UNITED IN SOLACE AND GRACE

GREETING

WELCOME …... Jenny

United in Solace and grace aims to create a safe and reflective space where we can remember ourselves, those we know who are affected by their past, and those who support them and enable them to move forward.

You will hear a number of voices, from a variety of traditions, some prayers, reflections and bible readings – and we have created a number of interactive stations to help you reflect and offer prayer if you feel that is appropriate.

Our intention is that the butterfly creative art will continue to evolve and will spend time in our churches and at Survivors in Transition.

We would like to thank Survivors in Transition, for their support whilst putting this service together.

**Opening Prayer**

Loving God,

You created us in your image  
to reflect your truth and light.

We come to you as we are  
seeking your healing and grace.

We hold before you those who walk alongside us  
the broken and the imperfect  
the angry and those weighed down by their memories.

Bring them your comfort and your peace.

We pray for restoration and justice for all those without a voice  
give them courage and hope  
  
For ourselves, we ask you to give us your grace,   
and a heart for the vulnerable,   
the oppressed, the voiceless and the forgotten.

Help us to see them as you see them;  
 to value them as you value them,   
  
To hear them as you would hear them  
To walk with them on their healing journey   
and to protect them as you desire.

Amen.

Silence …….

FOOTPRINTS - Christine

One night I dreamed a dream.  
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.  
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.  
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,  
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.  
  
After the last scene of my life flashed before me  
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.  
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,  
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,  
there was only one set of footprints.  
"I don’t understand why, when I need You most, You would leave me.”  
  
He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you,  
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.  
When you saw only one set of footprints,  
It was then that I carried you."

RESPONSE - Emma

When the dreams I dream and the flashbacks I see, reveal the scenes I wish most not to see, it is not the footprints I notice when my past intrudes on me. I expect to be alone in hardship and therefore may not stop to ask the Lord or question why I feel this way.

Much of what I've experienced is not behind me; I cannot view it that way. It is all around me, only needing the smallest sound, sight, or sensation to be right back to the present. It does not feel like looking back but instead brining forward.

To see these footprints next to mine makes me question “Who was the invisible presence next to me? Was it safety or risk? Was it supportive or coercive?” So instead, I ask the Lord to hold my hand and guide me where I can feel Him.

Bring me safety through transparency; teach me how to recognise your presence as I would that of a friend beside me. Do not leave me to question Your presence when I need it most, or to rely solely on my reflective sight for I have not always been able to trust that which my eyes can see.

Throughout my healing, I have looked back, and when I did, I was not surprised to see one set of footprints. Thinking that they are mine empowers me; if I cannot carry myself, who and where would I be?

 If I carry myself then god will always carry me, he will be my strength and my resilience as he is my creator so my strength was given from him all along with my free will to direct it.

What comforts me is knowing who is with me and recognizing that while God is with me in hardship. Instead of carrying me he walks beside me, the waves of trauma may hide his steps washing away those footprints, but I still carry myself, alongside my lord gives his love, grace and support.

Silence … … …

**KINTSUGI - Jenny**

In the Japanese tradition, brokenness is valued. When something is shattered, it is mended with precious and beautiful materials, making it whole again, and giving it new purpose and life.

Look carefully at the bowl, you will see it has been mended. It is still out of shape and the mends are a little rough, but there is beauty and value in its broken-ness.

Water has many meanings in the bible, at the beginning of time, the spirit of God moved across the water. It is essential for life, and is used in many of our symbolic acts to cleanse us, to bring us closer to God and to heal us.

Finally in the bible, Water represents being released from captivity, as Moses led the people of God away from Egypt across the Red Sea.

*A prayer is said, and the president draws a cross over the water to bless it.*

*Loving God, we come before you as we are. We thank you for your life-giving gift of water to heal and sustain us. As we place our hands in this water, may we find release from our burdens. Give us your gifts of hope and peace, restore our hearts and fill us with your light and love. Amen.*

*Those who wish to may approach the table and dip their hands in the water as a sign of healing and release.*

*Prayer and support will be available if needed.*

STATIONS (give plenty of time – 20 minutes) – please can we all float by the reflection stations to give help if needed

* Water
  + See above
* Air
  + Incense
* Earth
  + Place stones around the cross to represent your hope and fears
* Fire
  + Candles to light
* Spirit
  + Singing bowls
* Locked prayer box –
* Wire frame butterfly

**BIBLE READING**

**Voice 1 - Oliver**

A reading from Psalm 91

2I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress,  
    my God, in whom I trust.”

3Surely he will save you … …  
  
4He will cover you with his feathers,  
    and under his wings you will find refuge;  
    his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.  
5You will not fear the terror of night,  
    nor the arrow that flies by day …. ….

11For he will command his angels concerning you  
    to guard you in all your ways;  
12they will lift you up in their hands,  
    so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

Voice 2 - Jayne

**43**A woman in the crowd had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding,[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke%208:43-48&version=NLT#fen-NLT-25257a)] and she could find no cure. **44**Coming up behind Jesus, she touched the fringe of his robe. Immediately, the bleeding stopped.

**45**“Who touched me?” Jesus asked.

Everyone denied it, and Peter said, “Master, this whole crowd is pressing up against you.”

**46**But Jesus said, “Someone deliberately touched me, for I felt healing power go out from me.” **47**When the woman realized that she could not stay hidden, she began to tremble and fell to her knees in front of him. The whole crowd heard her explain why she had touched him and that she had been immediately healed. **48**“Daughter,” he said to her, “your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

*a few moments silence*

REFLECTION - Jenny

As I stand and watch the scene play out in front of me I am very aware of our nameless woman. She looks much as any other woman in the crowd – except she is on her own.

Rejected by family and friends, outside society, excluded …… though through no fault of her own.

I see her stretch out her hand … It took great courage for her to simply reach out and touch the fringe of Jesus robe as he passed ……… that was all that she could do ……

I can see her horror as he stops - how could he have felt her touch in the press of that massive crowd?

But he stopped, turned, and challenged her … …

Every time I read this passage I find myself there with her – watching her reaction, putting myself in her place

… … … it must have taken such strength to admit that touch … such bravery to look at him.

But then he did the unexpected – instead of rejecting her, he reached out to her, as someone valued and worthwhile – he treated her with empathy and understanding.

He reached out to her, Just as he reaches out to each and every one of us ……

She was free despite her expectations …. …

She would have known the first bible passage we had, this promise that her God would protect her and comfort her – this was not her experience until that remarkable moment – and now his wings will always cover her – United in Solace and Grace!

Play – song for reflection

* Broken vessels (Amazing Grace) Hillsong

PRAYER - Duncan

Jesus our companion and our friend,

You know the depths of our hurt,   
the pain we experience.

You know what we have endured,   
our burdens, all that we carry with us   
and all that holds us back.

You see us as we are,   
in sorrow and in joy,   
in darkness and in light.

Be with us as we reach out our hand

Be there beside us as we move towards wholeness,  
 step by step to support and to guide us.

Bring us peace, safety and rest under he shadow of your wings.

Now and always. Amen

Finishing prayer

Taken from the Lords Prayer

All: Creator, we greet you,   
your name is holy.  
We praise your glory.  
Renew us and refresh us  
and give us all that we need.  
Deliver us from captivity  
and give us wings of freedom  
to begin a new journey.  
Restore justice and freedom  
so that your kingdom may be established  
in our hearts, and our minds.  
we thank you for the gift of your love  
to support and guide us through this day.

Amen

Final Blessing - Jenny

May the God of love support and strengthen you  
may their light shine upon you   
and bring you their peace

The blessing of Almighty, God, creator, healer and enabling spirit   
be with you and remain with you always Amen

Butterflies to be given out at the end of the service