

January 11th—Human Trafficking Awareness Day Resources

Scriptures:

Amos 2:4-11

Psalm 140:1-8, 12-13

Mark 5:21-43

The prophet Amos speaks out against the sins of Judah and Israel, and these indictments are against the people as a whole because of the injustice that was allowed to occur, where the people did not follow the ways of God, where “they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (vs.6). They ignore those who have been hurt, and they exploit the innocent. “Father and son go into the same girl, so that my holy name is profaned” (vs. 7). God, through the prophets, declares the sexual exploitation of children, and in this specific case, young girls, to be the same as profaning God’s name. The prophet Amos reminds us that we are collectively responsible for the well-being of the poor, the afflicted, and our children, and that we bear the burden of the actions of others. We are called to speak out and to act to protect the poor, the suffering, and our children. As we commemorate Human Trafficking Awareness Day, we are reminded of our obligation before God to protect the innocent children and young women and men who are caught in the sex trade, where the needy are literally traded, every day. Let us not push the afflicted out of the way, ignoring the problems, but remember that these are children and young adults, sold for profit, and that Amos reminds us we are all responsible.

Psalm 140 is a prayer for deliverance. We pray this psalm in solidarity with those who have been the victims of trafficking, who have been taken away from home and family and sold into sex slavery. We pray for deliverance, for justice, for intervention into the plans of evil that they will be stopped, and for healing and hope for all who have been victims of human trafficking.

Mark 5:21-43 is the familiar story of a woman who seeks healing from Jesus and a girl resurrected from the dead. Neither of these stories are about human trafficking, but both of these stories are about faith, healing and hope. The story of the woman who had been bleeding for years is the story of a woman shunned by society. For those who have been sold as slaves and prostitutes, they may feel shunned, cut off, disgraced from their family and friends. In Jesus there is no condemnation, and by faith, she reaches out and is healed. The story of the little girl who appears to have died is the story of the faith of others. Jesus tells her father not to fear, but only to believe. For those who have been sold into slavery, it may feel like the person they were has died. Christ can bring resurrection and restoration. We have to have faith, and we have to act on faith. We have to do our part to bring healing and hope, to help children and young adults out of slavery and into freedom.

Call to Worship:

Leader: Across the Red Sea, God delivered a people from slavery into freedom.

People: We are called to bring the message of freedom to all who are enslaved.

Leader: Across the River Jordan, God brought forth a people from wilderness into homeland.

People: We are called to help others find their home in God.

Leader: Out of exile, God led the people from diaspora into community.

People: We are called to lead our communities to be places of safety and welcome.

Leader: Out of hopelessness, God brought forth a Messiah.

People: We are called to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the world.

All: Let us worship and share this Good News with all.

Prayer of Confession:

Almighty God, Author of Life, we confess that we have been silent. We confess that we have closed our eyes. We confess that we have shut our ears. We have not heard about human trafficking, we have not seen children and young adults sold into slavery, and we have not talked about it. Open our eyes, Lord, to see the vulnerable and the victims among us. Open our ears, Lord, so that we may hear their stories and understand where we need to speak out and act, and where our inaction and silence have caused harm. Open our hearts, Lord, so that we can be moved to work for justice, to do our part in our communities, in our country and in our world to stop human trafficking. In the name of Jesus, the Messiah, who went to the cross innocent, but rose triumphantly, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon:

What does the Lord require of us, but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God? Let us go forth, forgiven, and bring justice, mercy, and healing to our world. Amen.

Litany for Human Trafficking Awareness Day

Leader: Our history of our faith is full of the stories of heroes, but also stories of tragedy.

People: Our own history is not without its horror stories.

Leader: We remember Hagar, Jephthah's daughter and David's daughter Tamar

People: We remember these women of the Bible, sold into slavery, abused, raped or killed.

Leader: From Biblical times to today, children and women have been abused and sold into slavery.

People: We have forgotten our own stories and ignored the cries around us.

Leader: Our history of our faith calls us to speak out for the victims and the innocents.

People: Our Messiah was crucified, an innocent man, in an unjust system.

Leader: We are called to no longer scapegoat the innocent, the poor, children and young adults

People: We are called instead to see them as our brothers and sisters, our children.

Leader: God Almighty, call us away from our misjudging and ignorance into justice and knowledge.

People: Help us to learn how we might stop human trafficking; call us into ways we can bring about change in our laws and in our awareness.

All: Call us into the ways of your love, justice, and healing. Amen.