

# 2017 Youth Conference Weeks I & II Liturgy

(Monday, Wednesday, Friday)

MONDAY –

Entrance Music: Blue Skies by Ella Fitzgerald

<https://youtu.be/nB-xqDZbEVQ>

Call to Worship:

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAc283YmTPk>

Breathe. Just breathe.

Breathe in ... and breathe out.

Breathe in God's mercies ... breathe out your worries.

Breathe in all that is sacred in this place ... breathe out everything you have left behind.

Breathe in the all that is good and holy ... breathe out everything else.

Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out any chaos.

Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out any distraction.

Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out any hurt.

Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out any hate.

Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out any fear.

Breathe in God's peace ... and realize there is nothing else left.

So breathe in God's peace ... and breathe out God's peace.

Breathe in God's peace ... and breathe out God's peace.

Breathe in God's peace ... and breathe out God's peace.

Breathe. Just breathe.

## **Scripture Reading: selections from Ezekiel 37**

The spirit of the Lord brought me out and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all around. There were many bones lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, "Mortal, can this bones live?" I answered, "O Lord God, you are the one who knows." Then he said to me, "Tell these bones these things: 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. The Lord says, 'I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will cover you with tendons and ligaments and draw you back together. Muscles and flesh will cover you again. I will put breath in you, and you shall live, and you shall know that I am the Lord.'" I did as I was commanded. And suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came

together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were tendons and ligaments, muscle and skin — but there was no breath in them. Then the Lord said to me, “Say to the the breath, ‘Thus says the Lord God: come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these bones, that they may live.’” I did as I was commanded, and the breath came into them, and they lived.

**A Poetic Reading: Where the Breath Begins (by Jan Richardson)**

Dry  
and dry  
and dry  
in each direction.  
Dust dry.  
Desert dry.  
Bone dry.  
And here in your own heart:  
dry,  
the center of your chest  
a bare valley  
stretching out  
every way you turn.  
Did you think  
this was where  
you had come to die?  
It's true that  
you may need  
to do some crumbling,  
yes.  
That some things  
you have protected  
may want to be  
laid bare,  
yes.  
That you will be asked  
to let go  
and let go,  
yes.  
But listen.  
This is what  
a desert is for.  
If you have come here  
desolate,  
if you have come here  
deflated,  
then thank your lucky stars  
the desert is where  
you have landed —  
here where it is hard  
to hide,  
here where it is unwise

to rely on your own devices,  
here where you will  
have to look  
and look again  
and look close  
to find what refreshment waits  
to reveal itself to you.  
I tell you,  
though it may be hard  
to see it now,  
this is where  
your greatest blessing  
will find you.  
I tell you,  
this is where  
you will receive  
your life again.  
I tell you,  
this is where  
the breath begins.

### **Call to Confession**

This is where our breath begins:  
with honesty.  
We can't appreciate the beauty of grace  
until we acknowledge how much we need it.  
We can't fully appreciate the breath of God  
until we realize how much our lives are missing.  
We have come together in this place we love.  
Let us together take a deep breath,  
and admit the truth of ourselves to one who created us.  
Let us pray, first together, and then in the stillness of our hearts:

### **Prayer of Confession**

This is where our breath begins:  
with honesty.  
We can't appreciate the beauty of grace  
until we acknowledge how much we need it.  
We can't fully appreciate the breath of God  
until we realize how much our lives are missing.  
We have come together in this place we love.  
Let us together take a deep breath,  
and admit the truth of ourselves to one who created us.  
Let us pray, first together, and then in the stillness of our hearts:

### **Prayer of Confession**

Breathe in God's forgiveness ... breathe out sin and sadness.  
(pause)

Breathe in God's grace ... breathe out faults and frailties.

(pause)

And now all that is left to do

is breathe in God's peace ... and breathe out God's peace.

(with these next words, liturgist reaches into the font and lifts cupped hands full of water as high as they can, and let it fall back into the font. Repeat three times. If it's too difficult to remember the words while doing this (because they can't hold a script!), have one person say the words and another lift up the water)

Children of God, believe these words that are truth worthy and true:

by grace we are forgiven and by love we are transformed.

Alleluia! Amen.

### **Sharing the Peace of Christ**

The Good News of God's forgiveness and love and life brings peace to our hearts,  
breath to our lungs, and joy to our souls.

And this news is just too good to keep to ourselves — so please,  
share with one another some sign of Christ's peace.

### **Scripture Reading — John 20: 19-23**

#### **Prayers of the Gathered People**

This prayer is easily divided up for many voices to participate (but doesn't require that). The screen is to read, throughout the prayer:

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:

**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

There is a call and response element of the prayer. The words up on the screen, and the prompt of the reader(s) should make that obvious. The speaker at the beginning may wish to say something like, “Let us join our hearts together in prayer. As we pray, whenever you hear me/us say the words “Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord,” you will respond with “I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.” Let's try that together (repeat the call and response).”

God of life and love

God of goodness and care

You are our guide through the night

and you are the bread that sustains us every day.

You are the voice that calls to us

“Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens,  
and I will give you rest.”

You are the whisper that insists,

“Don't be afraid. My love is stronger than your fear.”

You are the reason for all all of our joy,

you are the source of all our freedom,

you are the breath that carries us through every day.

Some come and be with us now, O God.

Oh, we know that you are here,

but still we invite you,

for that is what we do when we love someone —  
we invite them.

We say, we want you here with us.

And God — we want you here with us.

We need you here with us.

We are offering ourselves up to you.

Come and be close to us, please . . .

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord: (*gesture while saying*)

**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come into the broken corners of our hearts, O God,  
where perfectionism cries out, “Not good enough”  
where calendars cry out, “Just one activity more”  
where guilt cries out, “What were you thinking?”  
Come and speak the words we need to hear,  
words of comfort and joy  
words of courage and hope  
words of forgiveness and peace.

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:

**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come into hospitals, O God, and doctors offices,  
come into treatment centers where chemo delivers hope one drop at a time  
come into emergency rooms and waiting rooms  
come into the endless questions and the test results and the hard decisions.  
Come and speak the words we need to hear:  
words of healing and wholeness  
words of comfort and presence  
words of restoration and resurrection.

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:

**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come into classrooms, O God,  
come onto playing fields and into the locker rooms  
come into the library and the theater and the rehearsal rooms  
come into the high expectations and the unbearable pressure  
come into the loneliness and the hurt.  
Come and speak the words we long to hear:  
words of welcome and acceptance  
words of gratitude and assurance  
words of friendship and love.

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:

**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come into our workplaces, O God, where schedules are overwhelming  
come into unemployment lines, where identities are wavering  
come into living rooms, where families are struggling

come into grocery stores, where budgets are stretching  
come into day care centers, where futures are just beginning  
come into community centers, where friendships are forming.

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:  
**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come into all the places, God, where we need you,  
places that are broken, but also beautiful,  
places that have forgotten the sound of laughter and joy,  
and places where laughter and joy are abundant.

Dry bones, fearful hearts, hear this word of the Lord:  
**“I will cause breath, deep breath, to enter you, and you shall live.”**

Come and fill our hearts, O God,  
with your holy breath that brings us together  
and holds us together.  
Come and be the god you always have been —  
a God of goodness and light  
a God of stubbornness and strength  
a God of music and dance and delight  
a God of unexpected grace and inexplicable love.

Trusting that you will do all that and more,  
we pray as Jesus taught us: Our Father . . .

## WEDNESDAY (COMMUNION)

### Entrance Music:

Throw It Away by Abbey Lincoln

<https://youtu.be/j2003vuk3r4>

### **Call to Worship**

This is the day the Lord has made —  
this is the evening the Lord has made —  
let us rejoice and be glad in it,  
for there is good news here for us all.

Please remain seated and join in our Call to Worship.

Sometimes, everything falls apart.

Plans.  
Dreams.  
Hope.  
Family.  
Health.  
Faith.

Friendships.  
**Sometimes, everything falls apart.**

When things do fall apart,  
**Keep us together, Lord.**

Even when it seems impossible, God keeps us together.  
Trust.  
Endurance.  
Justice.  
Prayer.  
Thanksgiving.  
Gentleness.  
Honestly.  
**Even when it seems impossible, God keeps us together.**

Rejoice in the Lord, always; again I will say, rejoice.  
The Lord is near.  
The Lord is near.  
**The Lord is near.**  
Do not worry about anything,  
but in everything, by prayer and with thanksgiving,  
let your requests be made known to God.  
**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

Screen changes to show this responsive exchange:

Let us keep on doing the things we have learned and received  
and heard and seen in this place,  
**and the God of peace will be with us always.**

### **Evening Prayer**

**Holy God, one in grace, one in glory, one in love —  
you have joined with us in every moment of this day,  
calling us to love and serve you as one people,  
unique in gifts and energy and perspective,  
united in heart and mind and spirit.  
As the evening gathers and the world quiets,  
whisper to us the ways you wish for us to live.  
We are your people, God, and we are listening.**  
(Silent prayer)

Wait 15-20 seconds, then concludes:

And all God's children together say: **Amen.**

**Matthew 18:23-35**

## **Sung Confession - Video <https://youtu.be/Gj2L061vK7k>**

**Genesis 50:15-21**

### **Invitation to the Table**

The work of forgiveness and reconciliation is some of the most difficult work we are asked to do.

To acknowledge the pain and the hurt  
and then to say —

“That is not the only thing,  
and that is not the strongest thing.”

And by the grace of God, move forward  
into a brand new day.

There is nothing easy about it.

Sometimes it feels like it is asking too much of us,  
or maybe even as if it asking too little of those that hurt us.

The way you feel is valid.

But thanks be to God, the way you feel today is not the end of the story

And that is why we come to this table, again, tonight.

Because it is a table big enough to hold all of our wounds and all of our injuries.

It is a table big enough to hold all of our anger and all of our hurt.

And it is a table big enough that there is still room left over —  
room enough for grace and healing and reconciliation and forgiveness to join in, as well.

That still doesn't mean it will be easy.

It simply promises that hope is possible and new life is working hard to find you.

And at this table, you will find bread and a cup that will sustain you —

giving you strength for the journey,  
a place to rest when you need a break,

and others who gather with you, for encouragement and support.

More than anything,

you find the One who invites you into all of this messy work,

the One who says,

“I have set this table for you —

so that your heart might be healed.

Come, please.

Because we need you here,

and the honest truth is,

you need you to be here, too.

So come.

All is ready. All is waiting.”

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

God of grace and God of glory,

God our helper and our hope,

God who set the world in motion,



God whose son set this table —  
we give you thanks for meeting us here.

You have always met us where we are:  
You met Rachel in her grief.  
You met Joseph in a faraway land.  
You met Jonah in the belly of a great fish.  
You met Ruth and Naomi on a long journey.  
You met James and John on the seashore  
and you met a woman at a well.  
You met your disciples on the sea in the midst of a storm  
you met your friends, even the one who would betray you, around a table,  
and you met a criminal in his final moments, promising him a place in paradise.

And as if that were not enough:  
you met violence on a cross  
you met fear in thorns and spears and bitter wine  
you met abandonment in those who left your body  
you met death itself in a closed off tomb.

But because you are who you are,  
you did what you always do:  
you looked at what was  
and breathed new life into it.

You met death and you introduced it to your own love,  
love that does not let go,  
love that does not leave us alone,  
love that works and pushes and strengthens and above all endures and does not fail

Love that brings forth resurrection.

So in this bread and in this cup, O God,  
resurrect us.  
Pour your spirit upon these simple, ordinary gifts,  
that the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation  
might transform us, your simple, ordinary people.

That is what you have always done,  
and so we trust that you will do it again.  
So hear us as we pray the way your son, Jesus, the resurrected one himself,  
taught us to pray:  
Our Father . . . (words of the Lord's prayer up on screen)

### **Affirmation After Communion**

Having shared the meal that strengthens us  
the meal in which bits of bread and sips of juice give us a taste of grace and remind us  
that the hardest things can yield beautiful results,  
let us together affirm our faith, and affirm the way that faith calls us to live.

Words up on screen for all to join in:

**We believe in God — the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,  
who gathers, protects, and cares for the church.  
We believe the church is one worldwide communion of saints,  
called from the entire human family,  
reconciled with God and with one another.  
We believe that through the working of God's Spirit, unity is a binding force,  
and that we must seek this unity, and it must become visible to the world.  
We believe that the sin of division, separation, and hatred between people and groups  
has been conquered by Christ.  
We commit ourselves to protecting the unity of the church universal  
and acting with kindness toward the entire created order.  
We pledge to work toward that promised day  
with all of our thoughts, words, and deeds.  
Amen.**

FRIDAY

Entrance Music:

Levels by Robert Glasper

<https://youtu.be/jM3GvD3DKbw>

**Call to Worship (leads into passing of the peace)**

...<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAc283YmTPk>

Breathe. Just breathe.  
Breathe in ... and breathe out.  
Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out God's peace.  
Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out God's peace.  
Breathe in God's peace ... breathe out God's peace.

Video fades and turns to the screen showing the responsive CtW:

We have lifted our eyes and our hearts  
up upon these hills  
**and we have found our help in the Lord,  
the one who made heaven and earth.**

And we have learned to pray  
**Even when all things are falling apart.**

And we have known these prayers to be heard,  
and we have trusted these prayers to be answered.  
**So rejoice in the Lord always,  
and again we say, Rejoice!**  
Remember, always:  
**the Lord is near.**

And the Lord who is near  
is the Lord who pushes us to be better than we have been.  
**Across barriers that divide us;  
across fears that fracture us;  
across differences that define us;  
reconcile us, O Christ.**

The peace of Christ has been given to us.  
**The peace of Christ dwells in our hearts  
and belongs to us all.**

Screen goes blank.

Friends, just because we can,  
because we are made by God  
because we are made for peace  
and because we need the practice while we are still in this place —  
yes, we have just drawn ourselves into worship,  
but even still —  
because it is always the right thing to do:  
let us share the peace of Christ with one another ...  
right now.

Screen shows:

The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.  
**And also with you.**

#### Call to Confession

On this final night,  
surrounded by friends,  
we pause to take in this holy ground of Montreat.

We are reminded that there are friends at home that did not attend Montreat this week. ...friends who did not experience the blessings of Keynote, Small Group, Recreation and Worship. What will they think of the change in us?

Too often we are tempted to pick up our lives, brush them off, and live the old way

Too often we leave the lessons of peace behind to fit into our peer group,

As we begin the journey back home,, let us speak the truth, as we confess to our God, praying together,

#### **Prayer of Confession**

**Gracious God,  
All week long you have shown us who we are,  
and who you are.  
You have given us a sense of security and steadiness  
in the midst of a chaotic world.  
You have reminded us how to live,  
and now you are sending us forth to do just that.**

**So we must confess:  
we would much rather stay here,  
inside these beloved gates, surrounded by these amazing people.  
Here, it is easier to hear your voice and follow where you lead.  
Here, it is easier to feel ourselves filled with your peace.  
Here, it is easier to offer love and expect joy.**

**So we must confess:  
we are more than a little afraid.  
We are afraid the change we have seen in ourselves this week  
will not be lasting  
and the change we have dreamt for the world  
will not be realized.**

**Reassure us once again, O God,  
and fill us with courage and confidence.  
(Silent prayer.)**

### **Assurance of God's Grace**

Wait 15-20 seconds before continuing.

Friends, here is the truth about the grace of God.  
It is something like this:

Video plays: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3FskhXOfuw>  
(planning team please determine where to stop and start clip — certainly do NOT  
include the bit where the pastor talks about keeping the kid under until the bubbles  
stop)

The grace of God — it is unexpected.  
It is enormous.  
It can be messy.  
It will make you burst out laughing or break into song.  
It will, even if just for a brief moment, let you forget your worries  
and remember what joy feels like.

And, like the pastor and the boy in that video remind us...  
grace is all encompassing.  
You cannot escape it or avoid it.  
Grace is what it is and it comes to us because God is who God is.

What Good News!

What Good News indeed!

**Prayer for Illumination**

Help us to hear your Word, O God.  
Silence in us any voices except your own  
so that we will hear your story of life and let it settle into our hearts.  
Amen.

**Scripture:** Matthew 28:1-10

Preaching Scripture: John 21:24-29