**Courage to Change - A Liturgy for CBWOQ Sunday**

**March 9, 2025**

**Written by Dr. Ksenija Magda**

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|  | *Dr. Ksenija Magda holds a special interest in the role of women in the church. She is a former BWA-Women president and a recipient of the International Scholarship with Canadian Baptist Women. She is now an author and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at a seminary for Protestant theology in Croatia.*  "She (Dr. Magda) epitomizes the goal of our scholarships as a woman who moved into significant leadership.”  -Brenda Halk, Senior Consultant,  Marketplace & Gender Initiatives, CBM: |

Instruction:

Items in (brackets) are for information only and are not read.

**Items in bold are read by the worship leader**

Items in plain text are read by the congregation.

1. (Call to worship, Ps 126 – The Message; if appropriate exchange for a different version)

**Leader:** **Let us worship the Lord**

Congregation:

**1-3**It seemed like a dream, too good to be true,  
    when God returned Zion’s exiles.  
We laughed, we sang,  
    we couldn’t believe our good fortune.  
We were the talk of the nations—  
    “God was wonderful to them!”  
God *was* wonderful to us;  
    we are one happy people.

**Leader**

**4-6And now, God, do it again—  
    bring rains to our drought-stricken lives  
So those who planted their crops in despair  
    will shout “Yes!” at the harvest,  
So those who went off with heavy hearts  
    will come home laughing, with armloads of blessing.**

2. (Call to Silent Prayer:)

**Leader**: **Let us each call upon the Lord to assist and prepare us for the solemn task of worshipping Him today.**

(After a minute or so the leader concludes the silent time)

**Leader: Amen. May the Lord hear the prayers of his people.**

3. (Responsive prayer- from Psalm 118 NIV)

**Leader:**

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;**Congregation:

his love endures forever.

**Leader:**

**3I was pushed back and about to fall,  
    but the Lord helped me.**

Congregation:  
**14**The Lord is my strength and my defense;  
    he has become my salvation.

**15**Shouts of joy and victory  
    resound in the tents of the righteous:  
“The Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!  
**16**    The Lord’s right hand is lifted high;  
    the Lord’s right hand has done mighty things!”  
**17**I will not die but live,  
    and will proclaim what the Lord has done.

**Leader:**  
**19Open for me the gates of the righteous;  
    I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.  
20This is the gate of the Lord  
    through which the righteous may enter.**

Congregation:  
**21**I will give you thanks, for you answered me;  
    you have become my salvation.

4. (Choose a hymn, or consider a time of worship in song, depending on what’s appropriate tradition)

**Leader: Let us worship the Lord in song.** (Add song number or lyrics here)

5. (Testimonials about the transformative power of God’s love in dire circumstances from around the world; This needs to prepared in advance.

Note that sometimes “the world” is in your congregation and women could be called forward for short interviews; warn them in advance!

Alternatively, today it is easy to obtain short videos, which could be added on Power Point and shown at this time. Make sure that they are up to the point and none are longer than 2 minutes)

**Leader:**

**Let us now hear the stories of transformation and healing from his people.**

6. (Bible readings: Have women ready to read the suggested passages)

**Leader: Let us listen to the Word of the Lord.**

**Reader 1:**

**2 Cor 5, 17-18a (NIV)**

**17**Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2%20Cor%205&version=NIV;MSG#fen-NIV-28895a)] The old has gone, the new is here! **18**All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: **19**that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.

(and one of the following three:)

**Reader 2.**

**Naomi’s transformation story (NIV)**

Ruth 1: 19-22

**19**So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, “Can this be Naomi?”

**20**“Don’t call me Naomi,” she told them. “Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. **21**I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me.”

**22**So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

…

Ruth 4

**9**Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, “Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. **10**I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon’s widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!”

**11**Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. …

**13**So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. …; the Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. **14**The women said to Naomi: “Praise be to the Lord, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! **15**He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth.”

**16**Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. **17**The women living there said, “Naomi has a son!” And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

(Alternatively, select verses from John 4 about The Samaritan’s transformation; or use Acts 16:11-15

For Lydia’s transformation; one of those texts may be used for the message).

**The leader: This is the Word of the Lord.**

Congregation: Thank you, Lord, for your Word.

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7. (Message on one of the selected passages above.)

**The speaker is called forward and introduced.**

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8. (Responsive Prayer: Celebrating the transforming power of God, from Romans 8 NIV)

**Leader:**

**31What, then, shall we say in response to these things?**

Congregation:

If God is for us, who can be against us? **32**He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

**Leader:**

**33Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34Who then is the one who condemns?**

Congregation:

No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

**Leader:**

**35Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?...**

Congregation:

**37**No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

**Leader:**

**38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.**

8. (Hymn and offerings)

**Leader: Let us sing a hymn … and take up an offering as a token of our thankfulness for God’s transforming love.**

9. (instead of a Doxology from the poem “My victory song” by Abimola T. Alabi is read as a responsive prayer:

(Published online by Family Friend Poems May 2019 with permission of the Author; <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/my-victory-song>)

**The Leader:**

**God's love sets me free.  
This is my victory song.**

Congregation:His grace is sufficient for me.  
It is what keeps me strong.  
  
…  
**Leader:  
  
The struggles may increase,  
But it's no cause for alarm.  
God's thoughts to me are of peace,  
To nurture and not to harm.**

Congregation:   
I forge on quite resolved.  
God's at work in me for the best.  
I am flawed but fiercely loved,  
And He is not finished yet. **…**

10. (Blessing)  
**Leader:**

**May the Lord renew his grace**

**As you face each new day**

**May he bring you laughter and peace**

**And give you reasons to sing.  
  
May you find open windows**

**And new doors where there seemed none.**

**And may you enter and grow and be**

**His bright light in the dark.**

**Amen. Let us now go in peace.**