Welcome

Lighting the Christ Candle  
Karen Kaul

Words for Reflection

“I’ve learned that people will forget what you said,  
people will forget what you did,  
but people will never forget how you made them feel.”
- Maya Angelou

Prelude

The Call  
“Touched by An Angel”  
a poem by Maya Angelou

We, unaccustomed to courage  
exiles from delight  
live coiled in shells of loneliness  
until love leaves its high holy temple  
and comes into our sight  
to liberate us into life.  

Love arrives  
and in its train come ecstasies  
old memories of pleasure  
ancient histories of pain.  
Yet if we are bold,  
love strikes away the chains of fear  
from our souls.
We are weaned from our timidity.
In the flush of love’s light
we dare be brave.
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free.

Gathering Song
“The Gift of Love” vv. 1 & 3

Gathering Prayer
In a world where the rhetoric of leaders
can sound more like the taunts of a playground bully,
it’s easy to lose hope for kindness.
Teach us, O God, to carry both strength and gentleness,
to offer kindness even in our anger,
to listen before lashing out.
Remind us that kindness is not a nice thought
meant for the better angels,
but a natural outcome for every image bearer who lives life in the Spirit.
May Your kindness be our steady filter and our sure companion.
Amen.

Children’s Time
Barb Harris

Scripture Reading
Galatians 5:13-14 (The Message)
It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don’t use this
freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your
freedom to serve one another in love; that’s how freedom grows.
For everything we know about God’s Word is summed up in a single sentence: Love others as
you love yourself. That’s an act of true freedom.

Music for Reflection

Scripture Reading
Galatians 5:22-25 (The Message)
But what happens when we live God’s way? God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that
fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We
develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a
basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not
needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.
Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way. Among those who belong to Christ,
everything connected with getting our own way and mindlessly responding to what everyone else
calls necessities is killed off for good—crucified.
Since this is the kind of life we have chosen, the life of the Spirit, let us make sure that we do
not just hold it as an idea in our heads or a sentiment in our hearts, but work out its
implications in every detail of our lives.
Message

“Our Better Angels”

Prayers of the People/Lord’s Prayer
Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kindom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kindom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Song of Response

“I Choose Love”
Amelia Lloyd, vocalist

Thanksgiving to God

Breathing in God’s Blessings

Blessing and Commissioning

Sending Forth Song

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Sources:
The Call is “Touched by An Angel,” a poem by Maya Angelou, in her book *Oh Pray My Wings Are Gonna Fit Me Well*, 1975.
Gathering Prayer is adapted from Emily P. Freeman on emilypfreeman.com.
The Gift of Love

1. Though I may speak with brav’est fire,
and have the gift to all inspire,
and have not love, my words are vain,
as sounding brass, and hope-less gain.

2. Though I may give all I possess,
and striving so my love profess,
but not be given by love within,
the profit soon turns strangely thin.

3. Come, Spirit, come, our hearts control,
our spirits long to be made whole.
Let inward love guide every deed;
by this we worship, and are freed.
Pass It On

1. It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
   and soon all those around can warm up in its glowing;
   that’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it;
   you spread God’s love to everyone, you want to pass it on.

2. What a wondrous time is spring when all the trees are budding,
   the birds begin to sing, the flowers start their blooming;
   that’s how it is with God’s love, once you’ve experienced it;
   you want to sing, it’s fresh like spring, you want to pass it on.

3. I wish for you, my friend, this happiness that I’ve found—
   on God you can depend, it matters not where you’re bound;
   I’ll shout it from the mountain top, I want my world to know:
   the Lord of love has come to me, I want to pass it on.