

January 17, 2020 – At-Home/Email Worship

A blessed Sabbath to you, and welcome to worship for our Second Sunday after Epiphany ☺ In a week that has been dominantly grey weather, with the announcement of the provincial Stay at Home order (and figuring out what that all means), I have found it a hard week to settle down and focus on anything specific. Perhaps change causes that for us. When I find focus difficult, especially in my prayer life, I return again and again to the Lord's Prayer ... it is always available at the tip of my tongue and consciousness, and allows me to go general when specifics become hard to hold. To that end, this Sunday we veer off lectionary yet again to spend some study time with the Lord's Prayer ☺

This week I want to again announce CANCELLATION of our Annual General Meeting (AGM) tentatively scheduled for January 31st, in the sanctuary following worship. Council has set a target date for AGM on March 21st, 2021 with the intention of using Zoom to meet on this date if in-person gathering remains unavailable. Moving our AGM to Zoom will mean quite a bit of advance communication, possibly training, and definitely seeking out ways to equip voting for those who are not able to connect by Zoom.

Please carefully follow and respond to our membership communications in the upcoming weeks, to ensure that you do your part in congregational decision-making, if your membership makes you eligible to vote per our church's constitution: "A voting member is one who has been confirmed in this congregation, or received by adult baptism, or received by transfer as confirmed members from another Lutheran congregation or another congregation in full communion with the ELCIC, or received by affirmation of faith as baptized adults. Voting members must have received Holy Communion and have made a contribution of record within the current or preceding calendar year."

This Sunday, your worship service is available to you:

in print copy (if you prefer to receive it this way, please call Bonnie Scott at the church office, 519-653-4721), **PLEASE NOTE, in 2021, the print copy will arrive in the week following the Sunday service, as this allows me to better focus on pastoral care duties during each week.**

As an online service you can go through at your leisure, with music links provided via our St Peter's YouTube channel (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdxKUbgYbZj4PN_R36KPeiw/videos), or

As a live, gathering of people for worship on the Zoom video/audio conferencing platform.

We are still experimenting on Heide's Zoom service for live online worship. This allows us to gather together for worship from our respective homes. The church is now looking into investing in our own Zoom license.

You don't have to have a computer or internet to connect to any of the Zoom services; you can also just call in on one of these numbers (long distance charges may apply):

1 587 328 1099 or
1 647 374 4685 or
1 647 558 0588 or
1 778 907 2071 or
1 204 272 7920 or
1 438 809 7799

Use your telephone keypad to enter the meeting ID and Passcode when asked.

Heide Emrich is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting for Sunday Worship:

Sunday, January 17, 2021 09:45 AM (Worship begins at 10:00 am)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84218908882?pwd=eWYvcnVnanNBTy9oWGIPtnd2cnpuUT09>

Meeting ID: 842 1890 8882 and Passcode: 787152

With the provincial State of Emergency and Stay at Home order, in-home visits are being avoided. If you need a phone or video call, doorway or distanced outdoor visit, please do reach out by email or phone: pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org or 519-653-4721 ... The church office is closed, but walking visits, brief front porch/screen door visits, video phone visits or regular phone visits remain available ☺ Have a blessing

filled week, and please do be in touch if I may be of help or support in these times!

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

Click for land acknowledgement:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9Zar8-GeUs>

**Please take a few moments of silence,
prepare your heart,
centre yourself for worship.**

Gathering Hymn: A Mighty Fortress is Our God ELW 503, Rhythmic or Peculiar Version, Bradley Moggach, Organ

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AmYG9uX-9oE>

Text & Tune: Martin Luther; Words & Music: Public Domain; Used by Permission. CCLI License # 11098609

Greeting:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day: All-knowing, all-seeing Creator, you equipped us for the times when we would not know how to pray or what to say. Help us to rely on praying the way Jesus taught us, depending not on focused specifics to communicate with you, but trusting in your capacity to know and meet our needs. Amen.

The Lesson: Romans 8:22-28

All around us we observe a pregnant creation. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply birth pangs. But it's not only around us; it's *within* us. The Spirit of God is arousing us within. We're also feeling the birth pangs. These sterile and barren bodies of ours are yearning for full deliverance. That is why waiting does not diminish us, any more than waiting diminishes a pregnant mother. We are enlarged in the waiting. We, of course, don't see what is enlarging us. But the longer we wait, the larger we become, and the more joyful our expectancy.

Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.

(The Message Translation)

Word of God, word of life. C: *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation: Jesus, Oh What a Wonderful Child ELW #297

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59JIsulUmcl>

Text African American Traditional; Music African American Traditional; Contributor: Jeffrey Radford; arr. Bradley Moggach
All Rights reserved. Reprinted with permission under ONE License # A727610

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 11:1-4

C: *Glory to you O Lord.*

It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples." ² He said to them,

"When you pray, say:

'Father, hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

'Give us each day our ^[e]daily bread.

'And forgive us our sins,

For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us [who has offended or wronged us].

And lead us not into temptation [but rescue us from evil]." (The Amplified Translation)

This is the gospel of our saviour, Jesus.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.*

Sermon (Imagine Pastor Janaki's voice here):

Most of us have, at one time or another, come to a place in our lives where we are at a loss for words, yet we feel the need to speak, to pray, to say something out loud or in our minds to reassure ourselves of our connectedness to God and to each other ... our connectedness to something bigger than our own solitude and finitude.

My most poignant encounter with that experience happened in the seconds immediately following my father breathing his last breath. My father laboured for almost a year with the pain of end-stage cancer, and we: my mom, sister and I alongside him. On the day that he died, he was laying on a couch we had set up for him in the dining room from which he could see the front gate of our home. He had been struggling with breathing all night, drifting in and out of a morphine assisted middle ground between consciousness and unconsciousness and we knew that death was coming.

And then the moment was upon us.

That last breath occurred. And there was none that followed.

My sister and I were right beside him. My mother was sleeping on a bed we had also moved into the space.

I was not at the time a professed Christian, a believer in Jesus as such.

And in that silence we needed some words.

My sister began ...

Our father who art in heaven,

And our voices joined as we prayed together, the prayer we had learnt I do not remember now whether it was in school or at home, but our voices joined and we prayed as Jesus had taught disciples, a prayer whose language was so broad and wide that anyone could use the words, that doctrine and denomination did not matter. A call out to our creator which simultaneously echoed the transition of our dad ... from earth to divine realms.

On another occasion, when I was serving as an on-call spiritual care provider at a hospital, I was called to support a family who had unexpectedly lost a loved one. It was a big family that had some long outstanding friction which meant some of the family members were gathered outside in the parking lot, in shock from the sudden death, and others were inside the ward near the body of their beloved deceased family member.

Usually at such times, I will call on everyone to gather for a prayer. This becomes even dicier when you don't know who in the family asked for a chaplain or spiritual care, and how many others in the family may not identify as Christian. But I have found that moment of gathering is profoundly helpful in giving people some measure of closure so I took courage in that and went to gather everyone. The situation was very tense, but in that time where close presence with each other was safely possible, I invited everyone to gather around the body of their loved one, and tentatively began those words ... in the traditional form ...

Our Father who art in heaven ...

And lo and behold a miraculous joining of voices occurred and everyone was praying together. Somehow even the youngest one in that room knew the words of the prayer, and for the duration of that collective call to God's overarching presence and power, there was unity of thought, voice and (perhaps most importantly) connectedness to the divine presence which is bigger than each of us individually ... and a point of integrity of Spirit occurred.

This past week, when the announcement came of the Stay at Home order, and I along with many others had to ask multiple questions to clarify and discern what is allowed and what isn't ... what is essential and what isn't, even what is our work and who is our household ... I, like that family at the hospital was scattered every which way, part of me in the proverbial parking lot, part of me standing beside the life I once knew and

took for granted, the parts of me not wanting to make eye contact with each other, let alone join with integrity for the common connectedness that is needed at this time.

And these were the words that came to me

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

I would be remiss if I did not add that some of our confirmands thought, from mis-hearing this prayer that God's name was Harold ... our Father who art in heaven "Harold" be thy name ☺

and I had to correct that ☺

In fact, one of the beauties of this prayer is it is accessible to us even when the faith with which we name our saviour might be too hard to reach. This powerful prayer reminds us of God's provisioning, and the reflexivity in both the need to forgive and be forgiven. It calls on God's power to protect us from evil – especially helpful in times like this when fear and controversy keep company with infection and the scary language of pandemic – the power of God to keep our spirits safe is freely available to us, requiring us only to surrender our own need to be in control ourselves.

In these times when we want so badly to be critical or judgmental of others: leaders who may decide things in ways we don't like, or fellow shoppers whose noses don't fit under their mask, or whose masks fit under their chins more than over their mouths, in these times when we want to trespass into the land of judging others, when others want to judge us because of their own fears, we are reminded that our own trespasses are forgiven, and called to exercise the grace of forgiving the trespasses of others.

One Christian scholar, John Dominic Crossan, says this about the Lord's Prayer:

"It is prayed by all Christians, but it never mentions Christ. It is prayed in all churches, but it never mentions church. It is prayed on all Sundays but it never mentions Sunday. It is called the "Lord's Prayer" but it never mentions "Lord" ... it never mentions the next life, heaven or hell. ... [it is] a radical manifesto and a hymn of hope for all humanity in language addressed to all the earth."¹

And I have to agree. And when scripture reminds us that in times of pain and waiting, God's Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words, we will always have these words with which Jesus taught us, his disciples, how to pray.

And in these times, pray we must. Amen.

Hymn of Day: The Lord's Prayer, Swee Hong Lim; Helga Morrison, vocal, Bradley Moggach, organ

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCBmceQH1mq>

Music © 2010 by Swee Hong Lim; Admin. Faith Alive Christian Resources; Used by permission. CCLI License # 11098609

**** Prayers of the People**

As we celebrate the manifestation of Jesus, to all people in this time after Epiphany, let us pray for the needs in our world, responding to the call: **God who provides all, *with hear our prayer.***

Gracious and Holy God, your eternal purposes revealed in Jesus demonstrate your love extends to the ends of the earth, far beyond our capacity to imagine. We give thanks for your expansive love, and for the abundant ways in which you make yourself known to us.

We pray for all who believe in you,

Too often afraid of the rich diversity you have designed,

Too often timid in our proclamation of the good news of your love-example, before the rulers and powers of this world.

Strengthen our witness, our voices, hearts and minds.

Fill us with Divine Spirit, that we may be bold and courageous, to live our witness of faith in Jesus.

God who provides all, *hear our prayer.*

¹ The Greatest Prayer: Rediscovering the Revolutionary Message of the Lord's Prayer, by John Dominic Crossan, 2010, Harper-Collins, pp 1-2.

Heal divisions in our world of knowledge, belief and power,
 So that your world may know the unity of love, sharing in the promises of Jesus,
 Knowing the peace those promises provide.

God who provides ALL, *hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who are struggling in and with darkness,
 Darkness of health, of soul, of mind, of spirit.
 We call upon your power to make apparent and manifest the knowledge of Jesus,
 The light which darkness cannot overcome.

God who provides ALL, *hear our prayer.*

We pray for those who have little power according to the world's measure of power.
 Guide us to be your defense in the cause of the poor, according to your will;
 Guide us to be your hands and feet in deliverance of those in need, in ending oppression, according to your will.

Bring your healing to those in need, your comfort to those who are hurting. Show us how to help.

God who provides ALL, *hear our prayer.*

Help us to be your light that makes Jesus manifest in our world. Show us the way, we pray, in Jesus' precious name. Amen.

Let us share the peace of Christ:

The Peace of Christ be with you always, in your home and in mine, and throughout God's creation.

Meal:

Click here if you are accessing YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0YEA0080U>

I invite you to prepare your table with bread and wine, or crackers and juice, whatever is available to you, so that you may participate in the meal. All are welcome.

****Prayer after Communion.**

Arise, shine; for your light has come and the glory of God shines on you.

Get up: shake off apathy, despair and all that brings you low.

GLOW: show God's light and love,
 so that others may know Jesus who is in you,
 and shines from within you.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy ELW 588; Bradley Moggach, Organ

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x40YdUod_nq&feature=youtu.be

Text: Frederick W. Faber, Tune: North American, 19th cent.; Tune Name: Lord, Revive Us; Text & Tune: Public Domain
 Used by Permission CCLI License # 11098609

Blessing:

May the love of God uphold you;
 the light of Christ guide you;
 and the fellowship of Spirit fill you with joy,
 now and forever.
 Amen.

Dismissal: Go with Jesus, shining Christ light into the world. ***Thanks be to God.***

*From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #42368. New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

** Some prayers are edited/adapted from Feasting on the Word, Liturgies for Year A, Volume 1, Advent through Pentecost Worship Companion (Kimberly Bracken Long, editor); 2013 Westminster John Knox Press. Reprinted by permission of Westminster John Knox Press from *Feasting on the Word Worship Companion*. Copyright 2013.