

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Exodus 3:1–15

Psalms 105:1–6, 23–26, 45b

Romans 12:9–21

Matthew 16:21–28

SELECTED READING AND THEME:

Exodus 3:1–15

Taking our place in the adventure of faith involves God meeting us in the places of our fear, our doubt, and our lack of vision.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Look, all you wilderness people –
a captivating sight
a blazing bush that is not consumed
and a voice that calls our name.

Here I am, and here we are.

Remove the sandals from your feet
for you are standing on holy ground!
Come, let us encounter the God of Abraham,
the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob,
the God of you and me.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Breath of Life,
arrest our attention,
seize our focus.

**Light a fire inside of us
that changes the trajectory of our lives.**

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, we've made terrible mistakes.
Sins we've run away from and tried to leave in the past.
our memories, O God, they haunt us
but now we're tired of hiding.
We're tired of pretending.
So, we confess our brokenness to you.

Forgive us our sins, God, and for all the hiddenness we've piled on top.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God finds us in the far country,
picking us up and placing us on God's strong shoulders.
God doesn't heap shame or terror upon us.
God rejoices and throws a party –
a grace and forgiveness party,
where there is always an honoured place for you and for me.
Rejoice, for we once were lost and now are found.
Rejoice, for your sins are forgiven.
Thanks be to God.

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Hallelujah! God be praised!
Shout out God's deeds and call on God's name.
Hallelujah! God be praised!
Remember the difference that God has made.
Hallelujah! God be praised!
Think Abraham and Jacob and all of the babes.
Hallelujah! God be praised!
Burning bush, voice from the flame
Hallelujah! God be praised!
Enemies oppressed but then Moses came.
Hallelujah! God be praised!
Rejoice in your heart for all of your days.

DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

God commands Moses' attention with the burning bush. God has seen the suffering of the Israelites and has heard their cries for deliverance. God wants to send Moses to Pharaoh to bring God's people out of Egypt. Moses, like the rest of us, has a host of reservations. Why me? Who am I? (Exodus 3:11–12). Moses is in Midian for a reason. Moses murdered someone. Could God really use someone who has skeletons like this in their closet? God insists that Moses will have God for company. Moses will have further questions and objections: who are you really, God? (3:13–22). What will others think? (4:1–9). What skills do I have? (4:10–12). Can't someone else do this? (4:13–17). Taking our place in the adventure of faith is a process. God meets us in the places of our fear, our doubt, and our inability to see how God's freedom movement could come to pass. We encounter the fire of God's love, and the flame of faith is lit in our hearts.

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

God gives. And gives. And gives. And gives. And gives.
Let's share in the Divine passion for generosity with the giving of our tithes.

OFFERTORY SENTENCE

Loving God, may these gifts find their way to where they are needed. May they play some part in your freedom and justice movement. Amen.

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Flame of Love,

Draw our attention to your peoples who are struggling and in need – those near and far.

Give us hearts to feel what you feel.

Give us eyes to see what you see.

We pray for all those who are marked as outsiders, especially those treated as threats.

Those who are sometimes targeted and scapegoated for simply coming from somewhere else.

We pray for migrants and refugees, for those who seek asylum all around the world.

God be with those on the margins.

Bring freedom and justice to those in tenuous situations.

We also bring to mind others close to us, people we know are in difficult circumstances, those who are sick or struggling in different ways.

We pray now for these people who are close to our hearts:

(The people pray)

Flame of Love,

Give us hearts to feel what you feel.

Give us eyes to see what you see.

May we become a truly welcoming, compassionate people.

In Jesus' name, amen.

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

We say, 'Who are we that we should go to others?'

And God says to us, 'I will be with you.'

The same God who brought the Israelites out of Egypt goes with you now.

So go with the backing of the freedom-bringing God, go with peace and go with a fire in your heart. Amen.

HYMNS

Exodus 3:1–15

Come to be our hope, Lord Jesus	TiS.688
Faith will not grow from words alone	TiS.691
God is the refuge of his saints	TiS.120 AHB.45
I, the Lord of sea and sky	TiS.658 AHB.372
Take, take off your shoes	TiS.651

Psalms 105:1–6, 23–26, 45c

O give thanks to God, call the holy name aloud	TiS.66
The Lord Jehovah reigns	TiS.117 AHB.37

Romans 12:9–21

Father of peace, and God of love	TiS.482 AHB.407
For the beauty of the earth	TiS.137 AHB.77
Forgive our sins, as we forgive	TiS.635 AHB.564
Help us accept each other	TiS.648 SFGP.8
Lord of earth and all creation	TiS.672 SA.62
O Jesus, I have promised	TiS.595 AHB.514
This is a day of new beginnings	TiS.653

Matthew 16:21–28

Brother, sister, let me serve you	TiS.650 SA.14
Glory be to Jesus	TiS.344 AHB.263
I need you, Lord, for I have seen	TiS.625
I set the Lord before my eyes	TiS.673 SA/48
O Love that will not let me go	TiS.602 AHB.525
‘Take up your cross’, the Saviour said	TiS.583 AHB.496
The head that once was crowned with thorns	TiS.378 AHB.301