

Healing Service for Those Touched by Breast Cancer

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LORD, HELP AND HEAL ME!
A Healing Service for Those Touched by Breast Cancer
April 9, 2000 Bethel Lutheran Church, Great Falls, MT

Welcome

Call to Worship

Opening Song

"On Eagles Wings"

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Psalm Dialogue

El Shaddai, With all my soul, and all that is within me,
I Bless Your holy name.
I remember with joy all your blessings.
You forgive all my sin and heal all my dis-eases.
You save my life from ruin and crown me with loving-kindness.
You surround me with tender mercy and satisfy my desires with good.
As long as I live, You will renew my strength like the eagles.
You know how fragile our bodies are, El Shaddai.
They so quickly return to dust! Our days are like fast-fading grass.
We flourish for a little while like wildflowers in the fields.
When the wind blows over them, they wither and die.
But Your steadfast love, El Shaddai, lasts forever.
You pour out Your generosity on Your children—all who revere You,
And all the generations of those who keep covenant with You.
O my soul, bless El Shaddai!

from Psalm 103, adapted by M. Rienstra

Readings from Scripture

Genesis 49:22-25

Ezekiel 15:6

Matthew 9:18-26

Song

"Healer of Our Every Ill"

201

Readings, Stories, Meditations

Prayers of the People

Song

"There is a Balm in Gilead"

217

Anointing with Oil and Prayers for Healing

Participants may come forward for anointing and/or to request specific prayers for healing.

Closing Song

"Breathe on Me Breath of God"

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Benediction

Notes on the Service:

Call to Worship:

We come into your presence, loving Creator, in many ways.

Sometimes we seem to skip down the aisle, just like children, bouncing with anticipation.

Sometimes we come hesitantly, bearing to bring our mistakes and guilt to you.

Sometimes we come stomping down the aisle, needing to ask you WHY and tell you of

our anger.

Sometimes we come into this place under such a heavy load that we can hardly make our

way.

You know, loving God, how each of us has come this day, what our needs are, what we bring with us as we prepare to worship with others. Grace us with your calming presence. Help us to trust your promise of peace and to come as children come, to be with each other and with you. Amen.

by Carol Q. Crosby, in *Sing Out New Visions: Prayers, Poems and Reflections by Women*, edited by Jean Martensen, copyright National Council of Churches, 1998, p. 58.

Psalm Dialogue

by Marchiene Vroon Rienstra, in *Swallow's Nest: A Feminine Reading of the Psalms*, Eerdmans, 1992, p. 26.

Prayer after the Gospel Reading:

Healing Savior, when you walk this earth, the woman who touched the hem of your garment was healed of her affliction. We, too, often long to touch the hem of your garment in order to be healed. We touch you now, Lord, through our prayers

and ask that you look into our hearts and give comfort, healing, and peace to those of us in need. God, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

by Ruth E. Fisher, in *Sing Out*, op. cit., p. 60

Readings, Stories, Meditations:

"I practice, but I do not celebrate resurrection. For I feel as if it is Holy Saturday. This day, the day between Jesus' crucifixion on Good Friday, and Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday, is a day about which the Gospels are silent. . . It is true that for most of my life I have skipped from Good Friday blithely across the abyss of Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday. After all, I have known the story has a happy ending.

"But during the first Easter Sunday worship service after my breast cancer diagnosis, when we sang, Where, O death, is now they sting?, I knew the exact spot death still stung my body! Since that Easter Sunday, Holy Saturday has been a hallowed space for my mortal body. I want, as I write, to stand in this space, thereby to straddle—not settle or subdue—these tense days of drama. For I know I cannot celebrate resurrection without descending to the dead, since practicing means making 'more tracks than necessary, some in the wrong direction.'"

by Melanie A. May, in *A Body Knows: A Theopoetics of Death and Resurrection*, The Continuum Publishing Company, 1995, pp. 19-20.

Loving the Body

I have lost my place
My body has become
a foreign country.
I no longer know
its maps or rules.

What languages it speaks
are silent to me or
frighten me to silence
by their strangeness.

They seem harsh.
They come from nerve,
and grate.

Every muscle groans
under their sounds.
Skin erupts in the effort
of trying to understand.

I am dried out
from loss of tears.
And sometimes
there are screams. I grow suddenly dizzy,
caught in the white-out
of an inner tundra storm.
Without focus I cannot tell
if I am going somewhere
or holding still.

I want to move freely
in this country and
live here again.
I want to respond well
to its voices and weathers,
learn its new laws.
I want to feel its welcome again.
I want to be unafraid and peaceful
and know that, after all,
I was born here.

I need an interpreter in my own skin.
Friend, help me to find and keep place here.
Be doctor or lover.
Hold me and remind me how.

by Alla Bozarth, in *Stars in Your Bones: Emerging Signposts of Our Spiritual Journeys*, North Star Press, 1990, p. 37.

They said, "just like two small beauty spots,"
I heard, "permanent tattoos"
And numbers of Auschwitz arms
bombaraded my brimming eyes.
My woman's life-bearing body
has been marked and machines scream
day after day
souvenirs of Civil Defense sirens
conjuring the perjury of protection,
"duck and cover,"
while my breast is naked to the waist.
Stubborn like limestone soil
I celebrate my own daily office
laid out like a burnt offering
on their unholy table.
I convert this to be my sanctuary
when I call forth the cloud of women
who will heal me:
pray for me now in the hour of my need
and I am anointed.

My breasts are becoming wilder.
I am filling up feisty, sweet with sweat,
tough as teak, tender as tendrils
to petal plentifully.

by Melanie May, op. cit., p. 47

God's Still Small Voice
God walks quietly in my life
There are no clanging bells.
Or sounding trumpets.
No astounding revelations to point the way.

I used to think I was living wrong
Because there were no miracle cures
No burning bushes or parting seas
But then God spoke in His still small voice

And I learned: prayers are heard
Scattered pieces finally fall into place
People's lives fit together again
And worries fade like the morning fog.

God is quiet. But God is near.
The promise is kept: I am not alone.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

by Melanie Barton, in Sing Out, op. cit., p. 66.

Blessing:

May God the Creator who knit you together in your mother's womb, look down tenderly upon you in your distress and touch you with his healing spirit. May you be made whole in body, mind and spirit so that you may once again rise up to serve and honor the One who heals you. In the name of our Creator, Savior and Sustainer God. Amen.

by Lynn Becker Hantel, in Sing Out, op.cit., p. 66.