Intergenerational Worship

Prayer – Romans 15:4-13

Year A – Advent 2 Dec 4 2016

What is this: Intergenerational Prayer

Where it’s used: In any intergenerational gathering, but specifically Lectionary based gatherings.

Time: 8 - 10 minutes

Bible Focus/theme: Romans 15:4-13

15:4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

15:5 May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus,

15:6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15:7 Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

15:8 For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,

15:9 and in order that the Nations might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Nations, and sing praises to your name";

15:10 and again he says, "Rejoice, O Nations, with his people";

15:11 and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Nations, and let all the peoples praise him"

15:12 and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Nations; in him the Nations shall hope."

15:13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

What’s needed:

Copy of the Romans 15:4-13 displayed on screen or in print
Prayer liturgy, either on screen or in print
Tree stump (or section of a thick log), Drill series of holes in the top of the stump, roughly 5-6 cm deep.
Long bamboo skewers. Attach a leaf* (securely with hot glue) to the top of each skewer. Make sure there’s enough for everyone in your gathering.
Set of Leaves on skewers, each with one of the identified repeated words written on a leaf. Place these in the drilled holes in the stump.
Markers
*Leaves - Option 1: use cut out leaf shapes from green paper (a variety of different tone greens will add to the visual representation of our prayers for different things being gathered.
Option 2: Use real gum leaves. With this option you will need to provide permanent markers (e.g. Sharpies) for writing on the leaves.

Words for leaves
Written
Steadfastness
Encouragement
Hope
One another
Welcome
Glorify
Nations
Praise
And again

Introduction

- As the introduction begins, have some volunteers distribute skewers with leaves among your gathering

Good things are worth doing more than once. The great stories of God are worth hearing more than once.

Our reading in Romans begins with a reminder that the ancient writings of God’s people the Jews, the scriptures, were still strong and steady encouragement and wisdom for the first century Christians in Rome, and for us today.

These words from God are worth a second go around. They are well worth reading again.

In fact in the reading from Romans itself, there are words that are so helpful and good, that they are repeated – used a second or even third time.
And the passage has an image of a tree stump sprouting a new shoot. And this is an image that gets a second and a third time around in different parts of the Bible – Isaiah, Matthew, Romans. And the image of the tree itself is about second times around - It is a tree that has grown large and beautiful once, and has been chopped down, but is now putting out shoots and growing again. It is a call to hope. A call to faith in second times around.

Melbourne Artist Chris Booth’s art based on this passage and the other passages that mention this shows a community –maybe like us – gathered around responding to the tree and the second time shoot appearing in various ways.
As we come to pray for the world and for one another, we are reminded that prayers are worth praying more than once. Not because God doesn’t listen the first time – God already knows our prayers before we do. But because when we pray our prayers a second or third time we affirm and strengthen our faith in God’s loving action in the world.

So we are going to make use of the repeated words in Romans 15 to launch our prayers today.

We will have some bidding prayers and responses together, then there will be time for us to take a leaf and add our prayers to the new shoots that are growing from the stump. We are joining in God’s second and third and fourth chances of grace in the world.

As we come to pray let’s remind ourselves of the repeated words from Romans 15.

- Display these on screen or include them in the printed liturgy. Invite the gathering to repeat the word after you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Written</th>
<th>v. 4, 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steadfastness</td>
<td>v. 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>v. 4, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
<td>v. 4, 12,13</td>
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<tr>
<td>One another</td>
<td>v. 5, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>v. 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glorify</td>
<td>v. 6,9,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nations</td>
<td>v. 9, 10, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Praise</td>
<td>v. 9, 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>And again</td>
<td>v. 10, 11, 12</td>
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</tbody>
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Prayer Liturgy

Loving God,

The written scriptures bring us your stories, and we have gladly heard them, some of us again and again and again. We thank you that your story brings new fresh hope and steadfast sure encouragement to those who hear.

We pray that your story would be heard in our community with crisp fresh life, new power, green shoots of hope, sprouting potential and a tender invitation to respond.

To us. To many. Again and again.

God of steadfast love and faithfulness,
Thank you for giving us Jesus, who taught us peacemaking and compassion.
You call to us live in harmony with one another.
We are sorry for our actions, thoughts and attitudes of hurt and harm and hubris and harshness.

Even when we wrong one another, your life and death stands as the promise of reconciliation. And so you hold out your forgiveness and new life to us again.

To us, to many. Again and again.

Great God of all,
You have welcomed us to the beautiful world you’ve made.
You call us to welcome one another. To welcome the stranger. To welcome the enemy. To welcome the nations.
May we live out this welcome,
declare this welcome,
avocate for this welcome,
ensure this welcome,
accept this welcome from you and from others.
You are the God of Welcome –

To us, to many. Again and again.

Loving God.
All the nations of the world are your precious and loved children.
We pray for justice and love to rule.
We pray for hope, not fear to take hold of our leaders.
We pray for unity and generosity to shape our communities, so that your glory and goodness would be shown...

To us, to many. Again and again.

Holy Spirit, by your power you fill us with Joy and Peace and Believing and Hope.
We look for your kingdom to come.
We pray for wholeness and healing for those who are broken,
strength and hope for those who are struggling,
peace and justice for those in conflict,
deliverance and freedom for those who suffer.
Let your kingdom come, and your will be done...

_In us, for many, Again and again._

Amen.

**Conclusion**

- At the end of your gathering time, invite those who would like to take a prayer leaf away with them to do so. They may take it home to be a prompt for prayer in their household. They may give it to someone else as a symbol of their prayer and solidarity for them. They may ‘plant’ it somewhere in a public space as an act of prayer for the community.