

Pastoral Prayer

God of ancient story, God of present, living Word, we worship you, and we praise you that you revealed yourself long ago through prophet and psalmist to those you called your own, and then, in fullness, to the whole world through Jesus the Christ.

We celebrate our identity as your children, an identity made known to us through your Word and our personal encounter with you.

You are the Alpha and the Omega. Help us to be open to the continuing revelation of the Holy Spirit in the interpreting of the Word and through the changes that come in our lives, the church, and the world. Give us a willingness not only to hear the Word but to take the living Word into our hearts and minds, and let our lives be changed.

Enable us to be prepared and pliant that You work Your way into us for our benefit, and for the building up of your reign upon earth, to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Stewardship Moment

In *Shaped by the Word*, M. Robert Mulholland, Jr., explores the role of scripture in spiritual formation. He contends: “First of all, the scripture is the optimum record of the intrusion of the Word of God into human history ...

Second, ... it is also a revelation of the Word as the [matrix or] context of human brokenness and human wholeness.”

Mulholland continues, “As such a revelation, the Word of God is portrayed in scripture as doing at least three things:

When the Word of God intrudes, encounters, or breaks in, it addresses human beings in their brokenness. That is part of the good news: we don’t have to measure up to some level of wholeness before the Word addresses us.

The Word calls us to wholeness right at the point of our brokenness! ... The scripture is a revelation of the Word addressing our brokenness and calling us to wholeness

Scripture is the revelation of the Word as the agent of transformation. As stewards of scripture we have “insight into the ways in which the Word penetrates human lives and situations, discerns/reveals the truth of the human condition, and transforms the garbled, distorted, debased words human beings have become into the words God speaks them forth to be in the world.”

(M. Robert Mulholland, Jr. *Shape Word*, Nashville, Tenn.: The Upper Room, 1985, p. 42.)

Offertory Sentence

It is God's Word that teaches us, corrects us, challenges us, and points us in the way that we should go. Let us follow God's Word as we make our offering today.

Commissioning

Let us go out not only as hearers of the Word, but as doers, witnessing by our lives to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Benediction

The blessing of God whose inspired Word is our strength, our guide, and our companion rests upon us.

Amen.