



I've been  
meaning  
to ask...

a series for curiosity,  
courage, & connection

# Words for worship

Written by Rev. Sarah Are

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## 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.**

## A benediction for the series

Family of faith,  
as you leave this place, may God grant you  
the curiosity to counter assumptions,  
the vulnerability to befriend,  
the bravery to speak your truth,  
the wisdom to listen,  
the strength to ask for help,  
the resiliency to choose love, even when it's hard,  
and the awareness of the Holy Spirit always beside you.  
In the name of the Great Connector—Love itself,  
go in peace.

## Week 1 I've been meaning to ask... where are you from?

### Call to worship

We are from north and south.

**We are from tiny apartments and expansive homes.**

We are from this city and from others far away.

**We are from big families and dinners made for one.**

We are from stages of grief and stages of love.

**We are from hot summers and cold winters.**

We are from kitchens with passed down recipes,  
and front porches with old, familiar swings.

**We are from the dust of the earth and the stars of the sky.**

We are from a lot of places, but today we are here.

**Today we are together.**

Holy God, gather us in.

### Call to confession

If we were to call the prayer of confession by another name,  
I would call it a moment for truth telling—

A moment to pause, to reflect,  
to be honest about the places we want to grow  
and the way we need God's help.

Family of faith, there is power in honesty.  
So pray with me. We worship a loving and gracious God.

### Prayer of confession | Truth telling<sup>1</sup>

When people heard that Jesus was from Nazareth,  
they asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

**We confess, God of beginnings, that we have asked the same question.**

Can anything good come from that side of town?

**From a school with poor test scores?**

From a criminal history?

**From the opposite political party?**

From a history of addiction?

**From a faith with doubt?**

From a church with faults?

**Holy God, forgive us for doubting that you are in all things at all times.**

**Open our eyes to see your goodness, not as something that resides here or there, but as the expansive grace that it is.**

Can anything good come from there?

**Yes. Always yes. Amen.**

<sup>1</sup> Technically, Nathanael is the one who asks this question in John 1:46. However, in this liturgy we broadened those making this assumption, imagining that others may have wondered the same thing when first learning about Jesus of Nazareth.

## Week 1 I've been meaning to ask... where are you from? *(cont.)*

### Words of forgiveness

Family of faith, if you ever ask yourself,  
"Can anything good come from this messy and human life of mine?"  
Remember this: God is always whispering, "Yes."

You were created in the image of God.  
Your origin story is one of goodness and love from the very beginning.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

**God is here. God is at work among us.**

**We are forgiven. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.**

### Prayer for illumination

Holy God,  
I don't always know how to pray,  
but you find me anyway.  
I don't always know how to listen,  
but you are in my ears all the same.  
I don't always know how to believe,  
but you surround me with beauty and  
I find myself held together in love.  
Where I come from there are so many distractions.  
Where I come from there is so much noise.  
Find me.  
Hold me.  
Be in these words.  
Help me hear.  
Amen.

### Affirmation of faith

**We believe that goodness can come from the dirt,  
that faith can come from doubt,  
that minds can be changed,  
that justice can begin with us,  
and that something good *can* come from Nazareth.  
We believe all these things, because we believe that God is  
more expansive than we have words for—  
showing up in the corners of our world so often  
ignored and denied.  
We believe that from this place of holy surprise,  
God invites us forward—  
beckoning hope, bravery, and curiosity from each of us.  
"Come and see," God says.  
We believe.  
Help our unbelief.  
Amen.**

## Invitation to the offering

Jesus told the disciples, "Come and see."  
Come and see the healing that is about to take place,  
the meals at the Table,  
and the little ones who will run to me.

Come and see the prisoners freed,  
the hungry fed,  
and the demons cast out.

Come and see the crowds  
and the walking on water  
and the prayers in the garden.  
Come and see!

Friends, we are being invited to come and see a deeper life of faith.  
One of the ways we can say yes  
is by giving what we have—time, money, and/or our talents.  
So let us say yes to this invitation of faith together.  
Let us give our tithes and offerings. Amen.

## Invitation to the Table

Jesus said to his disciples, "Come and see."  
He didn't reference check them before extending the invitation.  
He didn't ask them a series of questions to prove themselves.  
He didn't quiz them on temple attendance or Torah knowledge.  
There was no prerequisite to being invited, they just were.

Friends, the same goes for you.  
Whether you have been coming to this Table for years,  
or if this is your first time—you are invited here.  
Whether you come with a faith that could move mountains,  
or a seedling-sized faith still growing with care—you are invited here.  
Whether you come from near or far, east or west—you are invited here.  
And whether you come confident in the knowledge that you were made by God,  
or if you are still seeking to trust that good news—you are invited here.  
All of you—your faith, your doubt, your hope, your fear—all of you is invited here.

## Prayer of the people | Great prayer of thanksgiving

God of North, South, East, and West,  
I have been meaning to say... thank you.  
Thank you for scooping up the dirt and breathing life into it.  
Thank you for forming this body, this life, this world, these people.  
Thank you for drawing us in, for holding us up, and for weaving us together—  
even when it's hard, *especially* when it's hard.  
If people ask, "Where are you from?" my mouth speaks of geography,  
but my soul always sings your name.

So today we come to you in prayer with gratitude overflowing—  
gratitude for the places we've been,  
for the people who've shaped us,  
and for the spaces we call home.

But we also come to you with prayers on our hearts.

*Insert prayer requests for your particular community and context here.*

*For example: There are people who are hungry, the hospitals are full, loneliness feels like the second pandemic, parents are exhausted (playing teacher and guardian), there is grief that hovers far too close and far too heavy, etc.*

And so we ask you to scoop us up like you scooped up the dirt on that first day.  
Hold our hearts alongside our worries.  
Relieve us of this burden.  
Protect us in the palm of your hand,  
and draw us closer to one another as you do.

God of creation, you have always been our first home,  
So hear our prayers for the spaces we call home today.

*For Holy Communion:* And as you do, we ask that you would be among us in this meal. Allow this bread and cup to remind us of your home for us. Allow this meal to fill us to the brim so that when we leave this space we carry bits of you with us. Allow this meal to nourish us in the way only you can.

We are inviting you in.  
Come and see.

Now, with the confidence of children who believe without hesitation,  
we pray to you the prayer you taught us, saying...

*Close with the Lord's Prayer.*