

At Home Worship Materials for 2020 September 6

Prelude

(Listen to, play, or sing a favorite song to get you centered for worship.)

Welcoming the Light of Christ

(Light a candle as a way of honoring the sacred space around you. Note that your feet are on Holy Ground. Allow your shoulders to relax. Take a deep breath.)

Center yourself in the Love of The Sacred. Today's theme for worship is Remember, Restore, Renew. Allow those words to sink in, and ask yourself these questions:

What do I need from worship today?

What do I bring to worship today?

Honoring the many places from which we worship and the truth that we are Together While Apart, let us open ourselves to being changed by the Spirit while we worship today.

Call to Worship

(Enjoy this Call to Worship in whatever way makes sense to you. And if you happen to be worshipping alone, just read all of the parts! No worries. God is with you.)

One: Praise God!

Many: Sing to God a new song!

One: Give thanks to our Maker.

Many: We rejoice in our sovereign God.

One: Let us praise God with dancing and music.

Many: Let the faithful sing for joy as we praise God together!

Invocation

As we gather here in your name, O Christ, you are already among us. Keep us open to your presence in us and around us that we may grow closer to you. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God, too often we take you for granted. When you call us to leave the situations that constrain us, we are too complacent to hear your voice, and too timid to leave what is familiar. Make us ready to go where you lead us. Amen.

Assurance

God grace is abundant, God's love is never-ending. As children of God, receive forgiveness and blessing.

The Sharing of Scripture (Exodus 12:1-14)

(Note: The Exodus passage tells the story of the preparations for the original Passover, and the enslaved Hebrew people made ready to leave their oppression behind: the focus, the urgency, the sparseness of preparation may have some resonance in today's congregations, trying both to stay healthy in isolation, but also to be present in meaningful ways to address social inequity in communities.)

¹ YHWH said to Aaron and Moses in the land of Egypt, ² “This month will be the first of all months to you. You will count it as the first month of the year. ³ Say this to the whole community of Israel: On the tenth day of this month, every family in Israel will take an animal from the flock, one for each household. ⁴ If your household is too small for a whole animal, join with your next door neighbor, and divide the animal as the number of persons requires. ⁵ The animal must be a year-old male without blemish. You may take it from either the sheep or the goats. ⁶ You must keep it until the fourteenth day of the month, then the whole community of Israel is to slaughter it at sunset. ⁷ Some of the blood must then be taken and applied to the two doorposts and the lintel of every house where the animal is eaten.

⁸ That night you will eat the roasted flesh with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. ⁹ Do not eat any of it raw or boiled, but roasted over the fire – the head, feet and entrails. ¹⁰ You must not leave any over until morning. Whatever is left in morning you are to burn.

¹¹ This is how you are to eat it: with your belt buckled, your sandals on your feet, and a staff in your hand; you will eat it in haste. It is the Passover of YHWH. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night and strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both humans and animals. I will execute this judgment on all the gods of Egypt: I am YHWH. ¹³ The blood will mark the houses where you live. When I see the blood I will pass over you, and no harm will come to you when I strike the land of Egypt.

¹⁴ “This day will be for you a memorial day, and you must celebrate it as a feast to YHWH. All generations are to observe it forever as a feast day.”

Meditation

Bring to mind today’s theme: Remember, Restore, Renew. What did you hear in those words? What piqued your interest? What made you cringe? Today, we are offering two writings and four pieces of art upon which to reflect on this layered passage. Enjoy wandering through these offerings:

1. Honoring your own responses and the responses of others, consider this poem by E.M. Broner and Naomi Nimrod based on this passage:

***In every generation,
each man
is obliged to see himself
as though
he went out of Egypt.***

***In every generation,
every woman
is obliged to see herself
as though
she went out from Egypt...***

Consider the very SLIGHT differences in these stanzas. Think about the gender stereotypes at play. In what ways would you change this poem to be even more inclusive? How did this poem bring the story from Exodus alive and/or change the story’s focus for you?

2. Consider this writing: *A Passover Haggadah as Commented upon by Elie Wiesel.*

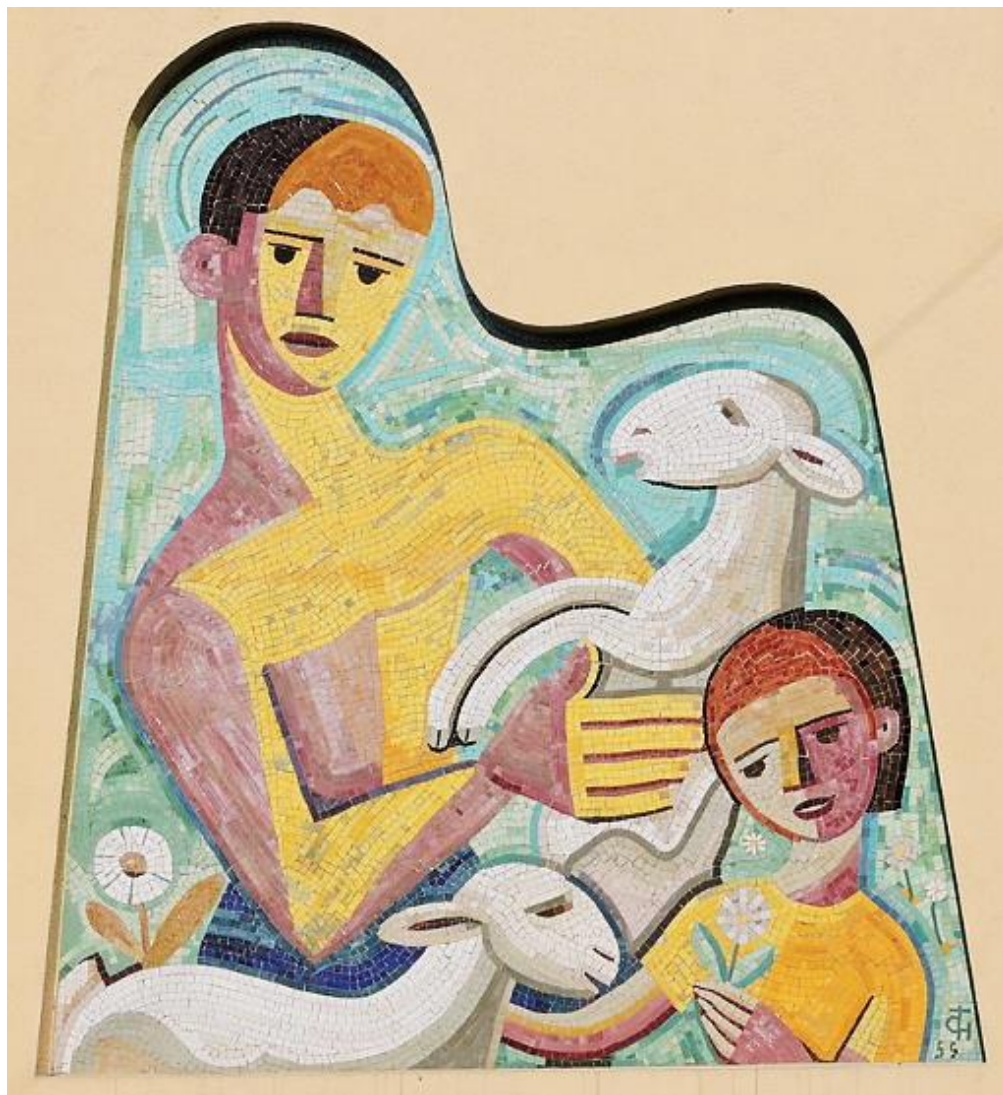
Toward the beginning of the Seder meal each year, the youngest of the children present at the table asks the Four Questions:

- How does this night differ from all other nights? On all other nights we eat wither leavened or unleavened bread. Why on this night do we eat only unleavened bread?
- On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs. Why on this night do we eat only bitter herbs?
- On all other nights we need not dip our herbs even once. Why on this night do we need to dip twice?
- On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining. Why on this night must we all recline?

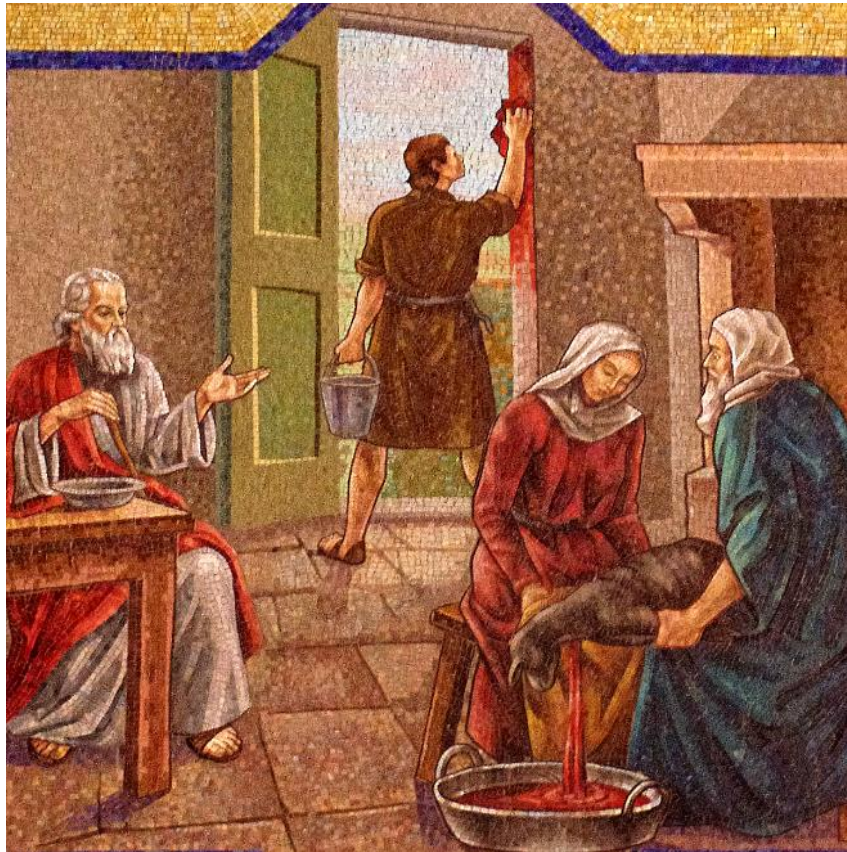
These questions are simple and practical... The entire Seder has been conceived for children. We must teach them how to ask questions. And therefore, for guidance, we offer them the proverbial Four Questions. Then, it is up to each child to ask his [or her] own.

What questions are YOU asking in this season? Do these questions help you to discern your next steps for today? This week? Next month?

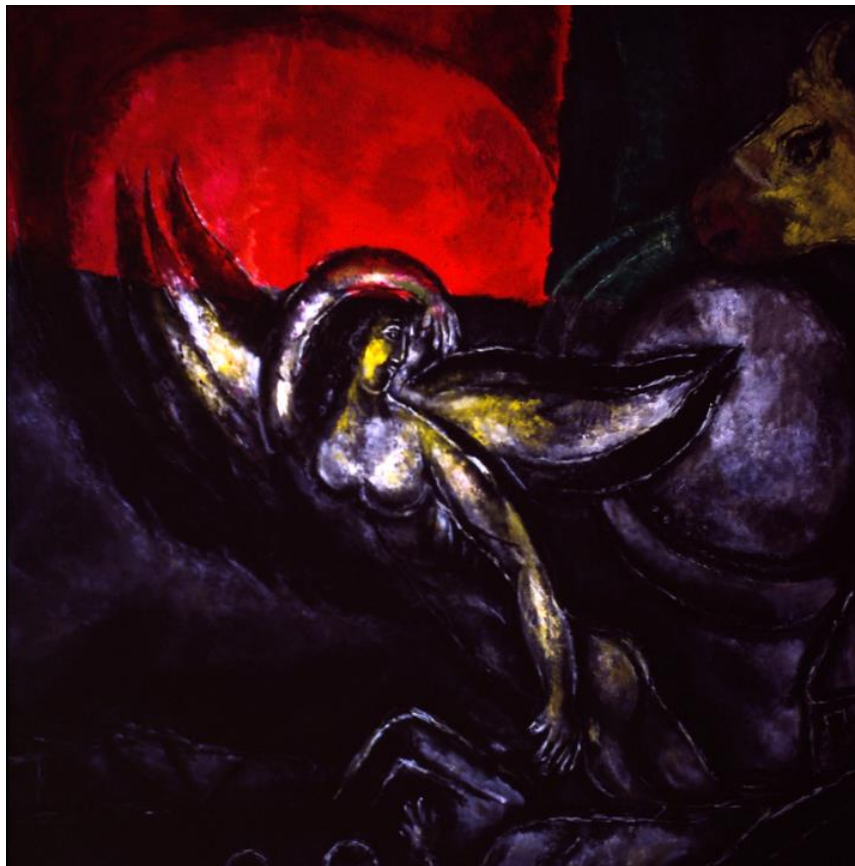
3. The following four art images are based on this scripture. Not their similarities and their differences. To which one(s) are you drawn? What might that say about your faith in this moment (if anything)?



Children with Lambs
Street mosaic in Vienna, Austria



*Blood of the Paschal Lamb Applied to Doorpost
St. Mary Magdalene, Columbus, OH*



*Angel of Death Passing Over
Marc Chagall, Musée du Message Biblique Chagall, Nice, FR*



The Passover in the Holy Family: Gathering Bitter Herbs
Dante Rossetti, Tate Britain in London, England

Honoring the various responses you have had, noting the questions that have arisen in your soul, and leaving space for the mystery that will continue to accompany this passage as we carry it with us this week, we continue to worship together, using all of our senses...

Call for the Offering

God gives to us continually. In each breath, we receive God's spirit. Responding to God's generosity, let us give to God in thanksgiving.

Inspired to Give? Consider these options:

Online: <https://onrealm.org/stpeterscarmel/-/give/now>

Text: Send a text to 73256 with the keyword CARMEL and a dollar amount (Click the link sent in the reply text to complete your gift.)

Mail: St. Peter's UCC 3106 E. Carmel Drive, Carmel IN 46033

Prayer of Dedication

We dedicate to you, generous God, our lives. Receive these offerings as a sign of our gratitude and commitment. Amen.

Holy Communion

(If you would like to remember the Sacrament of Holy Communion, we offer the following...)

Invitation

Jesus sets the table where we dine today.

Jesus' welcome extends to all of humanity.

People of all ages, of all genders, of all cultures and cultures,
of all economic conditions are welcome here.

No one can earn a place at this meal.
Come of your own choice...

Bring your hopes and your history.
Bring your deliberations and your doubts.
Come as your whole self.

Great Thanksgiving

One: May God be with you

Many: And also with you!

One: Lift your hearts

Many: We lift them up to God!

One: Let us give thanks to God most high.

Many: It is right to give God thanks and praise!

Creating God, we give thanks that you brought this world
and all of humanity into being,
breathing life into us.
You show yourself in each face we encounter,
each and all created in your image.

We thank you for your covenants.
You taught us how to serve you,
and how to honor each other.
To bring us into relationship with you,
you sent us prophets and teachers.
We offer thanks that when we ignored your embrace,
you persisted in reaching out to us.
We thank you most for the life and ministry of Jesus.
The death and resurrection of Christ taught us
that nothing, not even death, can separate us from you.

Through your Holy Spirit, you breathe through us, gathering us as church.
Thank you for continuing to bring us together that we may celebrate you.
We join our voices with all of creation to praise you, praying:

**Our Creator God,
Holy be your name.
Your kin-dom come,
your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kin-dom, the power, and the glory.
Now and forever. Amen.**

A Response in Song: Still Speaking "Sanctus" by Mark A Miller

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1k9fza-ZTEgSVWub7h9A4hf_Bm-DnoSOW/view?usp=sharing

Prayer of Thanksgiving after Communion

Gracious God, we thank you for this meal and for all of the ways you nourish us. Grow in us that we may nourish others. Sustain us as we press toward the goal of your call in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Benediction

Go forth into the world to meet all creation with the Spirit of Hope and Justice!

Additional Information

Hymns to consider for today's worship:

When Israel was in Egypt's Land

We Are People on a Journey

The Day of Resurrection

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Much of this worship was adapted from the work written by the Rev. Ruth Garwood. Rev. Garwood is a certified leader of InterPlay, a system of forms in movement, story-telling and vocalizing that brings body and soul together, and brings communities together. She teaches suicide first aid via Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training.

Scripture was from The Inclusive Bible: The First Egalitarian Translation

Images were obtained from the Vanderbilt Divinity Library

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