

Break The Silence Sunday

April 24, 2016

A time for the church to learn together
about the realities of rape and sexual violence;

about ways to create a community where survivors
can share their stories and receive support, hope, and love;

and to prayerfully consider ways in which they can be advocates
for change in their communities, and around the world.

Resources for Worship



<http://www.breakthesilencesunday.org>

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Background To Break The Silence Sunday

It's hard to know where to begin – with statistics; with a reminder of the call to the work of justice that is so deeply imbedded in the scriptures; with an amusing anecdote to make this discussion easier? Let's have a story instead...

My name is Moira Finley. I am many things - a poet, a painter, someone who loves a good meal, a potentially crazy cat lady, a fan of all things Sherlock Holmes, someone who is mildly (ok, intensely) obsessed with Harry Potter, the pastor of two wonderful United Church of Christ (UCC) congregations in northern Wisconsin, and a rape survivor.

It has been more than twenty-eight years since the night that changed everything. Along the way I have been blessed to be surrounded by a great many people who have loved me when I didn't feel loveable; who have held me together when I was falling apart; who have cried with me, laughed with me, tried to understand my anger, listened to my questions, and struggled with me to make sense of all that happened.

One of the most important, and most difficult, parts of my journey (and the journey of many survivors) has been wrestling with questions of faith. Where was God when I was raped? If God loves me, why didn't God prevent it from happening? Can God still love me even though I'm tainted, broken, dirty? There are questions about suffering, grace, mercy, hope, forgiveness, and so much more.

My mother, and the church I grew up in, were wonderful about helping me wrestle with those questions, but I know many survivors are not so lucky. Their congregations, their pastors, their communities meet them with outdated and hurtful theologies, dangerous ideas about what is required to be a Christian, and have laid blame and shame at the feet of survivors.

When I was ordained in the UCC I had high hopes that my own denomination might be a place where survivors could find space to share their stories, to be heard, honored, and respected. After all, ours is a tradition of justice seeking, and peace making, advocating for those who have been marginalized, and lifting up the voices of those who have been silenced and oppressed.

Sadly, this has not been my experience. I have been met with what feels like a firmly closed and locked door. Responses have ranged from the fairly mundane of "it's private and personal" and "it will make people uncomfortable" to the genuinely hurtful "it's not an important issue for the church." I have received theological advice that was well intentioned but seriously misguided including the platitudes about Jesus suffering, and that nonsense about God not giving us more than we can handle.

I have been instructed that forgiveness, immediate and unconditional, is a requirement of the Christian faith, and that I shouldn't be angry about what happened to me because it might upset others. I have been told that PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) is stupid, that I should just get over it since it all happened a long time ago, that stuff like this happens to everyone and I should just accept it, and so much more.

But I have refused to give up, to back down from my belief that the church is, and can be, a place where survivors can tell their stories; can receive love, encouragement, and support in their healing; and can find a way through their pain with faith. It has been a trying, difficult time. There has been a lot of crying, some screaming, and a lot of wondering if I was on the right track, if this really mattered, if the work was worth it.

Then something started to happen. In the summer of 2014 my dear friend Bryan Sirchio and I wrote a song about my story. The song started to get shared. I was invited to be the speaker at a Take Back The Night event in Fond du Lac in April 2015 where, after my speech, Bryan and I performed the song. We had reached a tipping point.

In August 2015, I met with Rev. Franz Rigert, our Wisconsin Conference UCC minister, and together with Lisa Hart we dreamt up the idea of Break The Silence Sunday. We are starting small, first within the UCC in Wisconsin, and a few other congregations, with the hope that eventually this Sunday, and this work, will be a part of the life of the UCC as a whole, and will move to other denominations as well.

This is an opportunity for our churches to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to reach out to those in their congregations, and communities, to be people of hospitality and welcome even when the subject is difficult and unsettling.

This is our time to sit with those who feel they have no voice, and to listen, to what threatens to overwhelm them, to the memories that keep them awake at night, to the questions (and answers) they have about the life of faith.

This is our time to say clearly that survivors bear no responsibility for what happened to them, and should carry no shame, that they are beloved children of God and that the church stands with them, outraged at their experience, and committed to working together towards a world where no one else ever has to live through such things.

I welcome you to the work of Break The Silence Sunday, and I look forward to hearing from you about your experiences with these materials. My prayer is that together we might create congregations where survivors feel truly welcomed, and know without any qualifications that their stories will be heard, and honored as part of the body of Christ.

Acknowledgements

The work of Break The Silence Sunday would not be possible without those who contributed their words, their music, and their prayers. So many people have been a part of the years leading up to this project, who have patiently waited through the frustration, fears, anger, and silence.

- The Rev. Franz Rigert for opening a door that has long felt firmly closed
- Lisa Hart for her support and administrative resources
- The friends who have held my hand, offered tea, listened to my anger and frustration, and just plain loved me, I owe you more than you know ~ Richard & Trish Bruxvoort Colligan, Bryan Sirchio, Christopher & Carla Grundy, Andra Moran, Conie Borchardt, Ben Welch, Amy Englesdorfer, Sharon MacArthur, Brent & Sara Smith, Ashley Nolte, Matt Schneider-Adams
- Bryan Sirchio for his amazing musical skills in setting my story to song; yes I know you say it's my song, but it shall forever be "ours" in my mind
- The folks who have contributed to the liturgy...
Maren Tirabassi, Don Neiderfrank, Richard Bruxvoort Colligan,
Bryan Sirchio, Christopher Grundy, Steven Price
- Students, faculty & staff at Eden Theological Seminary where much of the preliminary work for Break The Silence Sunday was done in September 2015
- The amazing folks of the Tri-Jo Parish United Church of Christ (Trinity UCC Shiocton, WI, and St John's UCC Cecil, WI) who have journeyed with me these years, giving me the privilege of being their pastor, and being brave enough to trust me with a sabbatical
- Jill Hileman, for her amazing work gathering state-wide resource information
- Pam Maier, for her editing skills
- Severin Provance, for his graphic design skills in cleaning up the logo
- My survivor sisters, particularly Patti Long and Jackie Gutschenritter, who understand how hard this work is, and how incredibly important it is as well
- For all the survivors who are stronger than they imagine because they get up and face each day, I hope we have done well by your stories.
- For all of you reading this who shall faithfully plan and lead worship to help us break the silence: my gratitude for your courage.

In faith and hope, *Moirra Finley*

A Prayer To Begin

As you begin planning for Break The Silence Sunday you may feel many things, wondering if you can bring this word of hope to your congregation, and how they will respond. You could be wondering what kind of stories will be shared with you, and if you will be able to hear them with your whole heart. You might be afraid of not knowing answers that you think are needed by those who come to you with questions about this day, with stories of their own, with fears and insecurities. Don't panic. This is a journey, and tentative first steps are still first steps. So sit in a comfortable place, take a few breaths, and then pray this prayer for yourself...

A Prayer For Hesitant Clergy by Rev. Don Niederfrank

Divine Companion, you have encouraged and comforted me
at so many times,
in so many places,
with so many persons.

One more time, I ask, though afraid even in my asking,
be with me.

Strengthen my trembling knees,
that I may stand with those who have too often and too long stood alone.

Call to me in the tumult of my self-focused anxiety,
that I may bring your Presence, your Peace, to those whose terror is real.

Deliver me from my silencing fears
that I may speak your Word.

Holy Shepherd, I am yours. Send me to those you love.

Notes For Worship Planners & Leaders

There is no doubt that rape and sexual assault are difficult subjects. They are hard for our society to address, and no less difficult for the church.

There are survivors in every congregation, whether or not we know their stories. They are waiting for you to step up, to make it clear that your church, your community, is a place where they can tell their story without fear, that what they tell you will be heard, and honored, treated with respect and dignity.

Preparation is most important. You need to prepare yourself, and your worship team, but you need to prepare the congregation as well. Everyone needs to be made aware of what worship will be like on Break The Silence Sunday. They need to know that sometimes explicit words will be used, and that it will possibly be emotionally challenging. If there are survivors in your community that you are aware of, you need to make a special effort to reach out to them in advance, to personally let them know about the plans you are making for this day. Newsletter articles and announcements in worship and bulletins, as well as on your social media, can be helpful ways of preparing your community. On page 39 you will find a sample newsletter and bulletin announcement that you may adapt.

In the pages that follow, you will find a complete liturgy for Break The Silence Sunday. You are welcome to use the liturgy as it is, or adapt it for your particular setting, using the prayers, and hymn suggestions as a guide for your own community worship. There are also additional worship resources and music ideas beginning on page 32.

There are many options for the sermon/reflection time during Break The Silence Sunday. Included here are two survivor stories that you are free to use. There is also a page of sermon suggestions and ideas to get you started. There may be a survivor in your community who would share their story, or someone from a local support agency who could speak to the needs of survivors in your community.

There is also an additional healing service, beginning on page 25. You may also find it helpful to work with survivors in your community to shape this service to best suit their needs. Survivors may well find it incredibly empowering, and healing, to be involved in the work of Break The Silence Sunday.

Every survivor's story is different, and so every survivor's healing journey is different as well. You need to go gently, taking care not to say there is one right way to do any of this. When we speak of healing it's not necessarily physical, but the work of mending heart and soul, of making some sense of what has happened. Anything that involves the words "should" or "must" would best be avoided.

Survivors have had enough of that already. What they need from you, from their faith community, is a place to work at their own pace, to tell their story in their own way, to be heard with compassion, but not pity. Please be careful when you speak of forgiveness. It is indeed a part of the life of faith, but it is not easy, and cannot be done quickly. It may well be the work of this lifetime, and into life everlasting, for a survivor to forgive their abuser.

Please remember that every survivor is different. Some may not be at a place where it is safe, or healthy, for them to share their story, and they may have resistance to Break The Silence Sunday. Go gently.

Finally, there are resources at the end of this packet to help you respond to the needs of your community. There are national resources as well as a list of county-by-county resources for Wisconsin. If you aren't familiar with them already, please get to know the people in your community who are on the front lines of helping survivors. And please, when a survivor shares their story with you don't just refer them out to someone else. Offer to go with them, to reflect with them over a cup of coffee, to wrestle with their questions about God, and faith, and church. Be a part of their healing journey.

If you have questions as you prepare, please feel free to contact the Rev. Moira Finley by email at breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com or by phone at 715-851-3080.

God's blessings on your work.

Some Statistics

- There are an average of 293,066 victims (age 12 or older) of rape and sexual assault each year in the United States (source – U.S. Department of Justice. *National Crime Victimization Survey*. 2009-2013)
- Let's do some math: there are 31,536,000 seconds per year (in a non-leap year). If we divide the number of victims (293,066) by the number of seconds it means that there is an average of one assault every 107 seconds.
- 17.7 million women in the United States (1 out of every 6) have been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime (source – National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey*. 1998)
- 2.78 million men in the United States (1 out of every 33) have been the victim of attempted or completed rape in their lifetime (source – National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women Survey*. 1998)
- 15% of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of 12 (source – U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Sex Offenses and Offenders*. 1997)
- The year in a man's life when he is most likely to be the victim of a sexual assault is age 4. The year in a woman's life is age 14. (Source – U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *2000 Sexual Assault Of Young Children As Reported To Law Enforcement*. 2000)
- 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker (Source – U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. *2000 Sexual Assault Of Young Children As Reported To Law Enforcement*. 2000)

Some Helpful Definitions

Acquaintance Rape/Assault – where the perpetrator(s) is previously known to the victim; occurs in approximately 4 out of every 5 rapes/assaults in the United States; acquaintance may refer to a date (hence “date rape”), domestic partner, former partner, family member, classmate, neighbor, boss, coworker, and more.

Attempted Rape/Assault – a threat or rape or sexual assault, including verbal threats, and those made in other ways such as electronic communication (email, text), and on social media (Facebook, Tumblr, Twitter).

Domestic Violence – violence, and threats of violence, between spouses, domestic partners, and those who are co-habiting.

Force – methods used to coerce a victim into a non-consensual sex; this may include the use of a weapon, or physical violence, but also includes emotional and psychological manipulation, threats to the victim’s family, the withholding of finances, intimidation, threats regarding employment or child custody, and more.

Incest – sexual contact (which may or may not include penetration) between closely related persons such as parents, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings, cousins; in legal terms incest is often described as the crime of sexual contact between people who may not be legally married.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – a condition resulting from the experiencing (or witnessing) of a traumatic event that causes long-term difficulty with flashbacks, intrusive memories, and severe anxiety; not all rape survivors will develop PTSD.

Rape – a form of sexual assault; the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics defines rape as forced sexual intercourse which is defined as “vaginal, anal, or oral penetration by the offender(s)”; this also includes incidents where the penetration is by an object such as a bottle; legal definitions vary by state, and some states do not use this term at all in their laws instead they have degrees/grades of sexual assault.

Rape Culture – the way in which society blames victims of rape and sexual assault, and normalizes this violence, particularly male against female violence; the assumption that rape and sexual assault are an inevitable part of life; this includes the use of the word rape in other contexts (for example, when a sports team is defeated and commentators say “they were raped”), as well as the objectification of women’s bodies including school dress codes and purity movements that seek to control and limit women’s behaviors.

Sexual Assault – sexual contact or behavior that occurs without explicit consent of the victim; this includes, but is not limited to: penetration of the victim's body (see rape), attempted rape, forcing a victim to perform sexual acts on the perpetrator, fondling, unwanted sexual touching.

Stranger Rape/Assault – where the perpetrator(s) is previously unknown to the victim; occurs in approximately 1 of every 5 rapes/assaults in the United States.

Survivor Guilt – though most often associated with being a survivor after a mass catastrophe (such as an airplane crash), this phrase has also come to mean the guilt imposed on survivors of rape and sexual assault because of some perceived action, or inaction on their part.

Victim Blaming – words and actions that imply the victim of rape or sexual assault is to blame for the actions of the perpetrator(s); this can be through questions about what the victim was wearing, why they were out alone, why they didn't fight back, if they had been drinking or had previous sexual relations with the perpetrator, and questions about the previous sexual activity of the victim.

Liturgy For Break The Silence Sunday ~ April 24, 2016

Unless otherwise noted, prayers are written by the Rev. Moira Finley.

Musical Prelude

Welcome

Welcome to worship. Today we stand with our sisters and brothers who have been victims of rape and sexual assault. We will witness to their pain, and their strength. We will learn how to be better advocates for them, and with them. We will start to speak out, to break the silence of complicity and fear, and through it all we will trust in the good news of God's incredible love for us, and for all the world.

Call To Worship

One: We come this day
Many: trusting in God's grace,
One: confident of Jesus' love,
Many: and attentive to the Spirit's presence.
One: We come this day
Many: to listen
One: to hear,
Many: and to speak out.
One: We come this day
All: to break the silence!

Gathering Prayer

O God, Life giver, Pain bearer,
You know what our sisters and brothers hold in their hearts, and memories,
the horrors they experienced,
the things they are afraid to speak of,
because they have been silenced,
by their own shame, and by our discomfort and fear.

Open us, Holy One.
Open our hearts, our minds, and our spirits,
to the stories of those who have survived the worst we do to one another.
Open us, that together we may no longer be silent. Amen.

Hymn ~ “We Have Come”

by Christopher Grundy, © Hand and Soil Music, 2009; used with permission

a cappella, with drumming

words and music by Christopher Grundy

$\text{♩} = 170$

We have come by way of strug_ gle, We have come
 We have come to lay our bur-dens down, we have come
 We have come to spread your ways of peace, we have come

7
 by way of pain,_ we have come by all your stead-fast love,
 to shed our shame,_ we have come to taste your bound-less grace
 to break the chains,_ we have come to stand with Jes us,

13 **To Coda** [1.2.]
 O re-vive our souls a - gain.
 and to rise as peop - le changed.
 lead us on in - to your reign,

19
 lead us on in-to your reign, lead us on in-to your reign.

Acknowledging The Reality Of Sexual Violence

This prayer is not one for survivors to pray, but is rather for those who have the privilege of living with blinders on, unaware of the reality of rape and sexual assault in our communities. During this time of prayer, you might invite survivors who are able to come forward and light candles symbolizing their story, and their experience with sexual violence.

One: We come together this day in solidarity with all those who have experienced rape, and sexual violence. We come to open ourselves to the reality of the pain this violation has caused, to listen to survivor's stories without judgment, and without pity. We come to take responsibility, and to commit ourselves to the hard work of changing the violence, and sexism of our world.

One: We admit that sexual violence is real and present in our world, in our communities, in our church, and in our families. We need to face our fear.

Many: We prefer to think that the statistics are wrong, that the problem is not as big as we are told. We do not want to admit that people we know – our friends, members of our families, women and men sitting with us here this morning – have been victims of rape, sexual assault, and sexual violence.

One: We do not know how to help. We want to fix things, to make it better, to put it all behind us. We need to stop and open our hearts.

Many: We need to hear the stories of those who have lived through this violence, who have endured things we can scarcely imagine, who have lived with feelings of guilt, fear, and shame. We need to remember that not everyone survives the violence of rape and sexual assault, and to honor their memories.

One: We need to open our minds.

Many: We need to listen to what keeps our sisters and brothers up at night, the nightmares, and flashbacks, and memories.

One: We need to open our spirits.

Many: We need to honor their questions about God, about faith, about the community that is the church.

One: We know that the church can be a place for healing and hope, and we pray that we might help create that feeling in this place, in this community. We pray, O God, that you will give to those who are survivors of rape and sexual assault the courage to trust us, in even the smallest way, to share with us the stories of what they have experienced. We pray, O God, that you will give to those who are not survivors, the strength to be quiet, to listen, and then the courage to speak out in love, and compassion, to work for justice and a future free from sexual violence.

All: Amen.

Sung Response ~ “I Am Welcome” by Bryan Sirchio, used with permission

(Chorus Only)

Bryan Sirchio
www.sirchio.com

I am wel - come, I am wel - come, I am
loved, just as I am. I am
wel - come, you are wel - come, we are
loved just as we are. O
Spir - it burn that truth in - to our
hearts. I am hearts.

Breaking The Silence ~ A Time For Prayer

Silence in worship can be a most powerful thing, a time for people to listen to the voice of their heart and soul. However, this is Break The Silence Sunday, a time to speak out, to no longer keep silence. This time of prayer seeks to provide some silence, acknowledging the reality of rape and sexual assault, but also breaking the silence of our complicity. These statistics are for the United States, but the problem is not unique to the U.S. As we hold and break this silence, we stand with our sisters and brothers around the world who live in the shadow of rape and sexual violence.

One: Once, in every one hundred and seven seconds...

a silence of 107 seconds is held, then a bell is chimed

One: Once, in every one hundred and seven seconds someone in the United States is sexually assaulted, and the church has been deafeningly silent.

a silence of 107 seconds is held, then a bell is chimed

One: Survivors have been shamed into silence, afraid to speak the truth of their experiences. When they have dared, they have been met with pity, contempt, hurtful and dangerous theologies, and victim blaming.

a silence of 107 seconds is held, then a bell is chimed

One: The time for our silence as the church is over. Dr. King once said, "In the end we will remember, not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."¹ It is time for us, the body of Christ broken by rape and sexual assault, to be outspoken about this violence. It is time for us to open our hearts, our minds, and our churches to the stories of survivors, to share with them the hope of God's grace that is with us in our moments of deepest despair, and can in time bring hope.

a silence of 107 seconds is held, then a bell is chimed

One: Now! Now is the time for us to break our silence!

¹ Martin Luther King Jr. "The Trumpet of Conscience" Steeler Lecture, November 1967

Hymn ~ New Century Hymnal #407 "How Firm A Foundation" (public domain)

Isa. 43:2-5; 2 Tim. 2:19; Heb. 13:5

"K" in John Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787; alt.

1 How firm a foun - da - tion for you has been laid,
 2 "Fear not, I am with you, oh, be not dis - mayed,
 3 "When through the deep wa - ters I call you to go,
 4 "When through fi - ery tri - als your path - way shall lie,
 5 "The soul that on Je - sus has leaned for re - pose,

by God in the Word, in the sac - ri - fice paid!
 for I am your God, I will still give you aid;
 the riv - ers of woe shall not o - ver you flow;
 my grace all - suf - fi - cient shall be your sup - ply;
 I will not, I will not de - sert to its foes;

What more can God say than to you has been said,
 I'll strength - en you, help you, and cause you to stand
 For I will be with you, your trou - bles to bless,
 the flame shall not hurt you; for I have de - signed
 That soul, though all hell should en - deav - or to shake,

to you, who for ref - uge to Je - sus have fled?
 up - held by my gra - cious, om - ni - po - tent hand."
 de - liv - er - ing you from your deep - est dis - tress."
 your soul to make pure just as gold is re - fined."
 I'll nev - er, no nev - er, no nev - er for - sake!"

Invitation To Confession

We have, as the church and as its individual members, been far too silent when the lives of those who we know have been shattered by sexual violence. We have put stumbling blocks in front of those who need to share their stories. We have been quick to ask questions about what they were doing, what they were wearing, why they didn't fight back, and so much more. We ask those questions, placing blame on survivors rather than perpetrators. We ask those questions to create an illusion of safety where these horrible things couldn't happen to us, or to someone we love, because surely we wouldn't have put ourselves in such a vulnerable position. Together let us confess the stumbling blocks of silence we have put between survivors and the good news of God's love.

Unison Prayer Of Confession

by the Rev. Maren C Tirabassi, © 2015, used with permission

God, we confess that we put stumbling blocks
in the path of those who need to share
their stories of rape or of abuse,
of incest or of cyber-shaming.

We put the block of disbelief,
the block of our own discomfort
at visualizing sexual violence
and our own discomfort
at not knowing how to fix everything.

We put the block of liking church
to be vague and happy,
the block of blaming the victim,
the block of "you should have been careful,
found different kinds of friends,
worn different clothes."

We put the block of insecurity,
the block of "I'm in too deep here –
please tell a therapist,"
the block of "get over it,"
and the block of "aren't you over it yet?"

God, we confess that we are so proud
about not throwing the stones
we never notice that people
stumble and fall
on the way to our church door. Amen.

Assurance Of God's Grace

by the Rev. Maren C Tirabassi, © 2015, used with permission

Christ who named putting stumbling blocks in the paths of little ones as the most serious of sins, affirmed that giving one cup of cool listening is worth a world of blessing. We are forgiven, and given a chance to listen and love again.

Hymn ~ "I Love To Tell The Story Re-sung For Break The Silence Sunday"

Text by Maren Tirabassi

Tune: I LOVE TO TELL THE
STORY (Fischer), 1869

1 2 3 4



1. We need to tell the sto - ries be - cause we know_ they're true, of__
2. We need to tell the sto - ries of minds and bod - ies dis - tressed, for__
3. We need to host the sto - ries to lis - ten and__ re - ceive, not__

5 6 7 8



bro - ken hearts and child-hoods, of the lost and those who came through. We
friends who've kept them hid - den, and_ hes - i - tant__ new guests. We
quick to of - fer "heal - ing," but__ sim - ply say "I be - lieve." And

9 10 11 12



need to tell the sto - ries of rape, a - buse, and__ fear for
need to tell the sto - ries in muff - led form or__ bare, for
when the folks need com - fort that God will dry their_ tears, the

13 14 15 16



ev - ery time we name them their pow - er dis - ap - pears.
si - lence is com - pli - ci - ty but lift - ed voice is prayer.
gos - pel's "come un - to me..." will e - cho down the years.

17 18 19 20



We need to tell the sto - ries, dark streets and dorm - i - tor - ies, and
We need to tell the sto - ries, of trust turned pre - da - to - ry, and
We need to host the sto - ries, un - ho - ly in - ven - to - ry, and

21 22 23 24



claim the ul - ti - mate sto - ry is that we all are loved.
claim the ul - ti - mate sto - ry is that we all are loved.
claim the ul - ti - mate sto - ry is that we all are loved.

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 43.1-7	God's promise to name and claim each of us
Psalms 130	A prayer of trust in God's presence
Luke 13.10-17	Jesus heals a woman and encounters resistance

Sermon/Reflection/Stories from Survivors

Sung Response ~ "God Is Holding Your Life" by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

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God is Holding Your Life

Psalm 121



Lift up your eyes, be-hold the hills. From where will help and res-cue come?
Turn down your gaze up-on the earth Where is the one who nev-er sleeps?
Ven-tur-ing out or com-ing home, 'neath heat of day or cool of night,



We call on One who made the earth, Who bless'd the stars, the moon and sun.
We call on one who guards you now, your spir-it safe in ho-ly__ keep
We call on one who hears your voice and comes to heal and keep your life



God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life we be-lieve__ God is



hold-ing your life, God is hold-ing your life God is hold-ing your life we be-lieve__

Words and refrain tune by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan. Verse tune: O Waly Waly

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A Time Of Prayer

Holy One, you filled the world with your love, and your spirit, breathing into each of us the breath of life. You named each of us, and claimed each of us as your own. But some of us, some of your beloved children have been hurt, deep in their souls. They have experienced great violation through rape, abuse, incest, and assault. They come, asking to be heard. They come, asking us to stand with them and work for justice. They come, needing to be healed by your unending love. We pray for that healing this day, O God. We pray for your love and grace to be poured out abundantly on all those who have been hurt by rape and sexual assault – the survivors, and all those who love them. May your healing presence guide each of them in their path towards wholeness, and hope. And may your courageous spirit fill the rest of us this day. Give us the strength to speak out, to be bold, to trust in you. Give us the words we need to comfort those who struggle, and the commitment we need to work tirelessly for the wholeness of all your people. These, and all our prayers, we pray with the words that Jesus taught his first disciples saying together...

The Prayer Jesus Taught

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offering Our Gifts

You might consider designating the morning offering, or a portion of it, to the local sexual violence resource center in your area, or to a national organization such as RAINN (Rape Abuse Incest National Network).

Prayer Of Dedication

Generous God, we are grateful for all that you have given to us. We bring you these gifts, signs and symbols of our gratitude. We entrust them to you in the faithful hope that the work Christ began – the work of listening to the stories of God's people, of healing the brokenness of the world, and of restoring creation – might continue in us and through us. Grant us the courage, and the blessing, to listen, to pray, and to speak out. In faith we pray, Amen.

Celebrating Communion

One: This table is not ours, but it belongs to God. All who seek to be fed and nourished by God's grace, and sustained by this community are welcome to share at this table. We come, from the shadows of a waiting, hurting world, knowing that, wherever we have been, whatever we have experienced, we will be fed and renewed. We reach for the cup of God's love, aware of an unquenchable thirst in the depths of who we are, a thirst for justice and hope. We come, trusting that God will meet us here. Let us pray together...

All: Holy One, we come to share the richness of table. We ask your healing grace to be poured out on all those who have suffered sexual violence. Renew and restore them, and your church. Be present with us, and remind us that your presence is with us always. Give us the courage to truly be the Body of Christ.

One: Gracious God, in Jesus you have given us the greatest gift. We come to this table to know you, to remember your love, and to confess that your grace is for all. Some of us come to this table tired and anxious. Some of us come with hope in our hearts. All of us come, trusting in your Spirit's presence, and trusting in the promise that we might all be One, whole and healthy, as your people. Let us pray together...

All: We thank you God for giving yourself to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you that he lived among us, and knew what it was like to be human. Feed us at this table, and give us the courage to be faithful to the One who dared to come into our world. Renew and revive us. Give us the courage to listen, and to speak out to our sisters and brothers, today and always. Amen.

One: We know the stories about Jesus' life, how he would come to share many meals with his disciples and friends. He would welcome those who had been cast to the margins of society, eating with sinners and prostitutes, with the sick and the lame, with the wealthy and the poor alike. On one of those occasions, as his earthly life was nearing an end, he found himself with his disciples and those who had followed him closely in an upper room in Jerusalem. They were there to share the story of hope, of release from captivity, of God's promise of freedom. During the meal he would take the bread, bless it, break it, and offer it to them saying, "this is my body which is given for you." Later, after supper, he would take the cup, give thanks, and say, "this cup is a reminder for us of the new relationship God has made possible between us, and all of creation."

The bread we share is a reminder for us that just as God blessed Jesus with an earthly body, so our earthly bodies are blessed. The cup we share is a reminder for us of Jesus' life, and the grace of God that Jesus came to help us know. We pray that God would bless this bread, and this cup, and us as we receive them. We bring all our lives to God at this table, that we might be one people, united as the Body of Christ, working together for justice and peace. The gifts of God for the people of God. Come for all things are now ready. Come and see how good God is.

Sharing The Elements

Unison Prayer Of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, Gracious God, that you come to us in bread and cup, and in the love of this community. Send us from this table, nourished and empowered. Help us listen with all our hearts, and speak with all our minds, that all your people might truly know peace.

Committing Ourselves To Change

One: In the presence of one another, we pledge ourselves to ending the violence of rape and sexual assault, working towards a vision of a healed community where all can live in dignity and peace.

One: We acknowledge the reality of rape and sexual violence, a plague that brings hopelessness and fear to our sisters and brothers.

Many: We stand in solidarity with those who have been victims. We promise to be open to their stories, and with the grace of God, to listen without judgment.

One: We know the promise of wholeness and hope that Jesus came to bring to the world.

Many: We affirm the promise of God's love for all the survivors in our world, those whose stories are known to us, and those whose stories are still shrouded in silence and fear.

One: We know that we have not done enough, that we have been too silent when those around us have been struggling.

Many: We look forward with hope, trusting in God's ability to give us strength to listen with courage, and to be silent no longer.

One: We believe that the future depends on us.

Many: We believe that there is something we can, and must do, as people of the Good News, and as members of one human family to end the violence of rape and sexual assault.

One: We recognize that we cannot do this alone. We know we must learn to depend on each other, and on God, in the struggle to end sexual violence, and create justice.

All: Gracious God, help us to be aware of your loving disruption of our lives. Give us the courage to work with you, and with each other, to transform our hurting world. Empower us with your Spirit that we might break the silence of sexual violence. Help us listen, and move together from fear and pain towards your realm of peace and justice. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Hymn ~ "We Shall Overcome" (tune: We Shall Overcome, public domain)

We shall overcome, we shall overcome,
We shall overcome, some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We shall overcome, some day.

We'll go hand in hand, we'll go hand in hand,
We'll go hand in hand, some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We'll go hand in hand, some day.

We are not afraid, we are not afraid,
We are not afraid, today.
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
We are not afraid, today.

The truth shall make us free, the truth shall make us free,
The truth shall make us free, some day;
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe,
The truth shall make us free, some day.

Benediction & Musical Postlude

Healing Service For Break The Silence Sunday

by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan © 2015

The ministry of healing in body, mind and soul is clear in the gospels. Jesus so often met men, women and children and touched them, had conversation with them, or reoriented their livelihood. There are also many Biblical stories of renewal, forgiveness and restoration.

Today's service continues that ministry of Jesus Christ enacted by our community.

In prayer, song and silence, we gather as survivors of abuse, sexual violence and rape; spouses, family members and important friends.

We are all people both in need of wholeness and with healing to offer one another.

All are welcome.

*The people enter in silence with an attitude of prayer, giving thanks for community and asking comfort and strength for those in sorrow and grief.
(Half-light?)*

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15 minute Prelude- hymn instrumentals

(Possibilities include: It Is Well With My Soul, Jesus Loves Me, My Hope is built on Nothing Less, Amazing Grace, Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying, Come and Fill Our Hearts).

Welcome

Litany of Invocation from Psalm 42

(The people stand as they are able)

One: As a deer thirsts for the waterbrooks, so my soul longs for you, O God.

Many: By day God commands unfailing love; at night God's song is with me.

One: My soul thirsts for the Holy One, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of my God?

Many: By day God commands unfailing love; at night God's song is with me.

One: Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you so disturbed within me?

Many: By day God commands unfailing love; at night God's song is with me.

One: 'Hope in the Lord, and wait', I tell my soul; 'wait for God, for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.'

Many: By day God commands unfailing love; at night God's song is with me.

(Please be seated)

Words of Confession and Forgiveness

One: At the beginning of this time together, we take a moment to acknowledge the truth: the each of us has broken places and unfinished stories. Being honest with one another and opening to God, we take a deep breath.

Many: God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from whom no secrets are hid, see us and hear us as we truly are. Heal us and help us to heal. Forgive us and help us to forgive.

One: Our great God of love has claimed you and called you wonderful. No matter what your past, present or future, receive the full joy of God's presence in and about you.

Many: Amen.

A song: "Healer of Our Every Ill" by Marty Haugen

(Chalice Hymnal #506; Evangelical Lutheran Worship #612);
or another hymn of healing & hope

Reading One: Psalm 139.1-16

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in the underworld, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.

A full silence is held.

Prayer: Creator God, You know us and you hold us in love through each season of our lives. Bless us in this time as we bring to mind our stories and witness for one another both grief and healing. Through Jesus Christ, Lord, friend, and healer. Amen.

Candle Lighting ~ A Time Of Remembering

Invitation to light candles

At this time, we invite you to make a prayer for what you are remembering tonight. Please feel free to take your time with this. It's a moment to hold one another in gentleness and grace. During the candle lighting, we will sing together songs of God's love and guidance.

The assembly comes forward where tables have been set with votive candles in globes.

Hymn: "Borning Cry"

(New Century Hymnal #351; Evangelical Lutheran Worship #732)

Taizé or other meditative songs as needed:

"Come and Fill Our Hearts;" "Jesus, Remember Me"

Reading Two: Psalm 46.1-7. 10-11

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy home of the Most High. God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

A full silence is held.

Prayer: God, our Home and our Help, be with us this season as we remember. Hold us with all the emotions of our experiences— sadness, confusion, anger, gratitude, fear. Stir in us holy hope that all our lives are being made whole in your love. Through Jesus who calls and welcomes us. Amen.

Hymn: “Hear My Cry, O God (Psalm 61)” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Or another song familiar to your community

Reading Three: Romans 8.38-39

A reading from Paul’s letter to his friends in Rome, Italy.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A full silence is held.

Prayer: O God that will not let us go, Your love holds us, and holds onto us. Renew in us the promise of Your never-ending grace so that we know the strong ground on which we stand, and the trusted anchor in which we hope.

Hymn:

“Amazing Grace” (New Century Hymnal #547)

“God Is Holding Your Life (Ps 121)” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan

Another song familiar to your community

Prayer For All Who Need Healing & Hope

One: In the name of Jesus Christ, the great Healer and reconciler of the world, let us entrust to God all who are in need.

A brief silence

One: Loving Maker, our source and final home, we give you thanks for the gifts of life on earth and all you have created. In your great mercy:

Many: Hear us, O God.

One: Fierce and Gentle Healer, your Son Jesus brought healing and wholeness to all who have experienced abuse, sexual violence or rape. Bring ease now to all who are grieving, hope to the discouraged, peace to the distressed. In your great mercy:

Many: Hear us, O God.

One: Spirit of Strength, give courage to family members and friends of those who have survived abuse, rape, or sexual violence (use whatever language is best) that they might be generous listeners, gentle healers and hopeful presence. In your great mercy:

Many: Hear us, O God.

One: Gentle Healer, walk with us as we come to accept life as it is now. We need your help to forgive those we need to forgive; and we need your forgiveness for the things we have done, and the things we have left undone. We pray that all those struggling will find peace in you. In your great mercy:

Many: Hear us, O God.

One: Gracious Provider God, thank you for those who have been with us on our journey: pastors, chaplains, friends, family, neighbors. We thank you for these important carriers of your love. In your great mercy:

Many: Hear us, O God.

One: God of great and abundant mercy, with your presence sustain all for whom we pray. Drive away despair, give us firm hope, and strengthen our trust in you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, Leader and Friend, Amen.

If desired, add:

Let us join in praying the prayer that Jesus taught us, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven
 hallowed be thy name,
 thy kingdom come,
 thy will be done,
 on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
And forgive us our trespasses,
 as we forgive those
 who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
 and the power, and the glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: “It Is Well With My Soul” (New Century Hymnal #438)
Or another song familiar to your community

An Invitation

These are possible suggestions for time after the service is formally ended...

- The people are invited to stay as long as they wish, and come forward for anointing and prayer.
- The people are invited for refreshments in the fellowship hall.
- The people are invited to give a free will offering that will go toward support for survivors in our community.
- Suggested Taizé songs to be played/sung as people remain as long as they wish:
 - Wait For The Lord
 - Jesus, Remember Me
 - O Lord, Hear My Prayer
 - Take O Take Me As I Am

Sending Blessing (in unison)

May the God of all comfort grant us peace.

May the God of New Life grant us hope.

May the God of Unfailing Love follow us all the days of our lives.

(In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.) Amen.

Additional Worship Resources

A Call To Worship

By the Rev. Stephen Price

Interim pastor, Heritage Baptist Church, Annapolis, MD

There is anger in this prayer, a holy anger that has been building up, rising against the silence that so many survivors face on a daily basis, rising against the shame and guilt survivors feel, and rising against those who would seek to keep us silent. The words are intense, and point to a deep need for survivors to be heard.

Leader: We come to break our silence this morning. We will shatter it like a plate thrown in rage.

People: It has not been a holy silence where we could meet God; but one in which the demonic howled in the darkness, and toxic feelings drifted like fog.

Leader: It has not been a silence we asked for, but a rag stuffed down our throats, the waterboarding of our souls.

People: A silence in which we hurt ourselves, or others, just to lessen our anguish.

Leader: A silence in which we ran from those who loved us, and clung to those who caused us pain; because they spoke the language the silence had taught us.

People: A silence we thought was God's silence because we could not imagine God loving people like us.

Leader: Our breaking the silence will not be pretty, this is not a Hallmark moment. Someone stole from us, then pawned the pieces.

People: This morning we are kicking in the doors and windows of the pawnshop; we are taking ourselves back.

All: Join hands with us this morning, if you dare. But know this, we will break the silence, we will not be broken by it. And where once we cowered in paralyzed fear, we will rise, and rise, and rise.

A Prayer for Peace After Sexual Assault

by Julia Park Rodrigues

From Women's Uncommon Prayers Our Lives Revealed, Nurtured, Celebrated

Edited by Elizabeth Rankin Geitz, Marjorie A Burke & Ann Smith et al

Morehouse Publishing, Harrisburg, PA, 2000

This is one survivor's prayer, and it moves through anger towards asking God to forgive their offender. This is not the path all survivors take, or need to. Coming to forgiveness is different for all survivors. This prayer is one approach, not the only approach.

Loving God, I know that you hold me in the palm of your hand.

I know it is so.

But *why*, O Lord, *why*?

I rage at this sin against me, at this defilement of my body,
this assault on my peace of mind.

I mourn my lost serenity, security, confidence;

I mourn the loss of my ease and open nature.

I hate what his assault has done to me.

I feel that my body and soul may never be the same.

What has been forced upon me may never be forgotten.

But send your healing upon me like cool rain.

Sooth my spirit with the balm of your tender love.

Help me to feel secure again, as safe as ever within the shelter of the Lord.

Let my anger not turn inward to self-loathing,

but outward for action and purpose: to help others like me,

to bring hope to those whose faith is not so strong.

Help me, with your grace,

to move beyond *victim*, to call myself *survivor* instead.

May you forgive this man's offense against me,

and grant me the peace and serenity

of a mind and body made whole again.

Amen.

"Sometimes I Wonder ~ A Poetic Manifesto"

Moirra Finley, August 2012 & revised August 2013

Sometimes,
in the small hours of the night
when the voices
of a million screaming women
keep me from sleep,
I wonder what it would be like
if we all just sat down
and stopped
because we'd finally had enough.

If we gathered up
our saris and burkhas,
nursing bras and corsets,
cotillion dresses and uniforms,
our suits and G-strings,
running clothes and pyjamas,
jeans and habits,
and settled ourselves in
for a nice long wait
until the world finally admitted
that enough was enough,
that rape must come to an end.

I dream of that day,
when over a cup of tea,
or coffee or simply cool clear water,
we calmly state our demands.

We require a world where we teach
that you should not rape
instead of how to avoid being raped;
that every person is sacred
and deserves to be respected,
to have their own voice,
a right to the sanctity and dignity
of their own bodies,
to an education and
the encouragement to use
their minds, their hearts, and their souls,
to follow their dreams.

We require a world where
girls and women can safely
walk down the street
wearing a bikini or a hijab,
and sit in their own homes,
without fear that their
bodies and hearts and souls
would be torn apart
by the violation of someone else's anger,
by the hatred of someone's violence,
by the searing pain of rape
which will follow them,
endlessly replaying
in their hearts and minds,
for the rest of their lives;
and where this is equally true
for boys and men.

We require a world where
our daughters and sons
never feel compelled to cooperate
with things that make them
hate their bodies,
at the hands of those
they should be able to trust;
where power over others
is a memory best to be forgotten.

I wonder what would happen
if the labourers in the fields,
office workers and nurses,
teachers and store clerks,
business owners and farmers,
mothers and grandmothers,
athletes and firefighters,
all of them women,
simply stopped and sat down
and demanded a world of peace,
a world free from rape and violence,
from shame and degradation,
from buying and selling human flesh,
from oppression and tyranny.

Would it matter?
Would the world notice?
Would it change anything
if more than half the world
failed to show up for work one day?
Would our strength be praised,
or our bravery condemned?

Would the men we love,
who say they love us,
take a stand with us,
use their voices and their power
on our behalf,
to advocate for us,
to share our dream,
to help create it?

Sometimes,
as the first rays of dawn
creep through my bedroom window,
I wonder what it would be like
if there were no more voices
crying in the night,
no more lives torn apart by rape,
and what it would be like
if the dream came true.

Additional Music Ideas

You might consider other hymns with themes of healing, and justice. These are some suggestions from the New Century Hymnal (NCH):

- “I Was There To Hear Your Boring Cry” (NCH #351)
- “Help Us Accept Each Other” (NCH #388)
- “My Life Flows On In Endless Song” (NCH #476)
- “Amazing Grace” (NCH #547)
- “Out Of The Depths, O God, We Call” (NCH #554)
- “Lead Us From Death To Life” (NCH #581) – particularly the chorus
- “Let Justice Flow Like Streams” (NCH #588)

Additional music you might consider for choir, band, teaching the congregation, or simply for listening:

- “God Is Our Refuge And Strength” by Andra Moran
<https://www.etsy.com/shop/AMMOMusic>

- “Light Of Heaven” by Andra Moran
http://www.andramoran.com/track/8132/light-of-heaven?feature_id=59929

- “Here In This Place” by Christopher Grundy
<http://sites.fastspring.com/christophergrundy/product/catalog>

- “From My Hands” by Christopher Grundy (particularly the second verse)
<http://www.christophergrundy.com/recordings/>
On the CD “In This Life”

- “Welcome To This Circle” by The River’s Voice
<http://www.riversvoice.com/shop.php>

- “God Who Remembers (Psalm 136)” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
<http://www.psalmmimmersion.com/#!/god-who-remembers/c23dt>

- “Move (Psalm 109)” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan
<http://www.psalmmimmersion.com/#!/move/cd4h>

“I Am Welcome” by Bryan Sirchio

The full song whose chorus is in the included liturgy can be found on the “Fully Alive” album at <http://sirchio.com/cds/f/c/1342>

“Stand With You” by Bryan Sirchio

<http://sirchio.com/songs/f/c/196>

Sample Newsletter Article & Bulletin Announcement

In the United States, every 107 seconds someone is sexually assaulted. The survivors of those assaults are our friends, neighbors, colleagues, and members of our congregation. They need us to help them speak out, to create a place where they can share their stories without fear, and without judgment.

Join us for Break The Silence Sunday on April 24, 2016

In worship we will acknowledge the painful reality of rape and sexual violence. We will hear the stories of survivors, trusting in the good news of God's love, and we will commit ourselves to being a listening people, and a people dedicated to changing the reality of violence in the world.

This service may be difficult and challenging.

Some parents may not want their young children to be present.

Please take time to prepare yourself. Ask God for the strength to open your heart and mind, that we might support all the survivors who are part of our church, our community, and the world.

If you have questions or concerns about the service, or if you would like to help with worship leadership, please contact _____.

Jackie's Story

by Jackie L. Gutschenritter, used with permission

For more of Jackie's work please see her website, <http://www.learninghope.org>

I do not have memories of abuse as early as some people. I primarily remember having no boundaries in my house. No door was to be closed. There was to be no private time; not even in the bathroom. My bedroom door was never to be closed. My primary abuser was my father, but he was not the only one.

My grandparents had foster children and one of them, named Michael, taught me a game called the screw. I had no idea what it was, but since the word is a fairly common description of a particular sexual act, it is pretty clear what he encouraged me to do. His brother, Adam, was also a foster child at my grandparents' home. He also participated in the game.

I think more because I was afraid to get in trouble than anything else, but we found out the boys were moving to a new home and I decided I had to tell my parents about the game we had been playing. I told them both at the same time. Their response was that it was too late to do anything and I should just forget about it. I think this was when my father saw his opportunity and knew he would probably not get caught.

As I said, there were no closed doors in my house. My father, for as long as I can remember, watched me in the shower. He would walk in when I was going to the bathroom. There was no saying, "No."

My mom got a job to bring in extra money for my sister to go to preschool. She worked at a grocery store on the weekends. It became a Sunday morning ritual that after my mother had left, he would call me into his bed. I do not know how long that went on. My sister, if she woke up, was told to go watch cartoons downstairs. I do not know how long I stayed in his bed; I only remember that he told me to get up when it was time to get ready for church. He did not attend, but my sister and I went to Sunday School.

It was not just at home when he would abuse me. It happened cutting wood, in the backyard, on the way to school. Wherever he felt he could.

The most painful sexual experience I had with my father was the time he raped me with his finger. I remember crying out, but he put his hand over my mouth so my sister could not hear me. Afterward, I got up and went to Sunday School. I'm not sure if the teacher could tell something was wrong, but she asked me if I'd had a tough week at school. Yes, a tough week at school. That was the only reason I could speak.

I always felt bad about accusing my father of childhood sexual abuse. Every survivor feels badly about telling the truth about their abuse. It is scary. And something no one should ever have to report. When I did tell, people, including my mother, told me it could have been worse, because, after all, he never really raped me. It wasn't **rape** rape, whatever that is supposed to mean.

The reality is he did rape me. And even if it could be argued he didn't, there were so many other touches, glances, and thoughts of his that were inappropriate. No one should ever have that kind of sexual attention from a parent. No one should ever experience unwanted sexual attention of any kind from anyone.

I don't know why, but I had to tell. I think I was trying to protect my sister. I told my mother. She said she'd talk to him and make him stop. It did stop for a week or two, then he was back at it. Then I told my Girl Scout leader, with my mom at my side. She had just given a talk on inappropriate touching and we thought she would be someone who could help. She did not. Then I told the minister at church. She counseled my parents for eight months before finally calling the police.

The day she called the police, an officer and his wife from another county came to question me. The county I lived in had no resources to handle the situation. The two people questioned me in the living room, while my mother and father sat in the kitchen, within earshot of everything I said. I don't know where my sister was at that time. After they questioned me, I was sent to my grandmother's house while they questioned my mom and dad.

Dad had to move out of the house. So where did he go? Two doors down from my house to my grandparents' house – with the foster kids they had at the time. He stayed there for a while, then someone realized he probably shouldn't be there with the foster kids. He used to come back to our house every night for dinner, but he didn't come in the house. One night, he left his dinner plate on top of his truck. It shattered on the ground in a million pieces as he drove away.

He was put on probation and we had family visits twice a week and counseling once week. I was told to apologize to my father for breaking up our family. I did because I didn't know what else to do. Eventually, he broke probation and abused another girl. She was not related to him, so it was considered a worse crime. He was sentenced to four years for breaking probation and five years for what he had done to the other girl.

The sentences were to be served concurrently so the most he could have served was 5 years, but because his crime was "not that violent" and the prisons were so full, he got two and a half years in prison.

I moved away to school as quickly as I could and tried to go on with my life and pick up the pieces of everything that had been done to me. It took a long time to get to a place I'd call ok. My life is finally on a good trajectory. I can say in the last two years, that for the first time in my life, I genuinely feel happy. Every day isn't great, but I'm loved and supported and feel like I can truly be me. It's pretty awesome.

Moira's Story

by Rev. Moira Finley, used with permission

When I was thirteen, the summer before I started high school, I went to a summer camp at a university in another state. It was great to be that far away from home without my family, to find the beginnings of some independence, and it was great to be around people who were dorks like me, who gladly gave up weeks of their summer vacation to sit in classrooms and learn new things.

It was great, for the first week, but then there was an attempted mugging on campus and so they gathered everyone together and gave us a speech about safety. They told us not to walk alone, particularly after dark, to always let others know where we would be, who we would be with, and so on. My mother had always given me a lot of freedom and so I had never doubted my safety, but something in what the leaders of the program said that day stuck in my thirteen year old brain.

So a few days later I was at the library after dinner and the person who was supposed to meet me there couldn't and I found myself alone, with no one to walk with me back to the dorms. I looked around, trying to find someone I knew, and I found one of my instructors. He seemed the perfect choice, after all we tell our children they can trust their teachers.

So I went over and asked him if he would walk me back to the dorms. He paused and said he'd be happy to, but he had to make a call first. Seemed perfectly reasonable. He went off to make the call, and a few minutes later we left.

He asked me if I minded if he stopped by his house to leave his backpack before we continued on to my dorm. Since it was on the way it seemed to make sense.

When we got to his house, I waited in the entryway while he went upstairs. He was gone a long time, and I was starting to worry that I would miss curfew.

Just as I had decided that it would be better to risk walking the rest of the way back to the dorm myself, the doors on the other side of the entry hall opened and five men I had never met before approached me.

The phone call my teacher had made was to let his friends know that he had succeeded in his mission – to find someone to rape.

Over the next seven hours that's exactly what they did, things my thirteen year old self couldn't even begin to imagine, things designed to hurt, and humiliate, to degrade, and to try to separate me from my soul.

When they were done, in the small hours of the morning, they wrapped me in a sheet and put me in the back of a pick up truck. They drove me to an isolated dirt road outside of town and left me by the side of the road, convinced that no one would find me, that I would die.

That didn't happen. An incredible man named Michael happened to be driving to town and saw what he thought was a pile of trash lying on the side of the road. He stopped to pick it up, and found me instead.

He drove me to the hospital and stayed with me. He held my hand through those first most terrifying hours of doctors, and nurses, and police officers, of questions, and questions, and more questions.

My mom was eight hundred miles away and so it took her the rest of the day to get to me, arriving late in the night, sobbing at my bedside.

I spent a long time in the hospital, with broken bones and other injuries, and I have spent the last more than twenty-eight years putting the pieces of my life back together. I struggle with the after effects of what they did, to my body, and my mind, and I fight every day not to give in to their voices, the words of the men who raped me who said I was worthless.

Thankfully I had, and still have, some incredible people surrounding me, getting me a psychiatrist to talk to in the hospital and a lawyer who helped advocate for me in the legal system. Thankfully my mother was my greatest strength, and we had a community of support who held me together through incredible darkness, who held our light, and hope, and love when I couldn't see it myself.

And yet, there is not a day that goes by when I don't think about what happened, when there isn't some memory, some trigger, a smell, a sight, a sound, that drags me right back to that room where everything in my life changed.

On the outside I may look like a reasonably normal person, but on the inside there is a struggle going on to stay present, to live in this moment, to believe in the goodness of the world, and that if we all put our hearts, and minds together, we could spark a revolution so that no one ever had to live through what I did.

I truly believe we can help that new world be born, but it's going to take a lot of work because, even with the most conservative numbers, one in six women in the United States, and one in three women worldwide face every day, along with one in thirty men have a story like mine.

But we aren't statistics. We are people, human beings who have faced the horror of someone else deciding that they had the right to take control of our bodies. We are people who have been through some of the most terrible things that one person can inflict on another. We have lived through it, we are standing here with you today, sitting next to you at work, at school, at church.

And the worst thing we have to deal with is not the memories of what happened, not the nightmares, the flashbacks, the nagging self-doubt, or the questions about why us, or what we could have done differently. The worst things we have to deal with is the shame that society thinks we should feel, and the crushing silence when we try to tell our stories.

When my survivor sisters and brothers try to tell our stories we are met with questions – what were you wearing, why were you there, are you sure you didn't ask for it? We are made to feel the shame and guilt that rightly belong to the people who raped and assaulted us.

And I understand some of it is a defense mechanism. If we were raped because of our short skirts, or because we were walking home late alone, or because we dared to go out and drink, then it can't happen to someone else. But we don't need that. We have enough of those questions, and doubts in our hearts and minds already.

What we need, from those of you who don't bear the scars of rape, is for you to listen. We need for you to listen to our stories, to not turn away. Yes, it will be uncomfortable and yes, it will break your heart. We need you to deal with all of that, all of your own discomfort, so that you can listen to us, support us, encourage us as we deal with the winding, difficult journey of healing.

We need you to listen to our fears, to try to understand our anxieties. We need you to be patient with how we tell our stories, with the stops and starts, with a sudden flood of memories that come and have to be shared or they will overwhelm us. We need you to hear the details, the awful specific things that happened, and we need you to understand that sometimes we can't share those details with you, or with anyone.

We need you to try and understand what it's like to live with post traumatic stress disorder, to need to sit on a particular side of the table, or triple check the locks on the door, or a thousand other things that help us navigate our days while our brains, and hearts, are torn between the present and the past.

We need to know that we aren't a burden to you, that you're in this with us for the long haul, that you'll stand with us in the good days when we are enjoying life, because we do have them, but also in the dark days of self doubt, fear, anxiety, and despair, because we have those days as well.

We need your voices, the voices of allies in this struggle, to stand with us and help us change the world, to create a future where no more people face the sleepless nights burdened by memories of what someone else inflicted on us, a future where saying no is respected, and a future where my friend Ashley's beautiful children have to ask "Momma, what was rape?"

Sermon Suggestions

You need to carefully consider what your community needs during the sermon time on Break The Silence Sunday. Are you part of a community that is already familiar with the issues of rape and sexual violence? Is yours a community where these are new, and scary topics? Does your community frequently engage in justice work in the world beyond the church doors? Are you aware of survivors in your pews, some who have shared their stories with you?

You could choose to use one of the survivor stories included in these materials. You could invite someone from a local resource organization to speak about their services to your community. And, of course, you can craft your own sermon.

If you choose to write your own sermon, you need to go carefully. The work of Break The Silence Sunday is to support survivors in their journey of healing. Please don't preach about any shoulds. Don't tell survivors that they should forgive those who have hurt them, or should share their stories, or should behave in any particular way. This is not the moment to glorify the cross, so please don't preach about the redemptive suffering of Jesus.

This is a time to speak about healing and wholeness, and the hope that Christ's community can provide. This is a time to talk about justice – a justice for individual survivors (perhaps through the criminal justice system, but surely through having their voice heard and their stories honored in the church); and justice for all creation as we work to change the culture that allows this violence to continue.

There are scripture suggestions in the included liturgy. Isaiah 43.1-7 speaks of God's claiming and naming each of us, walking with us through the struggles and fear of our lives; Psalm 130 is a prayer of trust that God will always be with us; and Luke 13.10-17 tells the story of a woman who has been crippled by her illness and seeks healing on the Sabbath.

These scriptures all point toward a God of hope, of companionship, and of justice. There are other scriptures that you could use to speak of God's support for those who are suffering, those who have been victims of injustice and violence, and those who have been silenced. You might also consider some of the other healing stories in the New Testament, but remember that healing is not necessarily physical, but an ability to fully participate in the life and work of the community, the chance for someone to be remembered, honored, and respected.

If your community is already engaged in the difficult work of justice on behalf of survivors, you might consider the story in Judges 19. It is a difficult scripture, and you will want to do considerable exegetical work, as well as much faithful preparation of your community so they are ready to hear, and receive the text.

You are invited to consider the final lines of Judges 19, whether you use that scripture in worship or not. Verse 20 reads (from the NRSV, emphasis added):

Then he commanded the men he sent, saying, "Thus shall you say to all the Israelites, 'Has such a thing ever happened since the day that the Israelites came up from the land of Egypt until this day?

Consider it, take counsel, and speak out."

That is the work of Break The Silence Sunday, and your work in preaching and leading worship ...

- Consider it - recognize the problem, admit that rape and sexual violence are real, hurting members of your community, and society as a whole
- Take Counsel – learn about rape and sexual violence, listen to the stories of survivors without judgment, walk with them through the struggles, support and encourage them as they journey towards healing and hope
- Speak Out – say something, often, be a voice for justice, for changing our communities, for creating places of peace and safety for all

Resources

General Information About Rape & Sexual Assault

- Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN) – includes links to their online and telephone counseling services, <http://www.rainn.org>
- National Sexual Violence Resource Center, <http://www.nsvrc.org>
- Joyful Heart Foundation, <http://www.joyfulheartfoundation.org>
- No More (a national campaign to end sexual and domestic violence), <http://nomore.org>
- “What’s Their Problem? Sharing Our Pews With Sexual Abuse Victims and Survivors,” from *Christ And Pop Culture*, <http://christandpopculture.com/whats-problem-sharing-pews-sexual-abuse-victims-survivors/>

Resources on PTSD

- From the Department of Veteran’s Affairs:
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/PTSD-overview/basics/index.asp>
- From the Rape Abuse Incest National Network (specific to rape victims):
<https://rainn.org/effects-of-sexual-assault/post-traumatic-stress-disorder>

State of Wisconsin Resources

- Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Telephone: 608-257-1516; <http://www.wcasa.org>
Offers information and referral on any issue related to sexual violence; does not offer direct services to victims/survivors, but will connect them to local agencies
- County-by-county resources – please refer to the table below to identify resource agencies within your county

<u>WI County</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Website</u>
Ashland	Northwoods Women, Inc. /New Day Shelter	800-924-4132	http://www.ndshelter.org
Adams	Hope House of South Central WI	800-584-6790	http://hopehouseswcw.org
Barron	Barron County Health	715-537-5691	http://www.barroncountyhealth.com/
Bayfield	Northwoods Women, Inc. /New Day Shelter	800-924-4132	http://www.ndshelter.org
Brown	Family Services Sexual Assault Center	920-436-8899	http://www.familyservicesnew.org
Brown	Sexual Assault Center Of Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin	920-436-8899	http://www.familyservicesnew.org
Buffalo	Bolton Refuge House, Inc.	800-252-4357	http://www.boltonrefugehouse.org
Burnett	Community Referral Agency	800-261-7233	http://crashelter.org/
Calumet	Sexual Assault Crisis Center-Fox Cities, Inc.	800-722-7797	http://www.sacc-foxcities.org
Chippewa	Family Support Center	800-400-7020	http://www.familysupportcentercf.com
Clark	Personal Development Center	877-436-6262	http://www.pdcmarshfield.com
Columbia	Hope House of South Central WI	800-584-6790	http://hopehouseswcw.org
Crawford	Gundersen Health System, Sexual Assault Services	608-775-5950	http://www.gundersenhealth.org/social-services/domestic-abuse-program
Dane	Rape Crisis Center	608-251-7273	http://www.danecountyrcc.org
Dane	UW-Madison End Violence on Campus	608-265-1483	http://www.evoc.wisc.edu
Dodge	People Against a Violent Environment, Inc.	800-775-3785	http://www.peopleagainstavolentenvironment.com

Door	Sexual Assault Center Of Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin	800-998-9609	http://www.familyservicesnew.org
Douglas	Center Against Sexual and Domestic Abuse	800-649-2921	http://www.casda.org
Dunn	The Bridge to Hope	800-924-9918	http://www.thebridgetohope.org
Eau Claire	Bolton Refuge House, Inc.	855-526-5866	http://www.boltonrefugehouse.org
Eau Claire	Family Support Center	800-400-7020	http://www.familysupportcentercf.com
Florence	Florence County Human Services	715-528-3496	http://www.florencecountywi.com/departments/?department=3bc4e37d886b&subdepartment=bc1d09cfd5af
Fond du Lac	ASTOP, Inc.	800-418-0270	http://www.astop.org
Forest	Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault	800-236-1222	http://www.tri-countycouncil.org
Grant	Family Advocates, Inc.	800-924-2624	http://www.familyadv.org
Green	Sexual Assault Response Program-Family Services of Southern WI / Northern IL	866-666-4576	http://sarpwi.com/
Green Lake	ASTOP, Inc.	800-418-0270	http://www.astop.org
Iowa	Family Advocates, Inc.	800-924-2624	http://www.familyadv.org
Iron	DOVE, Inc	800-711-6744	http://www.dove-inc.net/
Jackson	Black River/Jackson County Outreach	715-333-2350	http://www.boltonrefugehouse.org
Jefferson	People Against Domestic and Sexual Abuse	800-228-7232	http://www.padajc.org/
Juneau	Hope House of South Central WI	800-584-6790	http://hopehousesw.org
Kenosha	Women and Children's Horizons	800-853-3503	http://www.wchkenosha.org

Kewaunee	Violence Intervention Project, Inc	920-837-2424	https://www.facebook.com/Violence-Intervention-Project-167838666562171/
La Crosse	Gundersen Health System, Sexual Assault Services	608-775-5950	http://www.gundersenhealth.org/social-services/domestic-abuse-program
Lafayette	Family Advocates, Inc.	800-924-2624	http://www.familyadv.org
Langlade	AVAIL, Inc.	715-623-5767	http://www.availinc.org
Lincoln	Haven, Inc.	715-536-1300	http://www.haveninc.org
Manitowoc	Manitowoc Cty Dom Violence/Sexual Assault Ctr	920-684-5770	http://www.manitowocresources.com/listing.php?id=187
Marathon	The Women's Community Inc.- Sexual Assault Victim Service	888-665-1234	http://www.womenscommunity.org
Marinette	Sexual Assault Center Of Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin	800-998-9609	http://www.familyservicesnew.org/sac/
Marquette	CAP Services, Inc.	800-472-3377	http://capservices.org/programs/human-development/sexual-assault-victim-services/
Marquette	Hope House of South Central WI	800-584-6790	http://hopehousesw.org
Menominee	Menominee County Human Services	715-799-3861	http://www.co.menominee.wi.us/departments/?department=f55aeda5c4b7
Milwaukee	Milwaukee Women's Center	800-584-6790	http://hopehousesw.org
Milwaukee	Sexual Assault Treatment Center	414-219-5555	http://www.aurorahealthcare.org/services/sexual-assault/satc.asp
Milwaukee	United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc.	414-389-6510	http://www.umos.org/social_services/human_trafficking.html
Monroe	Gundersen Health System, Sexual Assault Services	608-775-5950	http://www.gundersenhealth.org/social-services/domestic-abuse-program
Oconto	Sexual Assault Center Of Family Services of Northeast Wisconsin	800-998-9609	http://www.familyservicesnew.org

Oneida	Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault	800-236-1222	http://www.tri-countycouncil.org
Outagamie	CAP Services, Inc.	800-472-3377	http://capservices.org/programs/human-development/sexual-assault-victim-services/
Outagamie	Sexual Assault Crisis Center-Fox Cities, Inc.	800-722-7797	http://www.sacc-foxcities.org
Ozaukee	Advocates of Ozaukee	877-375-4034	http://www.advocates-oz.org
Pepin	The Bridge to Hope	800-924-9918	http://www.thebridgetohope.org
Pierce	Turningpoint for Victims of Dom and Sexual Assault	800-345-5104	http://www.turningpoint-wi.org
St. Croix	St. Croix Valley Sexual Assault Response Team	888-334-4677	http://stcroixvalleysart.org
St. Croix	Turningpoint for Victims of Domestic and Sexual Assault	800-345-5104	http://www.turningpoint-wi.org
Polk	Community Referral Agency	800-261-7233	http://crashelter.org/
Portage	CAP Services, Inc.	800-472-3377	http://capservices.org/programs/human-development/sexual-assault-victim-services/
Price	TimeOut Shelter	800-924-0556	http://timeoutabusesshelter.org
Racine	Sexual Assault Services of Lutheran Social Services	262-637-7233	http://www.sasoflss.org
Richland	Passages, Inc.	800-236-4325	no website
Rock	Sexual Assault Response Program-Family Services of Southern WI / Northern IL	866-666-4576	http://sarpwi.com/
Rock	YWCA Rock County	800-750-7990	http://www.ywcarockcounty.org
Rusk	TimeOut Shelter	800-924-0556	http://timeoutabusesshelter.org
Sauk	Hope House of South Central WI	800-584-6790	http://hopehousesw.org

Sawyer	Sawyer County Health & Human Services	715-634-4806	http://www.sawyercountygov.org/Departments/HealthHumanServices/tabid/103/Default.aspx
Shawano	Safe Haven	888-303-3421	http://www.shawanoshelter.org
Sheboygan	Safe Harbor of Sheboygan Cty, Inc.	800-499-7640	http://www.sheboygansafeharbor.org/
Taylor	Stepping Stones, Inc.	866-343-5140	http://www.steppingstonesoftaylorcountywi.org/
Trempealeau	New Horizons Shelter and Outreach Ctrs, Inc.	888-231-0066	http://www.nhagainstabuse.org/
Vernon	Passages, Inc.	800-236-4325	no website
Vilas	Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault	800-236-1222	http://www.tri-countycouncil.org
Walworth	The Association for the Prevention of Family Violence	262-723-4653	www.apfwalworth.com
Washburn	TimeOut Shelter	800-924-0556	http://timeoutabusesshelter.org
Washington	Friends of Abused Families, Inc.	262-334-7298	http://www.fafinc.org
Waukesha	The Women's Center	888-542-3828	http://www.twcwaukesha.org
Waupaca	CAP Services, Inc.	800-472-3377	http://capservices.org/programs/human-development/sexual-assault-victim-services/
Waushara	CAP Services, Inc.	800-472-3377	http://capservices.org/programs/human-development/sexual-assault-victim-services/
Winnebago	Reach Counseling Services	920-722-8150	http://www.reachcounseling.com
Wood	Wisconsin Rapids Family Center	877-318-0003	http://www.familyctr.org/
Wood	Personal Development Center	715-384-2971	http://www.pdcmarshfield.com

Feedback Form ~ Break The Silence Sunday 2016

Please return to: BTSS c/o Moira Finley
PO Box 691
Bonduel, WI 54017

You may also submit this information by email at breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com

Your name: _____

Your position (pastor/worship leader/other): _____

Your community/church: _____

Did you use the Break The Silence Sunday Liturgy?

☐ Yes, as it was provided

☐ Yes, but we adapted it; please list how you adapted it:

☐ We used parts of it, but not the entire liturgy; please list the parts used:

☐ No, we wrote our own liturgy; if you are willing to share the liturgy you used, please email it to breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com or post to the above address

Please continue to the other side --->

What did you use during the sermon time?

- ☐ Jackie's story ☐ Moira's story
- ☐ Wrote our own sermon (if you are willing to share, please email it to breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com or post to the above address)
- ☐ A survivor in our community shared their story (if possible, please connect them with us by emailing contact information to breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com)
- ☐ Something else; please describe...

Did you use the Break The Silence Sunday Healing Service?

- ☐ Yes, as it was provided
- ☐ Yes, but we adapted it; please list how you adapted it:
- ☐ No

What could we provide to you for 2017 that would help you better prepare, and lead Break The Silence Sunday?

Any additional comments, suggestions, concerns?