

OPENING VISUAL MEDITATION

Black and White Headshots of Innovators/Trailblazers

CALL TO WORSHIP

Reminded of a few of the world's trail blazers—
people who have dared to be different—
let us worship the One
who created each one of us
as uniquely different creatures.
Please stand as you are able.

**ALL: Northerner and Southerner,
College-bound and "I'm getting a job,"**
One: bless the spaces between us.

**ALL: Athlete and artist,
musically gifted and
"I can't carry a tune for the life of me,"**
One: bless the spaces between us.

**ALL: "I've got this faith stuff all figured out"
and "I don't have a clue,"**
One: bless the spaces between us.

**ALL: "Never have to think about money"
and "scared there won't be enough,"**
One: bless the spaces between us.

ALL: This gender, that gender, these genders,
One: bless the spaces between us.

**ALL: For You, O God, created us—
each and every one of us good,**
One: so let us be honest about how we are different
as we settle in to worship You.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Knowing that God takes us just as we are,
let us confess the challenge of being different.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**Creating God,
sometimes it is hard being different.
There's so much pressure to conform,**

**to be like everybody else.
Normal (whatever that means) is much easier.
But You don't call us to play it safe—
to blend in and be like everyone else.
You call us to fully be ourselves,
celebrating our distinctions and differences.
So forgive us when all we want to do is fit in,
rather than stand out.
When we are tempted to hide parts of ourselves,
remind us that You love us just the way we are.
And whenever we participate
in shaming people who are different,
stop us in our tracks. Amen.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sisters and brothers and all members of the family of God,
God takes us as we are,
but thankfully doesn't leave us that way.
God summons out the very best of us
and gives each one of us the chance to begin again.
So show yourself to the world.
Be who God created you to be.
And make space for those who are different than you.
For God loves you.
 God welcomes you.
 God accepts you.
Celebrate this good, good news
by sharing signs of peace with one another.

PASSING THE PEACE

One: People of God, let us share the peace of Christ.
 Peace be with you!
ALL: And also with you.

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 11:1-9 NRSV

Now the whole earth
had one language and the same words.

²And as they migrated from the east,
they came upon a plain in the land of Shinar

and settled there.

³And they said to one another,
"Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly."
And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

⁴Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city,
and a tower with its top in the heavens,
and let us make a name for ourselves;
otherwise we shall be scattered abroad
upon the face of the whole earth."

⁵The Lord came down to see the city and the tower,
which mortals had built.

⁶And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people,
and they have all one language;
and this is only the beginning of what they will do;
nothing that they propose to do
will now be impossible for them.

⁷Come, let us go down,
and confuse their language there,
so that they will not understand one another's speech."

⁸So the Lord scattered them abroad
from there over the face of all the earth,
and they left off building the city.

⁹Therefore it was called Babel,
because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth;
and from there the Lord scattered them abroad
over the face of all the earth.

The word of God for the people of God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.