

**Contemplative Service for July 5, 2023**

***Light for darkness***

*We begin in silence. Take a moment to breathe, to relax, to center yourself.*

**First reading**:

Open unto me, light for my darkness
Open unto me, courage for my fear
Open unto me, hope for my despair
Open unto me, peace for my turmoil
Open unto me, joy for my sorrow
Open unto me, strength for my weakness
Open unto me, wisdom for my confusion
Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins
Open unto me, tenderness for my toughness
Open unto me, love for my hates
Open unto me, Thy Self for myself
Lord, Lord, open unto me!

- Howard Thurman

**Music:** “Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child” sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1uTIVTwpVI&list=PL661719F446413AAF&index=16>

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**Second reading**: from Psalm 116

I love the Holy One who heard my voice;
    God heard my cry for help.
Because God turned an ear to me,
    I will call on God as long as I live.

The cords of death entangled me,
    the anguish of the grave came over me;
    I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
Then I called out:
    “Save me!”

God, my companion and guide, is gracious and righteous;
    so full of compassion.
God protects the unwary;
    when I was brought low, God stood with me and rescued me.

Return to your rest, my soul,
    for the Divine One has been good to you.

You God, have delivered me from death,
    my eyes from tears,
    my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk with You
    in the land of the living.

**Music**: “Would You Harbor Me” sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp7JD5DP5FQ&list=PL661719F446413AAF&index=6>

**Silent Contemplation**: *This is an opportunity for you to open to presence of the Divine in whatever way best works for you. Consider taking five minutes to sit in silence. Attend to any tension in your body and try to let go of it. Breathe deeply. Sometimes it is useful to use breath as a mode of prayer: consciously breathe in what you most need: love, relief from stress, reassurance, and then exhale peace, courage, hope.*

**Unison Blessing**

God, we are becoming brittle with our fear and anxiety. Slow us down. In your love there is a quiet space: there is haven. Show us the way to rest there. We ask you to soften our defenses and learn to trust you. You are so tender with us, so patient, and so kind. When we are with you, we don’t need to worry about doing the wrong thing because everything finds its right balance in you. Help us to awaken from our time in your care with a new calm. We are exactly as we should be, held within your love. Amen.

**Music:** “Amen, Amen” sung by Sweet Honey in the Rock

[*https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-S8Ubi2kM&list=PL661719F446413AAF&index=32*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-S8Ubi2kM&list=PL661719F446413AAF&index=32)

*Go in peace. You are a beloved child of the Divine.*

[](https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pngkey.com%2Fpng%2Fdetail%2F3-32977_ash-wednesday-cross-png-picture-transparent-library-ash.png&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pngkey.com%2Fmaxpic%2Fu2a9o0i1y3r5w7w7%2F&tbnid=cCbfzNoFuF3MsM&vet=10CA0QxiAoAWoXChMIgN7Y6-q06AIVAAAAAB0AAAAAEA4..i&docid=OSXFthxMZ5GGTM&w=820&h=679&itg=1&q=public%20domain%2C%20black%20and%20white%20photos%2C%20crosses&client=firefox-b-1-d&ved=0CA0QxiAoAWoXChMIgN7Y6-q06AIVAAAAAB0AAAAAEA4)