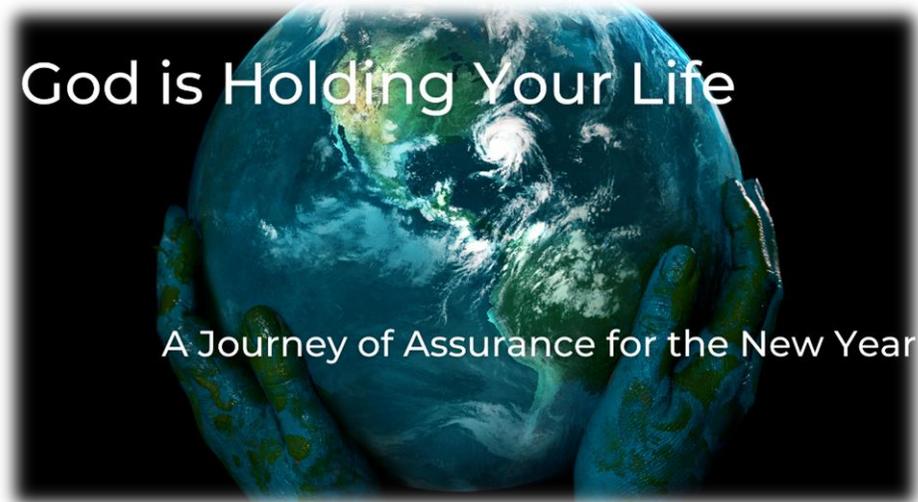


# 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Christmas

January 3, 2021



**"These Lives Are Precious"**

## **Prelude**

### **Welcome & Announcements**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

We begin a new worship series today that we pray will bring a "breather" and a sense of assurance to us all. Life is a series of exclamations from "O No!" to "Help!" to "Oh Yeah!" We can swing between disappointment, helplessness, and gratitude on a daily basis. The Book of Psalms knows all about this. Written over a span of time from exile and isolation to the rebuilding of the community, the poetry of the Psalms will accompany us in this series, reminding us that through it all, we can trust that God is, indeed, holding our lives.

This worship will allow us to simplify and slow down for a time. We will lean on prayer, reflection and sharing with one another.

**Threshold**  
“God is Holding Your Life”

We do not live in a land ruled by Kings, as the hearers of our first Psalm of this series did. Nevertheless, the petitions of the psalmist for justice, deliverance, defense of the poor and oppressed, and peace for all peoples is an undergirding theme of our faith. We are reminded that a just society is one that proclaims “these lives are precious” and worthy of protection. God, indeed, is holding our lives. Let this *be* our “epiphany” in this new year.

[People Join in Singing]

**Lift up your eyes, behold the hills.  
From where will help and rescue come?  
We call the One who made the earth,  
Who bless’d the stars, the moon and sun.**

**God is holding your life  
God is holding your life  
God is holding your life, we believe**  
*[repeat refrain]*

**Opening Collect Prayer**

Diane Adams, Liturgist

*Leader:* Holy and Just God,  
You have shown us what is right and good.  
Open us this day to a vision of the world made all-right  
so that we might follow your ways and know the peace of your reign  
on earth as it is in heaven.

***People:* We praise you for your steadfast presence,  
holding our lives together in love.  
Amen.**

**Hymn**

**Psalm Reading**

Diane Adams, Liturgist

Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14  
*Lukan Psalter translation*

*O God, give your anointed one your judgment—  
and your justice.  
Teach your chosen one to govern your people rightly  
and bring justice to the oppressed.*

*The mountains will bring the people peace  
and the little hills bring justice!  
Your anointed will defend the oppressed*

*among the people,  
save the children of the poor,  
and crush the oppressor.  
The reign of your anointed will endure  
as long as the sun and moon—  
throughout all generations.  
The rule of the chosen one will be  
like rain coming down on the meadow,  
like showers watering the earth.  
Justice will flower through the days,  
and abundance of peace 'til the moon  
shall be no more.*

*Tarshish and the Isles will offer gifts;  
Arabia and Sheba will bring tribute.  
All rulers will pay homage,  
and all the nations will serve your anointed.*

*Your anointed will rescue the poor  
when they cry out,  
and the oppressed when there is no  
one to help them.*

*Your chosen one will take pity on the lowly  
and the poor,  
and will save their lives.*

*Your chosen one  
will rescue them all from violence  
and oppression,  
and will treat their blood as precious.*

## **Psalm Song**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

In this series we have a guest composer. Richard Bruxvoort Colligan is a modern-day interpreter of the Psalms—a “psalmist.” As in our theme song written by Richard, “God is Holding Your Life,” his songs have easy-to-sing choruses that help bring the seminal message into our voices and hearts. In this one, the chorus is “these lives are precious, these lives are precious we know.” You will catch on quick. Here is an introduction from Richard and his song interpretation.

**Introduction from Richard and Song:  
“These Lives are Precious”**

**Reflection**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

[People Join in Singing]

**Sung Reprise**

*“God is Holding Your Life”*

*(refrain only, consider leading a capella)*

**God is holding your life**

**God is holding your life**

**God is holding your life, we believe**

*[repeat]*

**“Selah” Moment**

Diane Adams, Liturgist

The Psalms have a repeated direction throughout—the word “Selah.” Scholars are not sure exactly what it means. Perhaps because the Psalms were to be used in worship, we can surmise that the word indicates a pause, or an invitation for a musical instrument to be played. In this worship series, we will use an instrumental sound to remind us to take a pause, a breath, and remember that the settling of our hearts can offer the feeling that we are held in the hands of the Divine. We will hear [the sound] and then have some silence. Feel free to close your eyes if you like. Imagine yourself held in safety and love and care. When you hear [the sound] again, open your eyes.

*Silence*

**Prayers of the People**

Each week we will have a moment to write prayer concerns on small pieces of paper. We will then place these prayers in a container [*bowl, box, etc*]—a symbolic action of placing them in God’s hands, God’s care.

Let the people say, “Selah”

**Selah!**

Let us continue our prayers. I will offer a category of concern and we will allow a brief pause, then we together will respond. As a prayer posture for this worship series, you are invited to cup your hands, ready to receive God’s love and peace, and in preparation to be God’s love and peace in the world.

Let us pray for the leaders of this world and this church community...

**God of Justice, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who live in conflict around the world...

**Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for all who are experiencing loss of any kind in this pandemic...

**Comforting Healer, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who are homeless, hungry and alone...

**Emmanuel, God-With-Us, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for those who live in comfort,  
for Christ-like hospitality and generosity...

**Transforming Spirit, hear our prayer.**

Holy and Living One, as we are gathered to break bread once again, break us open to your love, to your peace, to your presence, to your transformative power. In the name of the One who invites us time and again, Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

Let the people say, "Selah"

**Selah!**

## **The Eucharist**

**Invitation to the Lord's Table**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

**Prayer of Confession**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

We are all invited to the gift of this table of grace. As a response to the invitation, we are asked to let go of all that separates us from accepting this grace. We confess the ways we have placed hardship in the hands of others, rather than peace.

*[People join in singing]*

**Put peace into each other's hands  
and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle flame,  
with tenderness enfold it.**

**Put peace into each other's hands  
with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways,  
in touch with God's creation.**

When we place peace in each other's hands, we place love in all the hands of the world.

*Silent Prayer*

## Assurance of Forgiveness

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!  
**In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!**  
**Glory to God! Amen**

## Passing the Peace

Diane Adams, Liturgist

Will you make a gesture of extending your cupped hands toward others who may be with you as a sign of offering the peace that Christ gives us? If you are alone, place your cupped hands over your heart, as a sign that you send your heartfelt peace out to the world.

The Peace of Christ be with you.  
**People: And also with you.**

*[People join in singing]*

**Give thanks for strong yet tender hands  
held out in trust and blessing.  
Where words fall short let hands speak out;  
the heights of love expressing.**

## Great Thanksgiving

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

The Lord be with you!  
**And also with you.**  
Open your hearts, your mouths, your lives to the Holy One.  
**We long for this communion.**  
Let us give our greatest thanks in the company of the beloved.  
**It is a good and joyful thing to give our thanks and praise.**  
Gift of Life, Creator of All That Is,  
You have breathed life into us,  
filled our emptiness,  
loved us through our resistance.

**Time and again you say, Listen!**  
**Time and again you say, Live!**  
**Time and again you say, Love!**

And so, we gather and give thanks in this moment.  
We stop so we may listen,  
we breathe so we may live,  
we open so we may love.

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you God,  
And blessed be your work in Jesus,  
Peace-Giver, Life-Healer.  
Spirit-Anointer, do your work in us, as in him.

**May we proclaim release, recovery,  
liberty and the end of all oppression.  
May we savor the taste of goodness and offer this gift of love to all.**

Jesus gathered with his disciples, his friends, his family.  
He took bread, said thanks over it, gave it to his companions and said,  
“Take, eat, this is my body. My life is given for love of you.  
So, whenever you gather together, stop... *Selah*... think of me. Be at peace. I am here.”

And after the supper he lifted his cup, gave thanks over it,  
and offered it to his companions, saying,  
“Drink from this cup, all of you. This is my life, my love poured out for you.  
Whenever you gather together, stop... *Selah*... think of me. Be at peace.  
I am here.”

*[People join in singing]*

**Put peace into each other’s hands  
like bread we break for sharing;  
look people warmly in the eye;  
our life is meant for caring.**

And so,  
in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ’s offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**People: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Holy Spirit, Breath of Wind,  
**People: Fill us, transform us.**  
Holy Spirit, Lover of Justice,  
**People: Fill us, transform us.**  
Holy Spirit, Maker of Unity,

**People: Fill us, transform us.**  
And all God's people say, **Amen!**

*[People join in singing]*

**As at communion shape your hands,  
into a waiting cradle;  
the gift of Christ receive, revere,  
united round the table.**

*[The people join in praying The Lord's Prayer]*

Let us pray the Lord's Prayer together.

We who are many are one body, one loaf, rising in Spirit together.  
Even if we cannot be physically in the same space,  
we are one in love.  
We are one in the grace of Christ broken open for us.

While we have many cups from which we pour,  
God's love is poured upon us from the one cup of salvation.  
It is in this sharing beyond all time and space that we are drawn close,  
that we are made whole,  
that we are made free.

As you are served by those with you,  
or served by your own hand,  
know that the hand that serves you is the hand of all Christ's Body,  
through mystical union with the Divine.  
You are not alone.

## **Breaking of the Bread**

### **Communion of the People**

*[after communion people join in singing]*

**Put Christ into each other's hands  
he is love's deepest measure;  
in love make peace, give peace a chance,  
and share it like a treasure.**

### **Prayer After Communion**

God of all that is too deep for words,  
we give you thanks that, at this table of grace,  
you offer your holiness, your steadfast love.  
Open us often to your *Selah*, your pause,  
to hear the needs of your people.

We pray this in the name of the Host of this Table,  
Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

*[People join in singing]*

**Put peace into each other's hands  
and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle flame,  
with tenderness enfold it.**

**Put peace into each other's hands  
with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways,  
in touch with God's creation.**

**Give thanks for strong yet tender hands  
held out in trust and blessing.  
Where words fall short let hands speak out;  
the heights of love expressing.**

## **Benediction**

Rev. Dr. Doris Chandler

Now go in the knowledge that  
God is holding your life  
even as we hold each other.  
You are not alone.  
You are loved.  
Amen.

## **Postlude**

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