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”I, the Lord,  
have called you....  
I have appointed you

as a COVENANT  
of PEACE

and LIGHT  
of the

NATIONS.

GO now to those  
to whom

I SEND you, and

Say whatever

I COMMAND you.”

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## CHURCH

**LEADER:** Your Word, O God, is power and truth,

**ALL:** We have seen it with our own eyes and stand in awe.

**LEADER:** You have chosen the weak to lift up the strong.

**ALL:** And have called the foolish to comfort the wise.

**LEADER:** We have seen your glory made manifest in the little ones of the earth.

**ALL** And radiant in the eyes of the poor.

**SONG:**

**PRAYER:**

**ALL:** You have called us to be Church and we strive to be that faithfully. Yet still we find ourselves recalling only words and forgetting your Spirit. We remember law and often disregard life. We too often preside over mercy and dispense service, causing your Church to become a place and not a people. Forgive us. Show us mercy. Let us see the truth as seen by you. Help us turn things right side up again, beginning with our hearts.

**ANTIPHONAL PRAYER:**

Strength did not turn your heart nor did wisdom merit your attention. "Small" was chosen. "Weak" was given glory.

We have tried to change your way with us. And won position, honor, and prestige. From those mistaken heights we sought to pray and serve you.

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We yearned for you- with half our hearts, but prayers were lost and voices muted and all we heard was our own echo ringing out in isolation.

While all the while, your eyes turned toward the poor, your hands out-stretched to those who hunger, your heart enfolded those who mourn. You stayed, and waited in the midst of loving until our yearning drew us back.

If we would be your Church, then we are poor and blind and hungry. If we are Church, then we are justice, bread and sight.

**ALL:** We pray for Church to happen, for courage and for truth. We pray, in need, with all our hearts, for Church to be for us Your Church.

## **READING:**

For the Church to call itself to work as Jesus did, in poverty and under oppression, is to seek an unaccustomed stance. It is to be, stand, and operate from the point of view of the world's victims and losers. It is to live and to preach the Gospel from the bottom up. It is a falling down, a downward mobility, if you will, into commonality of human existence. It is neither nice nor comfortable. In addition, it is confrontational and conflictual.

Because of such a stance, the Church, while it is committed to and in the world will also be at odds with the world 'as it is'. Such obedience to God will necessarily mean it shall be a minority phenomenon, a threat to any political or cultural status quo. The ramifications are many, the cost is high.

(from *A Gentle Presence* by Chuck Lathrop)

Quiet reflection

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## Responsory:

**LEADER:** Come to our aid, Spirit of power.

**ALL:** Spirit who moves among us, strengthen us.

**LEADER:** Come to us, Spirit of compassion.

**ALL:** Spirit who transforms the face of the earth, turn our hearts to the needs of the poor.

**LEADER:** Spirit of the Living One, stay with us.

Rouse us from our sleep and bring forth life in us.  
Let us rise up, full-term, image and apple of your eye.

## PRAYER:

**ALL:** We give thanks for all that you have worked within your Church. For all the service rendered and people loved. We ask for strength and courage that we might stand for truth when all the system that surrounds us would urge us to abandon it for compromise. Remind us of the roots from which we come: a people small and weak, of no account but that you love them, and made of them a people and a Church, gave them sisters and brothers, and a future full of hope.