

A More Beautiful World: *An Interfaith Liturgy in Four Movements*

Movement one: Looking back in gratitude

Movement two: Looking back in lament

Movement three: Begin to imagine a more beautiful world

Movement four: Offering our hands and feet in hope

//MOVEMENT ONE: Gratitude//

•Sung Refrain

What is the more

Beautiful world

Your heart can imagine

Your heart can imagine

(repeat)

•Introduction

"We humbly invite you into a four part practice that helps us look back over the last year —receiving the gifts and letting go of the burdens—and then look forward in hope to the healing possibilities of next year. And we will keep reflecting on the question..."

What is the more

Beautiful world

Your heart can imagine

Your heart can imagine

(repeat)

"Movement one: Looking back in gratitude. In what ways, over this last year, did you see glimpses, if only for a moment, of the more beautiful world that your heart knows is possible?"

•Gratitude spoken word (Sharon Irving)

What is the more

Beautiful world

Your heart can imagine

Your heart can imagine

(repeat)

•Guided Space

"Would you take one minute to look back over the last year and notice two or three reasons that you are deeply grateful. Where did you see glimpses of the more beautiful world your heart can imagine? Try to be as specific as possible. The next minute is yours..."

(60 seconds of space)

•Benediction (spoken)

And so as we go forward today, may we walk in the beauty and goodness of what is, even as we dream and work for what could be. Go in peace.

//MOVEMENT TWO: Lament//

•Sung Refrain

What is the more

Beautiful world

Your heart can imagine

Your heart can imagine

(repeat)

•Introduction

"In movement one, we looked back over the last year in gratitude to notice the goodness in our lives and glimpses of the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible. And now we turn to Movement Two: Looking back in lament. In what ways, over the last year, did we see the vision of a more beautiful world crumble? In what ways did last year smash our hearts to bits?"

•Lament spoken word (Sharon Irving)

•Guided Space to mourn

"Would you take one minute to humbly name your lament. It can be on behalf of our broken world, or it can be very personal. Or maybe it's both. May this become a safe space to cry out..."

(60 seconds of space)

•Guided Space to confess

"Not only have we been bruised by the brokenness of the world, but we must confess that we have also contributed to the breaking. Our hands are not clean. As an act of solidarity and humility, would you name one way you have not embodied the more beautiful world our hearts know is possible..."

(60 seconds of space)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Benediction

And so as we go forward today, may we carry the reality—deep in our bones—that things are not okay. They are not yet as they should be. And yet we never lose hope for a more beautiful world. Go in peace.

//MOVEMENT THREE: Imagine//

•Introduction

“After looking back over the last year in gratitude and lament, we now turn to the future in hard-fought hope. In Movement three, we begin to imagine the more beautiful world that our hearts know is possible...”

•Openness spoken word (Sharon Irving)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Guided reflection 1

"Take a minute to imagine and describe the more beautiful world your heart knows is possible. What is present in this kind of world? What is absent? What is true...and what is, thankfully, no longer true? In what ways would this world become space for all people to thrive—from every culture, history, and faith?" Let us imagine together.

(60 seconds of space)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Guided reflection 2

“What does this more beautiful world look like in your life? In your family...your workplace...your relationships...your hopes and dreams?”

(30 seconds)

“And what does this more beautiful world look like at a communal level? In neighborhoods...in social movements...in care of Creation...in matters of justice...in nations and governments?”

(30 seconds)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Benediction

And so as we go forward today, may we have eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to begin to imagine the more beautiful world that we know is possible. Go in peace.

//MOVEMENT FOUR: Action//

•Sung Refrain

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Introduction

“Finally, after looking back over the last year in gratitude and lament, and then beginning to imagine a more beautiful world, we turn to Movement 4: Offering our hands and feet in hope. In what ways might you be able to participate in co-creating this new world? Let us reflect on two questions...”

“First, what in this world most deeply moves your heart? What conversations and actions makes you feel most alive? What draws you to lean in and engage? What scares you in a good and healthy way? Take a minute to notice what you are feeling...”

(60 seconds of space)

“Second, name one or two concrete steps that you can take to join others in building the more beautiful world that your heart knows is possible. What are the internal actions you can take to personally heal, strengthen, and prepare for this work? What are the external actions you can take to build partnerships, learn from others, and get swept up into the larger story? What is the invitation to you today?”

(60 seconds)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Closing Rap (Sharon Irving)

*And our hearts believe it's possible
Our hearts believe it's possible
Our hearts believe it's possible*

*And our hands believe it's possible
Our hands believe it's possible
Our hands believe it's possible*

*And our lives can make it possible
Our lives can make it possible
Our lives can make it possible*

*And our love can make it possible
Our love can make it possible
Our love can make it possible*

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Benediction

And so as we go forward today, May we not just believe in a more beautiful world, but let us give our lives to make it so. Our hands can make it possible, our lives can make it possible, and our love can make it possible. For the arc of history is long, but it bends toward justice. Friends, may we join this more beautiful movement in big and small ways today. Go in peace.

Credits:

All raps written and performed by Sharon Irving.

All other words written and guided by Aaron Niequist.

A More Beautiful World: *Particularly Christian version*

Movement one: Looking back in gratitude and lament
Movement two: Imagining a more beautiful world
and offering our hands and feet in hope

//MOVEMENT ONE//

•Sung Refrain

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Introduction

"We humbly invite you into a two part practice that helps us look back over the last year —receiving the gifts and letting go of the burdens—and then look forward in hope to the holy possibilities of next year. And we will keep meditating on the question..."

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

"Movement one: Looking back in gratitude. In what ways, over this last year, did you see glimpses, if only for a moment, of the more beautiful world that your heart knows is possible?"

•Gratitude spoken word (Sharon Irving)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Pastoral Space

“Would you take one minute to look back over the last year, notice two or three reasons that you are deeply grateful, and thank God for these gifts. Where did you see glimpses of the more beautiful world your heart can imagine? Try to be as specific as possible. The next minute is yours...”

(60 seconds of music)

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly hosts
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Amen.*

•Turn to lament

“And in gratitude for the beauty and blessing, we have the courage and clarity to also see what is broken. As we look back, we also lament. In what ways, over the last year, did we see the vision of a more beautiful world crumble? In what ways did last year smash our hearts to bits?”

•Lament spoken word (Sharon Irving)

•Pastoral Space to mourn

"Would you take one minute to humbly hold your lament before God. It can be on behalf of our broken world, or it can be very personal. Or maybe it's both. May this become a holy and safe space to cry out to our Creator..."

(60 seconds of music)

•Pastoral Space to confess

“Not only have we been bruised by the brokenness of the world, but we must confess that we have also contributed to the breaking. Our hands are not clean. As an act of solidarity and humility, as deeply loved daughters and sons of the Almighty, would you join us in this historic prayer of confession:”

All: "Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.”

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Benediction (spoken)

//MOVEMENT TWO//

•Sung Refrain

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Introduction

“After looking back over the last year in gratitude and lament, we now turn to the future in holy and hard-fought hope. In Movement two, we begin to imagine the more beautiful world that our hearts know is possible, and offer ourselves to this good work. May God guide us as we open our hearts, minds, and imaginations...

•Openness spoken word (Sharon Irving)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Pastoral reflection 1

"Take a minute to describe the more beautiful world your heart knows is possible. What is present in this kind of world? What is absent? What is true...and what is, thankfully, no longer true? In what ways would this world become space for all people to thrive—from every tongue, tribe, and faith?"

(30 seconds of space)

“How does this more beautiful world flesh out in your specific personal life? In your family...your workplace...your relationships...your hopes and dreams?”

(30 seconds)

“And how does this more beautiful world flesh out at a communal level? In neighborhoods...in social movements...in care of Creation...in matters of justice...in nations and governments?”

(30 seconds)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Call to action

“Finally, after looking back over the last year in gratitude and lament, and then beginning to imagine a more beautiful world, we turn to Movement 4: Offering our hands and feet in hope. In what ways might God be inviting me to participate in co-creating this new world? Would you consider these three questions...”

“First, what do you feel God nudging you toward? What conversations and actions makes you feel most alive? What draws you to lean in and engage? What scares you in a good and holy way? Holy Spirit, please guide us as we pray and listen...”

(60 seconds of space)

“Second, name one or two barriers that could block you from saying “yes” to God’s invitation. Fear? Busyness? Broken relationship? Addiction? Playing small? Pride?”

(60 seconds of space)

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

“Finally, name one or two concrete steps that you can take to join God in building the more beautiful world that your heart knows is possible. What are the internal actions you can take to personally heal, strengthen, and prepare for this work? What are the external actions you can take to build partnerships, learn from others, and get swept up into the larger story?”

(60 seconds)

•Closing Rap (Sharon Irving)

*And our hearts believe it's possible
Our hearts believe it's possible
Our hearts believe it's possible*

*And our hands believe it's possible
Our hands believe it's possible
Our hands believe it's possible*

*And our lives can make it possible
Our lives can make it possible
Our lives can make it possible*

*And our God can make it possible
Our God can make it possible
Our God can make it possible*

*What is the more
Beautiful world
Your heart can imagine
Your heart can imagine
(repeat)*

•Benediction

*May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord lift up her countenance upon you,
and give you peace.*