

Liturgy for Those Who Have Found Their Deepest Community Online
by Elizabeth Wickland

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose essence is communal,
you created us for belonging
to one another, as we belong to you.

**We were made for connection,
to bear each other's burdens,
to share each other's joys,
to enter into the stories of another
as we look into their eyes.**

But the eyes that we see
do not always see us,
and some find it difficult
to enter the stories we bear.

**You know the human longing for connection,
the ache of separation this world holds.
You longed for connection with the Father
when you bore our temporality
when you bound yourself to place
when you wrapped your infinity in time and space
and were distanced from your own community.
You knew the ache of loneliness
that accompanies the desire for oneness,
for growing and flourishing together with others.**

In our longing for belonging,
and in seeking to be seen,
in aching to be heard, understood,
and held in community,
some of us have turned to digitally mediated space,
and found a surprising sense of safety,
security, and belonging, rooted in your grace.

**Here we have found genuine community
that echoes within our hearts,
resounding with the joy
of our stories being woven together
by the Spirit who unites us all.**

Lord, bless these spaces

**that exist outside of space.
Bless these communities
in uncommon places.**

In the ether we find life
that grows outside of place and time,
filling in the gaps between word, image,
sound, and video, like microcosmic gardens
flowering defiantly in the cracks of a sidewalk.

**May we find beauty in these flowers,
that adorn the well worn paths,
taking care not to discount them,
not to mistake them for weeds,
when for some they are home.**

**Lord, bless these spaces
that exist outside of space.
Bless these communities
in uncommon places.**

We journey together
from different time zones,
different places, an asynchronous
great cloud of witnesses,
glimpsing the eternal
in this liminal space.

**Let us lean in
to these places that fill us up
and, bursting with life,
scatter seeds on the ground beneath our feet
as we walk through our days
breathing out grace and peace,
truth, and beauty, and goodness,
cultivated in these locationless spaces,
transplanted to grow belonging where we live.**

Gathering hope in our online spaces,
and reminded of truth that is no less true
in our physical places, may we become
the liminal spaces where others find community
that grows from the common life of the Spirit.
And as we do, may we find that we belong, too,
in the places we are planted.

**Lord, bless these spaces
that exist outside of space.
Bless these communities
in uncommon places.**

Amen.