

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

10 OCTOBER 2011



Christ and Abbot Mena, Egypt 6th -7th Century

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened,
and I will give you rest.*

Matthew 11:28

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Introduction

Because of the many ways in which Christian faith communities worship God each week, it is inappropriate (not to say almost impossible) to provide service outlines that will suffice for every context. We hope, therefore, it is helpful if we offer a variety of resources, some of which might meet the needs of your own particular context.

The publication *Promoting mental health: A resource for spiritual and pastoral care*¹ suggests that:

“Worship on the theme of mental health can be organised at any time of the year. Many faith communities plan events to coincide with *World Mental Health Day*, which takes place on October 10th each year.

When planning a service, try to:

- Involve those with personal experience of using mental health services and/or carers in the planning of worship and encourage them to share ideas for theme and content.
- Encourage service user participation in the service e.g. playing, singing, reading, prayers, drama, particularly of their own composition.
- Invite a user or carer to preach the sermon.
- Try to have someone speak at the service about his or her own experience. This could take the form of an interview.”

In the Department of Spiritual and Pastoral Care, we share these aspirations but, at the same time, recognise that this is not always possible. There is a stigma attached to much mental illness that precludes those who experience the effects from talking publicly about it. But since liturgy and worship have a pastoral heart, *World Mental Health Day* offers a particularly appropriate occasion in which faith communities can open their arms in response to the challenging question in St Matthew’s Gospel:

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’

And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’

World Mental Health Day offers us all the opportunity to ask ourselves searching questions about the nature of mental illness, to break down the barriers that are so often erected for our protection and to search for the image of God that Christians proclaim to see in all people. Through the ritual elements of worship, by reading God’s word and breaking it open and, if it is your tradition, in the breaking of bread for the healing of all, we hope it will be possible for you to find fresh meaning in the area of mental illness. This year, we have included some additional resources that offer reflections and prayers on the subject of loss and bereavement (p.7). You will also find a liturgy aiming at gathering up and acknowledging many different forms of loss; this may be adapted to a smaller group (p.3). Please feel free to use these resources as you require. An acknowledgement in your service sheet or during your worship would be appreciated.

We would also appreciate any feedback that you may care to make, to enable us to see if resources such as these are helpful and would be welcomed in succeeding years. If you feel able to offer us your comments about on these resources, please contact Revd Cathy Wiles at:

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A selection of readings from the Bible

Old Testament Readings

"Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

Isaiah 54:10

The Book of Ruth

The Book of Ruth offers a touching account of the nature of loss. After the deaths of their respective husbands Naomi and her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, search for ways of dealing with their respective situations. In particular, Naomi and Ruth set out on journeys, both actual and symbolic, to find meaning in their losses.

They go back to Israel and, at first, cling to each other in grief. In time, Ruth acquires a new husband. Naomi does not, but she finds solace in being able to help her daughter-in-law come to marriage. Both are transformed, each in their own way, but only after they have painfully faced the reality of their respective losses.

It is a story that speaks of the potency of loss and its potential for transformation.

Psalms

Psalms are prayers of the People of God. They express about every possible human experience and emotion and do this in form of poems and prayers addressed to God. Many of them express the grief triggered by loss. Psalms can accompany us through the process of grieving, as they help us to put words on many of the emotions we experience as we live through the process - numbness, shock and denial; pain and guilt; anger and bargaining; depression, loneliness; working towards acceptance, hope and trust.

*You have taken my companions and loved ones from me;
the darkness is my closest friend.*

Psalm 87/88: 18

*And even now that I am old and grey,
do not forsake me, O God...*

Psalm 70/71: 18

*The LORD is close to the brokenhearted;
he rescues those who are crushed in spirit.*

Psalm 33/34: 18

*My days are vanishing like smoke ...
my heart is withered like the grass.
I forget to eat my bread...*

Psalm 101/102: 3-4

*Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;
O Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy...*

*My soul waits for the Lord
More than watchmen wait for the morning.*

Psalm 129/130: 1, 6

New Testament readings

*'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.
Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'*

John 14:27

Mark 6: 30-32

In Mark's gospel, the miraculous feeding which immediately succeeds this passage follows a period of intense activity involving much teaching and healing. Like many of our lives, the human Jesus and his disciples must have been exhausted, both physically and spiritually. The retreat to 'a deserted place' might be a metaphor for the way in which we could deal with stress.

Luke 12: 22-28

How much time and energy – emotional and physical – do we spend trying to manage our lives? Of course, it's far easier to preach a gospel of self-restraint than it is to practise it oneself. But the pressures of modern life, almost irrespective of our circumstances, are such that we invariably find ourselves working harder and harder just to maintain our social position. And ultimately for what purpose, asks Jesus.

The gospel challenge, to allow ourselves to be like ordinary field flowers, two a penny, yet still more beautiful in God's eyes than all the finery that Solomon wore, is immense. But it holds within it, a powerful antidote to the stress and anxiety that are almost the inevitable consequences of the rapidly spinning merry-go-round that is modern life.

I Corinthians 12: 14-26

This is such a well known passage that it is easy to miss its radical challenge, not only to the Corinthian community but also to Christian congregations today. At one level, it's clear that Paul is challenging his readers (and us) to recognise that we all have some part to play in the body of Christ, for no other reason than we are made by God and beloved of God. But the really crucial words lie in the phrases 'the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable' (v 22) and 'God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member' (v 24).

If we take these words at face value, those who suffer with physical, mental emotional or spiritual distress (which at some time or other will be all of us) are to be the most highly valued members of the community. Being 'mentally ill' is a stigma laden label. It is frequently attached to people whom secular society sees as threatening in some way. It almost always leads to the isolation of the person to whom it is attached. Yet here is Paul telling us that this is not God's way of looking at things. He challenges us to be counter-cultural in our attitudes and behaviour, radical in our thinking and prophetic in our actions.

Other suggestions of readings from the Bible with notes, which have been published in previous years, are available from the Department of Spiritual and Pastoral Care. If you would like to receive them, please e-mail cathy.wiles@swlstg-tr.nhs.uk

A Liturgy of Loss

The Hour of Loss²

This is a liturgy to gather up and acknowledge many different forms of loss – death, health, fitness, youth, career, home, country of origin, child, status, hope, confidence, relationship – anything which is now a blank space within us.

For this service you will need

- ✚ A long purple cloth
- ✚ A large white candle
- ✚ A number of small candles and tapers
- ✚ A basket containing some cut flowers

Opening

Within most of us there is a mourning,
an empty space which was once filled
or which we expected to fill,
a sense of ourselves which is no longer there,
a way of being and living which has gone.
Within us there is a loss,
a grieving for something held precious.

In this moment we claim the dignity of our human journey,
our travelling with a grief.
In self-respect we claim it for ourselves
and in compassion, we honour it in others.
In faith, we lay it before a loving God.
It is like a white light which burns within us
in the dignity of our living.

A purple cloth is spread and a large candle lit.

Respecting the Loss

Sometimes loss is white with sharp pain,
sometimes it is white with emptiness
and sometimes it is a white and gentle warm light
which starts to fill the space left by the loss.

Silent reflection.

What are the losses which we want to honour before each other and before God today?
What do we want to bring for naming as significant,
worthy of our awareness,
and worthy of our care?

As we sing quietly (*or listen to this music*),
anyone who wishes to bring forward a loss in their lives
is invited to light a small candle and place it on the cloth.

If you wish to name the loss out loud, feel free to do so,
or you may wish to simply name it in your heart.

The people quietly sing something like a Taizé Chant, e.g. 'By night we hasten in darkness' or 'Bless the Lord my soul', or a quiet Kyrie (see suggestions below) as people come forward to light the candles.

Reading and/or Reflection

The Comforting

Let us place these, our losses, in the hands of God.

Dear God,
you who cried when you lost a friend,
who wept over Jerusalem,
who asked friends to stay with you
while you struggled with your life,
please stay with us now, holding us in your love.
Cover our lives with the fragrant oil of your healing,
send your Spirit to comfort us in our grief,
and fill our emptiness with new things.
Gather our scattered lives into a community of love,
where loss can be shared
and gifts can be given
for the easing of mourning.
We pray these prayers in confidence,
for you are our restoration
and the renewal of our hope.

Amen.

Blessing

Let us bless all these things we have lost,
covering them round with flowers,
so that they know they are cherished
and we know that we are cherished,
never left alone to grieve.

The people put flowers around the candles and give flowers to each other.

Go in peace,
and may the loving Parent God surround you with love,
Christ Jesus hold out arms of healing towards you,
and the Spirit gather you into a new day.

Amen.

A selection of chants

The use of repetitive chants within a religious ritual is common to many faith traditions across the world. They have a calming, even therapeutic, feel, helping to still the spirit and focus the mind on God. Within the theme of mental illness in general and stress in particular, they may be seen to be particularly appropriate.

From the community at Taizé

By night we hasten in darkness,
to search for living water,
only our thirst leads us onward. *(Repeat)*

Lord Jesus Christ,
your light shines within us,
let not my doubts nor my darkness
speak to me.
Lord Jesus Christ,
your light shines within us,
let my heart always welcome your love.

Jesus, remember me
when you come into your Kingdom. *(Repeat)*

○ Lord hear my prayer.
○ Lord hear my prayer:
when I call, answer me.
○ Lord hear my prayer.
○ Lord hear my prayer;
come and listen to me.

Within our darkest night,
you kindle the fire that never dies away,
that never dies away. *(Repeat)*

From the Iona Community

Take, O take me as I am,
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart and live in me.

Kindle a flame to lighten the dark
and take all fear away.

From other sources

- 1 Be still and know that I am God. *(Repeat three times)*
- 2 I am the Lord that healeth thee. *(Repeat three times)*
- 3 In thee, O Lord, I put my trust. *(Repeat three times)*

Anon

Calm me Lord as you calmed the storm;
still me, Lord, keep me from harm.
Let all the tumult within me cease,
enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

Margaret Rizza

Hymns and Songs

The following are suggestions for suitable hymns and songs that reflect human feelings of ill-health and stress and the Christian theological understanding of and response to it. They dwell on the themes of pain and healing, exclusion and inclusion, service and community and, above all, the free gift of God's grace to all, whatever the circumstances. Given the number of hymn books used in our various Christian communities, we indicate here the first line of each hymn or song in alphabetical order.

Amazing Grace how sweet the sound
At even ere the sun was set

Brother, sister let me serve you

Christ be before me, Christ be behind me
Christ's is the world in which we move (*A Touching Place*)
Circle me, O God, let your love (arms) enfold me, circle me, O God...

Dear Lord and Father of Mankind
Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name

Father hear the prayer we offer
Father I place into your hands the things I can not do

God be in my head and in my understanding
God to enfold you
Great God your love has called us home

He's got the whole world in his hands
Help us to help each other Lord
Here in this place new light is streaming (*Gather us in*)

Jesus Christ is waiting
Just as I am, without one plea

Kum ba yah, my Lord ... Someone's crying, O Lord, kum ba yah...

Lead, kindly Light
Let us build a house where love can dwell (*All are welcome*)
Longing for light we wait in the darkness (*Christ be our light*)
Lord we come to ask your healing
Lord of all hopefulness
Love is the touch

Make me a channel of your peace

Now the green blade rises

O the love of my Lord is the essence

Rock of ages, cleft for me

Take this moment time and space
Through all the changing scenes of life

When I needed a neighbour

Prayers in times of Loss and Grief

"In difficult times always carry something beautiful inside."

Blaise Pascal

Calm my troubled heart;
give me peace.
O Lord, calm the waves of this heart, calm its tempests!
Calm thyself, O my soul,
so that the divine can act in thee!
Calm thyself, O my soul,
so that God is able to repose in thee, so that his peace may cover thee!
Yes, Father in heaven,
often have we found
that the world cannot give us peace,
but make us feel
that thou art able to give peace;
let us know the truth of thy promise: that the whole world may not be able
to take away thy peace.

-Soren Kierkegaard³

O risen Christ, you go down
to the lowest depths
of our human condition,
and you burden yourself
with what burdens us.
Still more, you even go
to visit those who have died
without being able to know you.

And even when within us
we can hear no refrain
of your presence,
you are there.
through your Holy Spirit
you remain within us.

Brother Roger, Taizé⁴

My heart was wilderness
I heard your voice;
my grief divided me
you held me close;
bitterness consumed me
you overflowed with trust;
I longed to be with you
you let me stay.

Janet Morley⁵

O God,
you call us to commitment
even at the point of despair.
Give us the faith of Martha
to find in our anger and loss
a truthful place to proclaim you
our resurrection and life,
through Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Janet Morley⁶

When we stand in the place of death and
loss,
Mary, stand with us,
and teach us how to endure.

When we stand in the place of
powerlessness, unable to act,
Mary, stand with us,
and teach us how to hold fast.

When we stand in the place of separation,
Mary, stand with us,
and teach us how to let go,
releasing ourselves and all
for whom we yearn
into the mystery of divine love,
so that we may become ready to move
on
into the new community of love
where God's Spirit calls.

Nicola Slee⁷ (from John 19: 25-27)

Responses, Confessions, Litanies and Intercessions

Opening Responses

In the darkest night –
when we feel most afraid
**someone comes alongside us –
a man walking in the darkness
as if darkness were day.**

In the storms of life
when we feel buffeted –
our dreams blown and torn –
our trust stretched to its fullest
**Jesus calls our name
and calms the storms that assail us.**

In the trials of life
when we feel overwhelmed by worry
and apprehension
**Jesus reaches out a hand -
invites us to trust
and we find we can walk on water.**

Wellspring Liturgy⁸

Penitence and forgiveness

For the times that we have erected barriers,
to exclude those who we experience as
different from ourselves,
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

On the occasions that we have avoided
contact with those who behave
differently from
ourselves,
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

In the situations when we have failed to see
the light of Christ in those who appear
different from ourselves,
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May the Source of all life
forgive our excluding instincts,

remove the fear of difference from our
souls,
and enable us to embrace all who are
created in God's image.

Amen.

Richard Allen

Intercessions

*It is suggested that a period of silence might be
kept between the subject of the prayer and the
bidding.*

O Lord our God,
for those whose lives are strained and
stressed.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.

For those whose hold on life is fragile.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.

For those whose illness makes them
vulnerable.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.

For those whose families struggle to
understand them.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.

For families and friends,
nurses, doctors and therapists
and all who seek to walk alongside
the stressed and strained, the vulnerable
and the fragile.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.

O Lord our God,
for all whose lives are in turmoil
through the effects of mental illness.....
Hear our prayer
and pour out your peace.
Amen.

Mary Hawes

General Prayers and Blessings

Lord Jesus
help us to trust you
even when we are going through
the most trying times of our lives;
to know that you are there with us
and that your faithfulness is just. Amen.

World Vision⁹

'Down and not up, in and not out'

God the ground of all being,
hold us in the depths of your love,
take us deep into the heart of your covenant,
and let your blessing go with us now. Amen.

Alison Norris¹³

God of all comfort and strength,
soothe us when we are hurt;
calm us when we are afraid;
hold us when we are alone;
support us when we are tired;
lead us through the valley of the shadow
to the place where we can, at last,
come home.

Nicola Slee¹⁰ (from Psalm 23)

May the Lord be with us to guide us,
within us to strengthen us,
without us to protect us,
above us to raise us,
beneath us to uphold us,
before us to lead us,
behind us to guard us,
ever about us this day and evermore. Amen.

Celtic Blessing

O God, with whom we wrestle
until the break of day,
make us long to seek your face
beyond the limits of our strength:
that in our wounds
 we may remember you,
and in your blessing
we may find our selves,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Janet Morley¹¹

God of the Weary

God of the weary
 receive my tiredness.
God of the hungry
 know my emptiness.
God of those in danger
 hold my fear.
God of the silenced
 hear my despair.
God of the heavy laden
 give me rest
God of the hopeful
 fill me again with longing.

Janet Morley¹⁴

Breath of Christ's loving,
Holy Spirit,
within each person you sow faith,
faith which can only be
a very simple trust,
so simple that everyone can receive it.

Known or unknown, in our darkness
you kindle a fire
which never dies away.

Brother Roger¹²

Acknowledgements

- ¹ National Institute for Mental Health in England, mentality & The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, *Promoting mental health: A resource for spiritual and pastoral care*, mentality, London, 2004.
- ² Dorothy McRae-McMahon, *In this Hour – Liturgies for Pausing*, p. 27-29, SPCK, London, 2001.
- ³ From Olivia Warburton, *Hear our Prayer – An Anthology of Classic Prayers*, Lion Publishing plc, Oxford, 2005.
- ⁴ Brother Roger, *Life from Within – Prayers by Brother Roger of Taizé*, Mowbray, London, 1990.
- ⁵ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, SPCK, London, 1992.
- ⁶ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, SPCK, London, 1992.
- ⁷ Nicola Slee, *Praying like a Woman*, SPCK, London, 2004.
- ⁸ Wellspring Liturgy, www.wellsprings.org.uk
- ⁹ Catherine von Ruhland (ed), *Prayers from the Edge: Meditations for Life's Tough Times*, Triangle, London, 1996.
- ¹⁰ Nicola Slee, *Praying like a Woman*, SPCK, London, 2004.
- ¹¹ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, SPCK, London, 1992.
- ¹² Brother Roger, *Life from Within – Prayers by Brother Roger of Taizé*, Mowbray, London, 1990.
- ¹³ Hannah Ward, Jennifer Wild, Janet Morley, *Celebrating Women*, SPCK, London, 1995
- ¹⁴ Janet Morley, *All Desires Known*, SPCK, London, 1992.