



Your Kingdom Come

Gathering (20 minutes)

Welcome

Acknowledgement

Prayer

*Our father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.*

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us in the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Listen - His Kingdom Now Is Come

Invitation to immerse yourself in the images painted by the vocalists...

Listening for God's Voice (40 minutes)

The scriptures use several different terms to describe God's intention for God's creation:

- The kingdom of heaven (especially in the gospel of Matthew)
- The kingdom of God
- The reign of God

What is it?

It is described in the Hebrew Scriptures by the prophets who reminded people of God's way and calling them to live as God intended.

It's the thing Jesus came to proclaim and is described by him in parable and metaphor.

It is not a place we go after we die, nor the end of days.

It is not some "other" place - but is among us (see Luke 17:20-21)

It is the dwelling of God in our midst.

God's kingdom does not have physical borders to mark out where it is, rather it has what we might describe as value markers.

Some suggested readings:

Creation at peace: Isaiah 11:6-9

Seek first: Matthew 6:25-33

How hard: Matthew 19:24 or Luke 13:22-30

Children: Mark 10:13-16ff. and Luke 18:16-17

Seeds and yeast: Mark 4:26-32 *and* Luke 13:18-21

Nicodemus: John 3:1-10

Sent to proclaim: Luke 9:1-6

Note: these are but a few - many of Jesus' parables are about God's kingdom
What other passages can you think of?

Some questions to consider as you read through the suggested texts:

- How is God's kingdom described?
- What are you noticing, or what surprises you about these readings?

Visio Divina

Read: Isaiah 11:6-9

Center yourself by taking a deep breath and relaxing your body as best you can. Allow your shoulders to lower away from your ears. Let your arms rest in your lap and let your feet be fully supported by the floor. Feel the weight of your body held by the chair. Spend this time in quiet. Open yourself up to God's voice.

(pause)

Take a deep breath in and out. Continue breathing deeply as you read the image. In this moment, simply notice the visual qualities of what you see: colours, line, shape, form, space, and texture.

(pause)

Now, take a deeper look. What parts of the image are your eyes most drawn to? What parts of the image did you quickly brush by or overlook?

(pause)

And now, use your imagination.

Imagine yourself in this piece. Where would you be and how would you interact with what surrounds you?

(pause)

And now, read the artist's notes. What new insights do you discover?

(pause)

Finally, observe your own emotions. How does this image make you feel?

(pause)

Reflect: what have you discovered about God, yourself, the world around you?

Responding (40 minutes)

Go for a walk or sit quietly and think about the world around you.
Where do you catch glimpses of God's kingdom?

What does it mean for you to pledge allegiance to this "kingdom"?

What then is your role / part / place in God's kingdom?

How does your life reflect the values of God's kingdom?

What will you do differently?

Are there parts of our community that we need to change (eg, to be more just, more loving, more compassionate) and how can we encourage that?

Re-engaging with the World (15 minutes)

Prayer

***Life-Giver, Pain-Bearer, Love-Maker.
Source of all that is and that shall be.
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:***

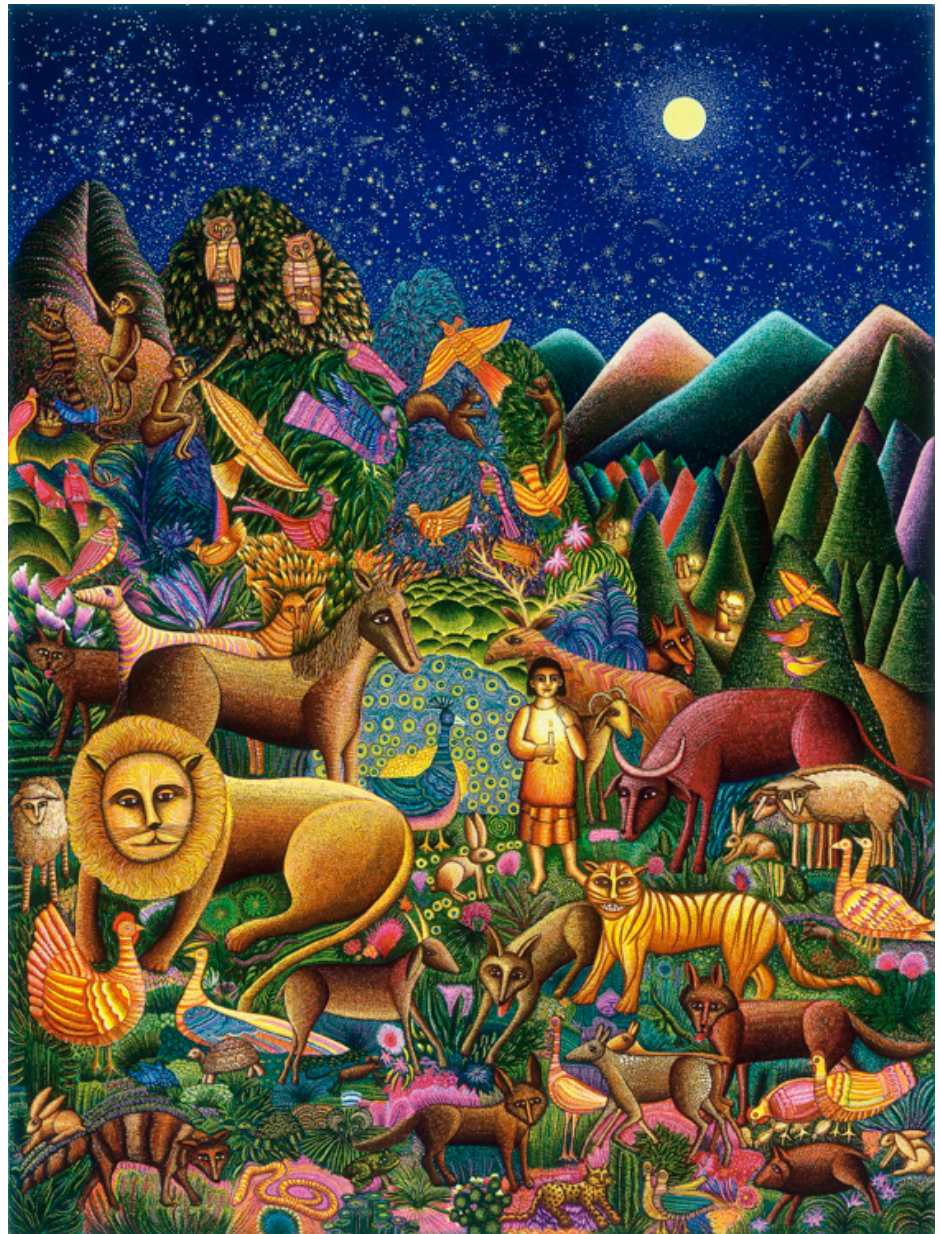
***The hallowing of your name echo
through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by all peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done
by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.***

***With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.***

***For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.***

Peaceable Kingdom
John August Swanson

HAND-PRINTED
SERIGRAPHS



John Swanson's much loved serigraph *Peaceable Kingdom* was created in 1994 and has been out of print for over 15 years. It's one of Swanson's most popular images and embodies one of the central themes of his art: the hope that people can live together in harmony basing their lives on the Christian values of kindness, love and peace.

Peaceable Kingdom is a visual illustration of Isaiah 11:6-8: "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them..." John Swanson's creative, visual re-telling of this biblical vision enables us to see the story through new eyes and rediscover the power and meaning of the story for our own lives. He challenges us to look at our lives, to re-examine our world-view, and see if we're living as we should be.

1994 | Edition of 250 | 47 Color Stencils
Image Size: 30" x 22.5"
Paper Size: 36" x 28"
Paper: 100% cotton rag, acid free