

## A. CALL TO WORSHIP

The word has come for us from God:  
**who promises to shelter us under the wings of hope and grace.**

The word has come to us from Jesus:  
**who encourages us to remember the good news we have received.**

The word flows to us from the Spirit:  
**who reminds us to place our hope and trust in God.**

## B. OPENING PRAYER

When we fall into the traps of groundless fears, you deliver us. When an epidemic of worry threatens to overcome us, you protect us. When harmful words are flung at us, you answer our cries for help.

**Gracious God, we worship you.**

When our lives crumble, you urge us to buy hope's fields. When we are tempted by wealth, you point us to those who have nothing but share all. When we are eager to grasp senseless lies, you wrap our hands around God's promises.

**Servant of the poor, we follow you.**

When the world silences our hope, you give us the words to make the good confession of faith. When we have lost our way and can no longer endure the emptiness of our lives, you satisfy us from the abundance of God's grace and joy.  
**Sheltering Spirit, we seek your peace.**

## C. PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, open our eyes to the presence of your Spirit upon us, within us, among us. For our apathy in the presence of oppression, forgive us. If we have contributed to the brokenheartedness of anyone, forgive us. For our participation in systems that enslave, forgive us. When we are deaf to your good news, have mercy and open our ears. When our mouths remain too tightly closed, loosen our lips with songs of praise. Hear our prayer, O God, and forgive our sins. Hold us in your mercy, now and forever. Amen.

## D. READING

[Luke 4:14-21](#)

## E. PRAYER TO THE PRINCE OF PEACE

Dear God: The newspaper brings nothing new, only an old, old story of war — more bombing, more shooting, more bloodshed. One more family wailing a funeral song.

Against the backdrop of brutal images, we hear the old, old story of an angel with good news, who brought good tidings of great joy for all people.

Angel of Bethlehem, we long to hear your song again this day. We want good tidings for countries in crisis. We want good tidings for soldiers caught in webs of violence. We want good tidings for terrorists whose actions spread fear and anguish. We want good tidings for all who grieve, and who see no end to grieving. We want good tidings for children who long to inherit a country where peace has blossomed.

Jesus, our Saviour, you escaped Herod's best-laid plans. May your Spirit of peace be born again this year in the hearts of all who work for peace. Amen.

## F. LET US PRAY

*"I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." ([Luke 2:10-11](#))*

Let us pray ...

## G. CLOSING AFFIRMATIONS

*(inspired by [Revelation 21:1-6](#))*

**We are the church that lives into God's future today.**

A church united across space and time.

**A church of many races, languages and ethnicities.**

A church that lives by the work of God in Christ who was, is now, and is still to come.

**The one who is seated on the throne says to us: "See, I am making all things new!"**

A new heaven and a new earth, where the home of God is among God's people.

**God's future is epic, and it's good news. Remember God's future, for this is our story!**

## H. COMMISSION

*(based on [Romans 10:5-15](#))*

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news — the good news of God's victory, of peace and forgiveness available to all who believe! Go from here to share that good news with all you meet.

## CREDITS

A/B. by Thom Shuman, and posted on [Lectionary Liturgies](#).

C. from [re:worship](#)

E. by Carol Penner, available from the [re:worship](#) website.

G. from the [Mennonite Church Canada](#) website.

H. from [re:worship](#)

Prayer sheet prepared by Rev. Irene Bom, OLM in International Presbytery of the Church of Scotland, compiled for the Prayer Matters blog (December 2019), inspired by the theme of the month: Story

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# prayer sheet

GOOD  
NEWS ~  
GREAT  
JOY

Theme  
good news