

Sunday March 29th, 2020 - FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT- for your Devotion time

The Lord be with you!

Please read this through first.

I hope you are able to gather everyone in your household together this morning. Perhaps around your kitchen or dining room table. I hope you find this time together supportive and uplifting.

If you are not alone - assign parts of this beforehand. If you don't have a Bible you can google the scripture readings and print them out too. Adjust the font size for your use if you print this doc. out.

Place a focus piece in the centre of your table – a candle, a cross, or something from nature – a stone - some water in a bowl – an evergreen tree branch – an indoor potted plant – a piece of wood. Include a Bible also.

Perhaps print out copies of this for everyone present.

Shut off all the distractions in your home.

Sit in the quiet for a bit –take a few deep (yoga) breaths.

DEVOTIONS

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen

GATHERING PRAYER: *say together* Almighty God, your Son came into the world to free us all from sin and death. breathe upon us the power of your Spirit, that we may be raised to new life in Christ and serve you in righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,

who is present, who gives life, who calls into existence the things that do not exist. **Amen.**

If you were to keep watch over sins, O Lord, who could stand?

Yet with you is forgiveness, and so we confess.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God,

have mercy on us.

**We confess that we have turned away from you,
knowingly and unknowingly.**

We have wandered from your resurrection life.

We have strayed from your love for all people.

Turn us back to you, O God.

Give us new hearts and right spirits,

**that we may find what is pleasing to you
and dwell in your house forever. Amen.**

Receive good news: God turns to you in love.

“I will put my spirit in you, and you shall live,” says our God.

All your sins are forgiven in the name of ✝ Jesus Christ,
who is the free and abounding gift of God’s grace for you.

Amen.

READINGS

ISAIAH 43:1-7

PSALM 130

JOHN 11:1-45 Lazarus raised from the dead

REFLECTION on ISAIAH:

The passages before Isaiah 43: tells of God's people (Israel) living in a foreign land, feeling forsaken, where not even God would claim them. There seems to be hurt and silence between God and people. Perhaps some of you feel the same way as we enter into our third week of physically distancing or isolating ourselves from one another.

Although Isaiah wrote the original text to convey God's love for Israel - I hear God saying those words to us today. Vs 1 "you are mine" means I have ransomed you. If you believe that God is the ultimate creator of all, then God has this message of hope for you today. I believe He/She is saying to us all: - I am your maker, lover and redeemer.

Vs 4 " because you are precious in my eyes"! To be declared precious means to find mercy. Mercy in our day means compassion, kindness, generosity and grace. I have seen & experienced mercy this week.

I'll recite some examples from our own 2 congregations. Many, phone calls, texts and emails have been sent and received. One family has created their own "bake and deliver to the door and then dash " project going to people who just can't do this for themselves right now. Grandchildren and seniors are having visits through window screens so they can see and hear each other and so they can *really see* how things are with the loved ones on the other side. One senior told me it is good to laugh every day and *then she told me a joke!!* A single person went to Tim Hortons takeout just to get out of the house for a bit and behold the car in front of them paid for their coffee and doughnut. I have seen returning birds at my feeder this past week, bluejays, a pair of cardinals, and chickadees – reminders to me God is present in nature and that the cycle of our seasons carries on, no matter what else is happening. Maybe you can share with your family right now signs of "mercy" that you know happened this week.

"You are mine"! God has paid the ransom for us with the life of His only Son. God loved us enough to change our lives through the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Christ died, once and for all. At Easter time we celebrate that Christ is risen! This

is the heart of the gospel. We are called to be an Easter people so may we embrace that calling! For now – Today is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

God of life, bind your faithful people into one body. Enliven the church with your Spirit and bless the work of those who work for its renewal. Accomplish your work of salvation in us and through us, for the sake of the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you love the world you have made and you grieve when creation suffers. Restore polluted lands and waterways. Heal areas of the world ravaged by storms, floods, wildfires, droughts, and all globally who are affected by COVID 19. Bring all things to new life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, show redemption to all who watch and wait with eager expectation: those longing for wars to cease, those waiting for immigration paperwork to finalize, and those in dire need of humanitarian relief. Come quickly with your hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you weep with those who grieve. Unbind all who are held captive by anxiety, worry, despair, illness or pain *especially* Fill us with compassion and empathy for those who struggle, and keep us faithful in prayer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of Life, we give you thanks for all the medical front line workers in our midst. From our congregations - nurses, ward clerks, and personal support workers. We thank you for the wisdom and skill of doctors and specialists. We are grateful for the dedication of businesses and the people they employ to stay open to meet our essential needs. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, we give thanks for opportunities for this congregation to collaborate with our community in caring for the needs of our neighbors, especially our

FOODBANK. Strengthen our ties with other local congregations, agencies, and services. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, you are our resurrection. We remember all those who have died and trust that, in you, they will live again. Breathe new life into our dry bones, that we, too, might live with you forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lords' Prayer –together

BLESSING

Now is the acceptable time. Now is the day of salvation.

Holy God, speaking, spoken, and inspiring,

✝ bless you, unbind you, and send you in love and in peace.

Amen.

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