

Sound a tone of healing.

Global Grace

If you look at the earth from outer space, you do not see the divisions of nations, religions, ideologies, etc. that splinter the human family. But for those of us on the planet surface, we are bombarded with fear, terrorism, war and rumors of war. Peace may seem unreachable.

In God, the unreachable enters the very heart of the human condition. Born in a Bethlehem stable, the Prince of Peace gave his life to reconcile all to God. When that

happened, death itself shifted to reverse. Peace begins with a changed heart, forgiveness for an historical grievance and a willingness to build toward the future.

If you feel led, come forward to ask for peace for a specific world challenge that needs God's healing power and grace, then tap a tone for healing.