

Remembering Victims of Domestic Violence and Abuse

Remembrance: Where Healing Begins

This service was adapted from one planned by the Women @ Fourth Church Connect and the Center for Whole Health, a program of Chicago Lights at Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago.

Ringing of the Chimes (*silence is kept*)

Gathering Words

O God, come to our assistance.

O Lord, hasten to help us.

The Lord our God gives us salvation and victory.

The Lord our God brings us light and life.

God's right hand has done wonders.

So let us proclaim the works of our God.

Hymn *God of All People Everywhere* (words below) Jane Parker Huber

Response

Now hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people.

Thanks be to God!

Reading *I Got Flowers Today* (words below)

Psalter Psalm 55 (selected verses) (*responsive by paragraph*) *The Message*

Open your ears, God, to my prayer; don't pretend you don't hear me knocking. Come close and whisper your answer. I really need you.

My insides are turned inside out; specters of death have me down. I shake with fear, I shudder from head to foot. "Who will give me wings," I ask—"wings like a dove?" Get me out of here on dove wings; I want some peace and quiet. I want to walk in the country. I want a cabin in the woods. I'm desperate for a change from rage and stormy weather.

This isn't the neighborhood bully mocking me—I could take that. This isn't a foreign devil spitting invective—I could tune that out. It's you! We grew up together! You! My best friend! Those long hours of leisure as we walked arm in arm, God a third party to our conversation.

And this, my best friend, betrayed his best friends; his life betrayed his word. All my life I've been charmed by his speech, never dreaming he'd turn on me. His words, which were music to my ears, turned to daggers in my heart.

Pile your troubles on God's shoulders—God will carry your load. God will help you out. God will never let good people topple into ruin. But you, God, will throw the others into a muddy bog, cut the lifespan of assassins and traitors in half.

And I trust in you.

Prayers for Healing

adapted from Caroline Sproul Fairless

God of grace, you nurture us with a love deeper than any we know, and your will for us is always healing and salvation. God of love, you enter into our lives, our pain, and our brokenness, and you stretch out your healing hands to us wherever we are. God of strength, you fill us with your presence and send us forth with love and healing to all whom we meet.

We praise and thank you, O God.

God of love, we ask you to hear the prayers of your people. We pray for the world, that your creation may be understood and valued. Touch with your healing power the minds and hearts of all who live in confusion and doubt, and fill them with your light. Touch with your healing power the minds and hearts of all who are burdened by anguish, despair, or isolation, and set them free in love.

Hear us, O God of life.

Break the bonds of those who are imprisoned by fear, compulsion, secrecy, and silence. Fill with peace those who grieve over separation and loss.

Come with your healing power, O God.

Restore to wholeness all those who have been broken in life or in spirit by violence within their families; restore to wholeness all those who have been broken by violence with our family of nations, restore to them the power of your love; and give them the strength of your presence.

Come, O God, and restore us to wholeness and love.

Let us name before God and this community gathered those, including ourselves, for whom we seek healing...

(those gathered may name individuals silently or aloud)

...that they in our remembering may find sanctuary and shalom.

In our homes, our workplaces, our communities, our churches, and in this world.

We lift up before you this day all those who have died of violence....

(those gathered may name individuals silently or aloud)

...in that place where there is no pain or grief, but life eternal.

O, God, in you all is turned to light, and brokenness is healed.
Look with compassion on us and on those for whom we pray, that we may be re-created
in wholeness, in love, and in compassion for one another.

So, let it be so!

Remembering

*(during the silence, those gathered may come to the Common Table and
light a votive candle in remembrance and prayer for someone (or for
themselves) living with violence or who has died from violence)*

Unison Prayer

**God of comfort and strength, revive us when we are weary, console us when we are
full of woe, and set our feet anew in the way Christ leads us. Protect us from sin so
we may always be glad disciples, diligent in service and bold in witness for our risen
Lord, Jesus Christ, Savior of the world. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Dismissal

The grace of God be with us all, now and always.

Amen.

Bless the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

"God of All People Everywhere"

Maryton LM

("O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee")

Jane Parker Huber, 2001
For the Presbytery of Chicago
Task Force on Family Violence

Henry Percy Smith, 1874

God of all people everywhere, Your love for us is ours to share.
Yet victims suffer cruel blows. And words can kill where power grows.

In the complexities of life, keep us from being numb to strife.
Open our eyes to inner sight. And tune our ears to other's plight.

So when we hear the cries of pain, grant us the grace to be humane.
Grant us the heart to love and care, to be Your presence sanding there.

I got flowers today!

It wasn't my birthday or any other special day;
We had our first argument last night;
And he said a lot of cruel things that really hurt;
I know that he is sorry and didn't mean to say the things he said;
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today!
It wasn't our anniversary or any other special day;
Last night he threw me into a wall and then started choking me;
It seemed unreal, a nightmare, but you wake up from nightmares;
And I woke up this morning sore and bruised all over — but I know he is sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today!
And it wasn't Valentines Day or any other special day;
Last night he beat me and threatened to kill me;
Make-up and long sleeves didn't hide the cuts and bruises this time;
I couldn't go to work today because I didn't want anyone to know — but I know he's
sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today!
And it wasn't Mother's Day or any other special day;
Last night he beat me again, and it was worse than all of the other times;
If I leave him, what will I do? How will I take care of the kids? What about money?
I'm afraid of him, but I'm too scared and dependent to leave him! But he must be sorry;
Because he sent me flowers today.

I got flowers today....
Today was a special day — it was the day of my funeral;
Last night he killed me;
If only I would have gathered the courage and strength to leave him;
I could have received help from the Women's Shelter, but I didn't ask for their help;
So I got flowers today — for the last time.

*If you or someone you know is being abused, call the National Domestic Violence
Hot Line toll free at (800) 799-7233 for assistance and guidance.*