

Fourth Sunday in Lent
Spiritual practice to cultivate Forgiveness, one of the eight pillars of joy.
5:30 p.m., Sunday, March 27, 2022
Jonesborough Presbyterian Church

(As you enter, please light a candle and place it by the Christ Candle.)

Gathering music “Salve Regina (Mode 1)” The Trappist Monks of Gethsemani

Welcome

Music **“Keeping Vigil With the Mystery”**

My heart can see into the darkness.
And my prayer travels deep,
Where the Eternal One waits.
With love I listen, keeping vigil with the Mystery,
With the One who waits for me.
I am with the One who waits for me.

Lyrics by Macrina Wiederhekr and music by Velma Frye, from *Seven Sacred Pauses*

Scripture Gen 50: 15-21

Joseph Forgives His Brothers

¹⁵ When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “It may be that Joseph will hate us and pay us back for all the evil which we did to him.” ¹⁶ So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this command before he died, ¹⁷ ‘Say to Joseph, Forgive, I pray you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, because they did evil to you.’ And now, we pray you, forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸ His brothers also came and fell down before him, and said, “Behold, we are your servants.” ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, “Fear not, for am I in the place of God? ²⁰ As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. ²¹ So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.” Thus, he reassured them and comforted them.

¹⁰ Be still and know that I am God

Silence

Meditation Our guided meditation this evening is on **Forgiveness – The Fourfold Path** found on pages 334-336 in *The Book of Joy*.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu became a modern-day spokesperson on forgiveness when he was asked to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa (in 1995) by President Nelson Mandela. “Forgiveness,” Tutu says, “is the only way to heal ourselves and to be free from the past.” As he and daughter Mpho explained in *The Book of Forgiving*, “Without forgiveness, we remain tethered to the person who harmed us. We are bound to the chains of bitterness, tied together, trapped. Until we can forgive the person who harmed us, that person will hold the keys to our happiness, that person will be our jailor. When we forgive, we take back control of our own fate and our feelings. We become our own liberator.” Consider the attitude that Joseph adopted with his brothers.

Archbishop Tutu and the Dalai Lama -- when discussing people who are committing atrocities -- spoke in one voice: Forgiveness does not mean you forget what someone has done, contrary to the saying “Forgive and Forget.” The Dalai Lama continued, “You should remember the negative thing, but because there is a possibility to develop hatred, we mustn’t allow ourselves to be led in that direction – we choose forgiveness.” Unforgiveness can lead to ongoing feelings of resentment, anger, hostility, and hatred that can be extremely destructive.

1. **Telling your story.** All forgiveness must begin by facing the truth. Go back to a time and place of the emotional experience and see the scene in your mind’s eye. Move away from the situation to a point where you can watch the event unfold. Observe your distant self.
2. **Naming the hurt** – as you watch the situation unfold, try to understand his or her feelings. Why did he or she have those feelings? What were the causes and reasons for the feelings? If the hurt is old, ask yourself whether you want to continue to carry this pain and suffering? If the hurt is fresh, ask yourself, “Will this situation affect me in ten years?”
3. **Granting forgiveness.** The ability to forgive comes, in part, from the recognition of our shared humanity. Can you accept the humanity of the person who hurt you and the fact that they likely hurt you out of their own suffering? If you can accept your shared humanity, then you can release your presumed right to revenge and can move toward healing rather than retaliation.
4. **Renewing or releasing the relationship.** Once you have forgiven someone, you must take the important decision of whether you want to renew the relationship or release it. If the trauma is significant, there is no going back to the relationship that you had before, but there is the opportunity for a new relationship. When we renew relationships, we can benefit from healing our family or community. When we release the relationship, we can move on, especially if we truly wish the best for the person who has harmed us.

Prayer A Prayer of Confession, *Book of Common Worship*, (page 88)
From the PCUSA Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

*Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo.
Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has
become for us a consuming fire of judgement.*

*Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be
changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus
Christ, the light of the world. Amen.*

Departing Music **“Keeping Vigil With the Mystery”**

(Please leave in silence.)

Resources used in preparing tonight’s spiritual practice

Joy Practices

Dalai Lama, Desmond Tutu, and Douglas Abrams, *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World* (New York: Avery, 2016), 307-348.

Prayer

A Prayer of Confession, *Book of Common Worship*, (page 88). From the PCUSA Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993.

Music

Macrina Wiederkehr (lyrics) and Velma Frye (composer and performer) from the CD *Seven Sacred Pauses* (Notre Dame, IN: Sorin Books, 2008). The words were from a book of the same name by Macrina Wiederkehr.

Velma Frye, “Dona Nobis Pacem,” track 12; “The Angel of Night,” track 1; “Keeping Vigil with the Mystery,” track 3 – from *Seven Sacred Pauses CD*. www.velmafryemusic.com
www.cdbaby.com/cd/velmafrye Book:
www.amazon.com/Seven-Sacred-Pauses-Mindfully-Through/dp/1933495243
www.avemariapress.com/product/1-933495-24-3/Seven-Sacred-Pauses/

The Trappist Monks of Gethsemani “Salve Regina (Mode 1)” from the CD *Hail, Holy Queen* (1958).