

Today's gospel text is one story about healing.
 Healing for those with privilege,
 like Jarius, the synagogue leader and his daughter;
 and healing to those in poverty,
 like the woman who spent all that she had seeing physicians,
 none of which could cure her twelve years-running hemorrhage.

To both these people,
 Jesus alone is the hope for healing.

To those with chronic conditions,
 and to those in acute pain or unexpected circumstances,
 Jesus is only reliable restoration.

And as the story ends with Jesus raising a little girl from the dead,
 we see that not only in life
 but also through death,
 Christ offers a healing touch.

But how does Christ's healing touch *actually happen for us*?
 Unlike for Jarius, his daughter, and the bleeding woman,
 we cannot literally grasp hold of a physical, person of Christ.
 So what *is* the fringe of the garment,
 that can offer us Christ's restoration, healing, and hope?

For many, it's music.
 Music can help us find Christ's healing presence.
 We find Christ's healing in the
 soothing melodies and peaceful harmonies.
 We find healing in sung words from Scripture
 and reminders of God's power and plight.
 Music is—or is part of—
 the hem of Christ's garment.

Today, we're going to reflect on three hymns
 that Kenny and Susan are going to play and sing.
 We've passed out lyrics sheets to help draw us deeper into reflection.
 I know for me, when I'm asked to listen and *not* sing
 I see new aspects to words and images
 I'm not focused on singing the right notes
 or blending my pitches.

I hope that this time you can be similarly meditative, reflective, and prayerful for you.

The first hymn you'll hear is "We Come to You for Healing, Lord," which reminds us of when Jesus physically walked ancient streets. The hymn affirms that, because we cannot physically touch Jesus, it's by the Spirit's touch that we are made whole. It also names other ways we receive healing: through physicians skills, nurses gifts, and love of faithful friends, who pray for us.

The second hymn is "When We Must Bear Persistent Pain." Written by a pastor in the United Church of Christ who suffers from chronic pain, this song comes from our Lutheran church's new hymnal supplement, *All Creation Sings*. So it is brand new to us, and a perfect complement to the hemorrhaging woman's story. Its text considers persistent conditions, for which there are no cures in sight. It speaks of learning new ways of care, better days and worse days, calling upon God as Holy Presence, our hope, our health, our song.

The third hymn is also from the new hymnal supplement *All Creation Sings*. It's called, "Lord Jesus Christ, Lover of All" and it references this exact reading from Mark chapter 5. It's a contemplative worship song meant to be song over and over and over again as a way of prayer or meditation. The new hymnal notes that the final part "extends from the highest note of the melody to the lowest like the billowing garment of Jesus that trails wide to bring healing and peace to all."

(A final note for those at 9:30 a.m.: In place of rising to sing the Hymn of Day, I invite you to stay seated and sing along with this final, repeated hymn.)