

Midweek Lenten Series: Open My Life, Lord



Week of Lent 2: Open My Hands, Lord

We use our hands to pick up a child, to serve a meal, to play an instrument, to wipe away a tear. Jesus used his hands for healing and for deeds of great power, and the psalmist reminds us that we are always held fast in God's hands. In Deuteronomy, Moses encourages us to open our hands in service to others.

OPENING DIALOGUE

Into your hands, almighty God, we place ourselves:

our minds to know you, our hearts to love you, our wills to serve you, for we are yours.

Into your hands, incarnate Savior, we place ourselves:

receive us and draw us after you, that we may follow your steps.

Into your hands, O hovering Spirit, we place ourselves:

take us and fashion us after your image;

let your comfort strengthen us and your fire cleanse us.

Into your hands, almighty God, we place ourselves:

gather us in your light eternal. (*Based on the commitment prayer, ELW, p. 86*)

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

PRAYER

Open our hands, Lord, to reach out to a world in need. May our arms enfold those who sorrow, our palms bear mercy and grace, and our fingers point to your love. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

READINGS

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

⁷ If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted toward your needy neighbor. ⁸ You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. ⁹ Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, “The seventh year, the year of remission, is near,” and therefore view your needy neighbor with hostility and give nothing; your neighbor might cry to the LORD against you, and you would incur guilt. ¹⁰ Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. ¹¹ Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, “Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land.”

Psalm 139:1-10

¹ O LORD, you have searched me and known me.
² You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
 you discern my thoughts from far away.
³ You search out my path and my lying down,
 and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴ Even before a word is on my tongue,
 O LORD, you know it completely.
⁵ You hem me in, behind and before,
 and lay your hand upon me.
⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
 it is so high that I cannot attain it.
⁷ Where can I go from your spirit?
 Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸ If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
⁹ If I take the wings of the morning
 and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰ even there your hand shall lead me,
 and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Mark 6:1-5

He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. ² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, “Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! ³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him. ⁴ Then Jesus said to them, “Prophets are not without honor, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.” ⁵ And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them.

REFLECTION

BLESSING OF HANDS

Christ has no body now on earth , but yours, No hands but yours, No feet but yours, Yours are the eyes through which is to look out Christ's compassion to the world; Yours are the feet with which he is to go about doing good; Yours are the hands with which he is to bless all people now. Amen. *Teresa of Avila*

- Blessed be your hands as you care for others
- Blessed be your hands as you reach out in love
- Blessed be your hands as they offer help
- Blessed be your hands as they hold those who are afraid
- Blessed be your hands as you share what you have with others
- Blessed be your hands as you care for the earth
- Blessed be your hands as you plant, till, and harvest
- Blessed be your hands as you feed all of the hungry
- Blessed be your hands as you care for yourself
- Blessed be your hands as you wash dishes, make the bed, and cook supper
- Blessed be your hands as you do God's work with your hands

May you look at your hands and always give thanks for the good God is able to do through them. Amen

PRAYERS

Lord of all life,
when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,
open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.

When we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,
open our hands to do your work in the world.

When we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,
open our ears, that all will know your love.

When we are hardened against our neighbor,
open our hearts and heal our resentment.

When we are closed to the grace you long to give us,
open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.

Here other prayers may be offered.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

BLESSING

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross.

The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life ✝ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.