

Morning Prayer
Access for All: The Faith Community Responding
An Ecumenical Gathering Preparing for the International AIDS Conference
Saturday, 10 July 2004, Bangkok, Thailand

Around the lights on the tables we have simple cords, maybe of red. We will tie them around each other's wrists during the service. These cords might be ribbons of some kind, or just simple yarn or string.

Musical preparation

"God has loved you with an everlasting love" with this phrase the celebrant ties one of the red cords on the person who leads the greeting

Greeting

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God
and God abides in them.

There is no fear in love,
but perfect love casts out fear

for fear has to do with punishment,
and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love.

In this is love, not that we loved God,
***but that God loved us and sent God's Son into the world
that we might live through him.***

(I John 4:16b, 18, 10a, 9b)

"God has loved you with an everlasting love" with this phrase the celebrant ties one of the red cords on the person who leads the song.

Hymn The Love of God comes close by John Bell and Graham Maule, The Iona Community, Scotland

Prayer

"God has loved you with an everlasting love" with this phrase the celebrant ties one of the red cords on the person who leads the prayer.

Never-ending Love,
calling us back and sweeping us into your arms,
holding us tight against the night and catching us when we fall,
enthrall us with your Spirit
so that when we stumble and stall in love,
we get picked up
to restart small steps at kicking away,
stone by stone, division's walls,
until no one feels left outside your care,
and all know what true humanity is made of
through Jesus Christ. ***Amen.***

Song From the Bible we learn God's will Thai

found in *Sound the Bamboo #217* published by the Christian Conference of Asia.

Words by Ruth Srisuwan, Music by Inchai Srisuwan, Thailand.

“God has loved you with an everlasting love” *with this phrase the celebrant ties one of the red cords on the person who reads the Bible*

Scripture reading Hosea 11:1-4

When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
The more I called them, the more they went from me;
they kept sacrificing to the Baals,
and offering incense to idols.
Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
I took them up in my arms;
but they did not know that I healed them.
I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love.
I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks.
I bent down to them and fed them.

Response to the Word

Ruth Srisuwan danced in Thai style. She had yarn at the foot of the centre for worship. She unwound the yarn and pulled it so that it surrounded the people.

Remembering

Hosea, the prophet warned Israel of God’s judgment. But in the midst of hard words comes this gentle appeal from God asking Israel to remember God’s goodness. The image is powerful and tender. God teaches Israel to walk, gives Israel nourishment, holds Israel close. God has drawn them with “cords of human kindness.”

Some of us face incredible rejection. Some of us live with secrets, and their accompanying question: “Whom do I tell?” For many our world is not a safe and kind place. Surrounded by judgment and rebuke, Hosea asks us to remember another reality, stronger than human hurt—God’s love, guiding us with the cords of human kindness.

One person from each table is invited to come and receive cords for the whole table. While that person comes, the rest are invited to remember one moment of human kindness when God was leading you. When your table has cords for everyone, begin to go round the table. Each person in two or three phrases evokes something of a moment of human kindness where they experienced God leading them. Then that person takes the cord and ties it on the next person’s wrist and says to them, “God has loved you with an everlasting love.” The table replies, “Thanks be to God.”

*(The people from the tables come. All the people who already have a cord, give out the cords to the others. They tie the cord, look at the person and say, “God has loved you with an everlasting love.”
(We will need some music under this action.)*

Song Ubi charitas Taizé, France
Ubi caritas et amor, ubi caritas Deus ibi est.
Where there is charity and love, God is there.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

With bands of love, you have marked us, God.
You have lifted us to your cheeks and bent down to us to feed us.
You have not denied anyone your compassion.
You have not left anyone outside your arms.
Even when we did not know it, you offered us healing.
We thank you that kindness is not restricted to the rich,
nor mercy owned by the powerful,
but all are set free in your Beloved One, Jesus, the Christ,
who teaches us to walk the way of life, life everlasting. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Benediction

Song Reamo leboga Botswana

Found in *Africa songs of worship* published by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland.