

March 29th ORDER OF WORSHIP – 5th Sunday in Lent

MUSIC for preparation and reflection is for QUIET meditation

Prelude / Pre-Service

(please use this song today as preparation for Worship – may God draw you close to assure you of His love and of His presence with you in the worship service you are about to participate in.... listen to it or read the lyrics)

Song: 'Draw me Close to You' Michael W. Smith

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7d_oYr-P16M

Draw me close to you
Never let me go
I lay it all down again
To hear you say that I'm your friend
You are my desire
No one else will do
'Cause nothing else can take your place
To feel the warmth of your embrace
Help me find the way
Bring me back to you

You're all I want
You're all I've ever needed
You're all I want
Help me know you are near

Draw me close to you
Never let me go
I lay it all down again
To hear you say that I'm your friend
You are my desire
No one else will do
'Cause nothing else can take your place
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Help me know you are near
Help me know you are near

GOD CALLS US ...

WORDS OF GREETING:

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you –

and also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHURCH:

- You are receiving this as written text this morning. With each Provincial Gov't Report on the emergency measures to deal with Covid 19 we are told that **every** effort by all citizens will eventually turn the tide so that the dissemination of this virus is halted. The limit is set at 10 for group gatherings and even then, to be 2 meters apart. Therefore, the Session of NKP invite you to worship in this way. Suggestions are to follow this service together with your family, your spouse or individually – consider it a version of 'house church' (each in our own houses).
- As you follow this printed service, we invite you to read and meditate on the words. For the hymns and songs, please sing as you are able, or read the words thoughtfully, or listen to the youtube links of other singers. For Scripture and prayers, read out loud for in hearing your own voice, the words may be more meaningful. Another suggestion, if you are with another person is to take turns to read, especially in places where there are responses, a 2nd voice may also make it more meaningful. A benefit of the written text is that you can also do a re-read which may help you in your learning and in finding comfort and strength.

- As for other events at the church, all have been cancelled for the immediate future. Call me, text me, email me if you are seeking more information or details.
- I continue to be in the church office, most daytime hours from Tuesday to Friday. A visit to the church is fine as we can easily see and talk with each other keeping the 2 meter distance.
- Please take note of this: the NKP website is up and active again. Here's the address: www.nkpchurchregina.ca We will be putting information on that site as well.
- Offerings: once again a reminder that you may drop offerings to the church Tuesday to Friday during hours when someone is in the office, but please let us know if you are bringing an offering. You are also welcome to drop envelopes at the Bosch's.
- We don't know when we can gather again – but in preparation for Easter (or whichever Sunday we are back), we will celebrate – so the **Easter/Spring Flower Fund** will receive \$ donations and an indication of who the flowers might be remembering...
- As part of the global church's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada joins the World Evangelical Alliance in inviting Canadians to participate in a Global Day of Prayer and Fasting on Sunday, March 29th.
- We hope to provide a newsletter sometime close to Easter. If you have anything to contribute send it to the church please.
- Finally, in light of what is happening, I have added a section in our worship order called 'Prayers and Songs of Hope & Encouragement' – I pray this is helpful. I invite you to send me a prayer that you would write or words of encouragement you would like to share with the congregation. I will include anything you send in next week's Order of Worship.

LET US WORSHIP GOD TOGETHER

The Way of Lent is a path that we travel each year, as a time for us to remember Jesus' journey. On that journey he met many people. On that journey, he meets us: in our times of prayer, in our times of blessing, in our times of worship, in our times of sharing. So, come, brothers and sisters in Christ!

Come to Worship so that we might share all that we have, all that we are, for the love of our neighbours, for the healing of creation, for the hope of the world.

Come! For we pray together - **Lord, be with us this day as we commit ourselves to being your disciples. Help us to face the future unafraid, trusting in your loving care and presence with us. We pray this in Jesus' name. AMEN.**

CALL TO WORSHIP:

THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE, WE WILL REJOICE IN IT!

Come to this place, this house, this home, Lord Jesus,

And let us receive you with lavish welcome.

You are the Restorer of our fortunes,

The Promise of new life –

We pour out our praise to you.

Fill this room with your Spirit,

And fill our hearts with your compassion,

Not just in this time and place, but in all times and in all places,

So that as we celebrate the great things you have done for us,

We may also embody the love you give to all. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: **#193 'Out of my bondage, sorrow and night'**

<https://www.hymnal.net/en/hymn/h/1050> (click on piano...and sing along)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpRUD-EUWA> (or this link and you can sing with a congregation)

Out of my bondage, sorrow and night,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy freedom, gladness and light,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of my sickness into Thy health,
Out of my want and into Thy wealth,
Out of my sin and into Thyself,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

2 Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of earth's sorrows into Thy balm,
Out of life's storms and into Thy calm,

Out of distress to jubilant psalm,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

3 Out of unrest and arrogant pride,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into Thy blessed will to abide,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of myself to dwell in Thy love,
Out of despair into raptures above,
Upward for aye on wings like a dove,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

4 Out of the fear and dread of the tomb,
Jesus I come, Jesus I come;
Into the joy and light of Thy home,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

Out of the depths of ruin untold,
Into the peace of Thy sheltering fold,
Ever Thy glorious face to behold,
Jesus, I come to Thee.

PRAYER: (unison)

Holy God, Creator of Life, you call us out of our dark places, offering us the grace of new life. When we see nothing but hopelessness, you surprise us with the breath of your Spirit. Call us out of our complacency and routines, set us free from our self-imposed bonds (and the discouragement of isolating bonds which we are now experiencing) and fill us with your Spirit of life, compassion, and peace, In the name of Jesus, your anointed one, we pray. Amen.

GOD DESIRES TO RECONCILE US . . .

Six days before the Passover (*John 12:1-8*), Jesus came to the home of Lazarus and received hospitality like no one had seen before – generous, loving, whole-hearted, and even a little bit undignified. His disciple Judas could only see the inefficiency of the gift, not the spirit of loving-kindness with which it was offered. We, like Judas, often want to expedite our giving without really engaging with those we are called to serve.

Let us consider the depth of our relationships with those we encounter and with the One who calls us to faith, as we confess our sin in silence.

[pause for silence]

WE CONFESS OUR SINS AND LAMENT OUR BROKENNESS: (unison)

We confess, O God, that we excuse ourselves from reaching out to those who need your care. We take your words – that there will always be unmet needs as a reason not to try to meet the needs we can. Forgive us, and help us to change. Renew our determination to live as faithful followers, faithful disciples, faithful Christians. Help us to work with you for the well-being of your creation, that the fortunes of all your peoples may be restored. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE:

We, too, are a part of God's will for restoration.

We are called, through Christ Jesus, to strive for restoration, but we are not called to do this work alone.

The One who has made a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, will surely equip us for all we are asked to do in Christ's name.

God will empower us to attain all the potential God has placed within us.

Thanks be to God!

SPECIAL MUSICAL OFFERING OF ASSURANCE: 'Restore us, O God' (*a piano solo*)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsMrHes_9DA

Restore in us, O God,
the splendour of your love;
renew your image in our hearts,
and all our sins remove.

O Spirit, wake in us
the wonder of your power;
from fruitless fear unfurl our lives
like springtime bud and flower.

Bring us, O Christ, to share
the fullness of your joy;

baptize us in the risen life
that death cannot destroy

Three-personed God, fulfill
the promise of your grace,
that we, when all our searching end,
may see you face to face.

GOD TEACHES US . . .

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

God of all Wisdom and Glory,
grace us today with the presence of your Spirit
that we might hear today's word
with understanding and imagination.
This we pray in your holy and good name. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READING: The Gospel of John 11:1-37 (ERV)

(I choose to use the Easy Read Version to print here – because it is an ‘easy read’ - if you wish to read the scripture lesson from your own favorite translation please do so – the online Bible resource for various translations can be found at

www.biblegateway.com)

11 There was a man named Lazarus who was sick. He lived in the town of Bethany, where Mary and her sister Martha lived. ²(Mary is the same woman who put perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) Mary’s brother was Lazarus, the man who was now sick. ³So Mary and Martha sent someone to tell Jesus, “Lord, your dear friend Lazarus is sick.”

⁴When Jesus heard this he said, “The end of this sickness will not be death. No, this sickness is for the glory of God. This has happened to bring glory to the Son of God.” ⁵Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days ⁷and then said to his followers, “We should go back to Judea.”

⁸They answered, “But Teacher, those Jews there tried to stone you to death. That was only a short time ago. Now you want to go back there?”

⁹Jesus answered, “There are twelve hours of light in the day. Whoever walks in the day will not stumble and fall because they can see with the light from the sun.^[a] ¹⁰But whoever walks at night will stumble because there is no light.”

¹¹Then Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus is now sleeping, but I am going there to wake him.”

¹²The followers answered, “But, Lord, if he can sleep, he will get well.” ¹³They thought Jesus meant that Lazarus was literally sleeping, but he really meant that Lazarus was dead.

¹⁴So then Jesus said plainly, “Lazarus is dead. ¹⁵And I am glad I was not there. I am happy for you because now you will believe in me. We will go to him now.”

¹⁶Then Thomas, the one called “Twin,” said to the other followers, “We will go too. We will die there with Jesus.”

¹⁷Jesus arrived in Bethany and found that Lazarus had already been dead and in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸Bethany was about two miles^[b] from Jerusalem. ¹⁹Many Jews had come to see Martha and Mary. They came to comfort them about their brother Lazarus.

²⁰When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to greet him. But Mary stayed home. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But I know that even now God will give you anything you ask.”

²³Jesus said, “Your brother will rise and be alive again.”

²⁴Martha answered, “I know that he will rise to live again at the time of the resurrection on the last day.”

²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection. I am life. Everyone who believes in me will have life, even if they die. ²⁶And everyone who lives and believes in me will never really die. Martha, do you believe this?”

²⁷Martha answered, “Yes, Lord. I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God. You are the one who was coming to the world.”

²⁸After Martha said these things, she went back to her sister Mary. She talked to Mary alone and said, “The Teacher is here. He is asking for you.” ²⁹When Mary heard this, she stood up and went quickly to Jesus. ³⁰He had not yet come into the village. He was still at the place where Martha met him. ³¹The Jews who were in the house comforting Mary saw her get up and leave quickly. They thought she was going to the tomb to cry there. So they followed her. ³²Mary went to the place where Jesus was. When she saw him, she bowed at his feet and said, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

³³When Jesus saw Mary crying and the people with her crying too, he was very upset and deeply troubled. ³⁴He asked, “Where did you put him?”

They said, “Lord, come and see.”

³⁵Jesus cried.

³⁶And the Jews said, “Look! He loved Lazarus very much!”

³⁷But some of them said, “Jesus healed the eyes of the blind man. Why didn’t he help Lazarus and stop him from dying?”

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Sermon Title: ‘Do you love me?’

Last Sunday we completed the sermon series from the story of Joshua and the journey into the promised land. For this Sunday, I have returned to the Lectionary and today’s Gospel takes us to the story of the death of Lazarus. It was a long Gospel reading but I feel we need to hear most of this chapter in order to put the one little verse I will focus on in context.

In the reading you may have recognized one 2 word verse – yes the shortest verse in the entire Bible – at verse 35 “Jesus wept” (in the ESV translation – “Jesus cried.”) However, the verse I wish to speak on today is 5 words from verse 37 – “He loved Lazarus very much.”

If there is one characteristic we associate with Jesus, it is love. We speak often of his love. One of the first church songs we have learned in Sunday School was

“Jesus loves me this I know.” We sometimes casually say to another “Jesus loves you and so do I.” As we read the gospels and hear the stories of Jesus we learn of his love – he loved the world; he loved his disciples; he loved his friends; he loved his enemies. It’s nice to know that Jesus loves.

But in this story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus we learn about a more personal love. The gospel writer makes a point to tell us this twice – in vs. 5 “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” and in vs.36 “Look! He loved Lazarus very much!” We are so casual with our thoughts about Jesus’ love – so much so that we see ourselves just one of the crowd of people Jesus loves – whether we fit into the crowd that are called disciples or the crowd that are called enemies. Because Jesus loved both.

Yet Jesus’ love for me /Jesus’ love for you and our love for him needs to be considered personally and meaningfully.

The musical ‘Fiddler on the Roof’ provides a wonderful reflection on love for one other person. If you know the musical, or know the story there is a part where Tevye is explaining to his wife Golde why he gave his permission to Perchik and Hodel (his eldest daughter) to marry. Her concern was that he’s poor, a poor tailor, who had absolutely nothing. Not good husband material. But Tevye responds that Hodel loves him. And he loves Hodel.

What’s love got to do with anything? So Tevye launches into his own question to his wife – do you love me? She can’t quite get her head around such a silly question – is it being asked because he’s not feeling well, because his daughter is determining her own way, because there’s trouble in town, because he has indigestion? But he persists. And so she answers based on experiences they have had together - her answer goes through a whole lot of experiences –



“For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes, cooked your meals, cleaned your house, given you children, milked the cow - after twenty-five years, why talk about love right now? And then together they conclude “I suppose I love you – it doesn't change a thing but even so, after 25 years its nice to know.”

It's nice to know. **No, it's essential to know that you are loved by another and even more important to know that Jesus loves you and he loves you personally.**

The Gospel stories, in numerous ways, show us that Jesus loved people. We read of the crowds who were like sheep without a shepherd and who had followed Jesus from one place to another, even across the lake when all he and the disciples wanted to do was rest and find some peace and quiet – but because he loved them, he continually offered to them his teaching, his healing, his love. He loved people who followed him around, he loved people he met on the road whom others had passed by, he loved children when others wanted them to go away and leave Him to attend to more important matters. Jesus showed that He loved people in many different ways. We also read of individuals who are named as ones Jesus' loved.

Today's gospel story about Mary, Martha and Lazarus is a story about the friends whom Jesus loved. Here we get a glimpse into Jesus' personal life. We know he had his immediate family of Mary, Joseph and siblings as he grew up; he had recruited a motely crew of disciples with whom he spent most of his time and he indeed loved them, but he also had personal friends – and Mary, Martha and Lazarus fit in that category. When illness struck in their home, they reached out to their friend – Mary and Martha sent Jesus a message - “Lord, he whom you love is ill.” The Gospel writer wants us to know that there is a special bond between Jesus and this family. It is mentioned a few times. The information of Lazarus illness is passed on because friends tell friends when they are sick. In that message, although it is not recorded for it was maybe assumed, is also a desire to have Jesus come and be with them during Lazarus' illness. Friends help each other in times of illness. We learn later on that Martha definitely thought Jesus

should have come immediately. When Jesus gets the message, he makes plans that he will go – but just not yet. Something of God is at work, something Jesus identifies that will be to God's glory. From a human perspective, such love for a friend, the request (even though not verbalized) should mean that you'd show up and support your friends. However, there's more happening here than what is evident from a human perspective – Jesus, although humanly disturbed by the news of his sick friend, is also in tune with the purposes of God.

Surely John, who writes this story, is stressing Jesus's love for this family. He knows that what Jesus is about to do here does not feel like love to most people. Very few human beings think of love this way. Love means you'll do whatever for the welfare of the one loved. But what love really is, looks different in this text. Jesus' love would be shown even in the death of his very close friend.

Although, for Lazarus, in his dying hours, would he have felt loved when his friend who was asked to come, did not come? For Mary and Martha, in their vigil, in their grief, in their preparations of the body, in the burial – by being absent was Jesus communicating his love for them?

Where is the love?

Consider though that there is a connection between the verses that say "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" and "therefore he stayed 2 days longer". It was love that moved Jesus to delay and, in that delay, to allow Lazarus to die. Jesus own death was a mere few days away and so he had this opportunity to communicate that God's glory could be and would be seen even in death. The friends he loved would be the ones to have this preview and this preparation for what His own death would communicate.

Resurrection was not just at the end of time, there would be resurrection now (with Lazarus) and in a few days His own— both of which would speak loud and clear of God's glory. This illness and death had a greater purpose – God's glory would be displayed. It was to God's glory when Jesus stood at the entrance of Lazarus' tomb and bid him come out. It would be further seen on the day of Jesus's own resurrection. It will also be seen when you or I die – in the certainty that Jesus loves you, he loves me –and He promises us a place in heaven. In our death, glory will be revealed.

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, at the home of his friends, the neighbours all noticed how much he loved this family. It was a love that caused tears to flow as he experienced and shared in the grief and pain – but it was also a love that gave them a glimpse into eternity.

Many are wondering in these days if Jesus loves and cares for the world in the midst of a pandemic. Maybe you are wondering does he love and care for you personally. You may be crying out toward heaven – Jesus, do you love me?

My friends, be reminded, take comfort in this - Yes, Jesus loves you. Yes, Jesus loves you. Yes, Jesus loves you.

The Bible, which is trustworthy and true; the knowledge and experiences you have had of Jesus calling you by name, comforting you in trouble, caring for you daily – these are evidences that you are loved and God' greater glory will be revealed, even when Covid 19 continues its spread into our neighbourhoods and even our homes.

May God show His love and mercy to you – personally - in these days. Amen

SILENT REFLECTION

INVITATION & PRESENTATION OF OUR TITHES AND OFFERINGS:

(The Giving of our Offerings is one of our worship acts – we do so in order to provide ministry through the church. We do so in order to thank God for His gifts to us. We do so, especially in our mission offerings, to meet the need of sharing the Gospel in word and action. Remember your offerings can be dropped off at the church or at the Bosch's home).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VFQ_H4c8WW0

Doxology: **Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above ye Heavenly hosts,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication:

What we have, we freely share, loving God. Blessed by your love, may we be a blessing in your world. May what we offer always be used in service of your grace, your peace, and your love. Amen!

Response: Prayers and Songs of Hope and Encouragement:

Words of Encouragement:



Socially distancing /physically distancing is now the law. This reminds me of an experience one of my sisters shared of her Bible School days – she attended a

very conservative Bible School and when an interest developed between a guy & girl for the purpose of dating, they had to ask or apply to the administration for what was called 'fellowship privileges'. If this was granted, they could meet for a 'date' on Friday evenings in the Student Lounge. Here they were supervised by older students as 'monitors' who actually were to impose a 6" rule – meaning you could not sit closer than 6" or you risked having your fellowship privileges revoked!

From the Saskatchewan Gov't website, we read that their version of social distancing also means that we must avoid close contact. We are told to keep a minimum of 2 meters from others when walking, shopping or out and about – which of course we shouldn't be out and about much at all.

Thus, today we have worship in our homes. I appreciated getting feedback from last Sunday as we worshipped – you in your small corner and I in mine! A few of you commented about feeling lonely, others didn't mind the quiet of their house and the private way they could think and pray as they read the service. A few others connected virtually using an app (Zoom) so they could see each other and share in leading the parts of the service. I know I missed the face to face interaction.

Dallas Willard, an author, philosopher on Christian formation, tells a touching story about a young boy who needed some assurance. At night, unable to sleep, he went into his daddy's room and crawled into his bed. But because it was dark, he couldn't tell if his dad was facing him or not. "Is your face turned toward me, Father?" he asked. The dad, either still awake, or having been woken by his son, replied, "Yes, my face is turned toward you." Not only did the boy want to be closer to his dad, but he wanted his dad to be facing him. It made a difference. It gave him assurance and comfort. Close.

We are practicing distancing...but God is practicing closeness. God has never asked or suggested that we keep our distance. In fact, he made the first move to come close. He walked and talked with Adam & Eve in the Garden; He allowed Moses to be so close he could feel the breath of God; the Psalmist writes that it was good to be near to God. The ultimate closeness was when God sent Jesus – who physically, personally came to live in the neighbourhood, and by His Spirit in our hearts. In Jesus Christ, the face of the heavenly Father has turned toward you. The One who made you is for you – you are loved, you are valued, you are not alone, you are not at arm's length, you are face to face with God. Enjoy the

closeness. They say social distancing should make a difference in the fight against Covid 19, but we can have a greater confidence because we know that spiritual closeness with our Heavenly Father will make a difference!

Song: 'Face to Face

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SuLig-W4wSU>

Face to face with Christ my Savior,
Face to face--what will it be
When with rapture I behold Him,
Jesus Christ who died for me?

Chorus:

*Face to face I shall behold Him,
Far beyond the starry sky;
Face to face in all His glory,
I shall see Him by and by!*

2 Only faintly now I see Him
With the darkened veil between,
But a blessed day is coming
When His glory shall be seen. [Chorus]

3 What rejoicing in His presence,
When are banished grief and pain;
When the crooked ways are straightened
And the dark things shall be plain. [Chorus]

4 Face to face--oh, blissful moment!
Face to face--to see and know;
Face to face with my Redeemer,
Jesus Christ who loves me so. [Chorus]

Song: 'There is None like You'

Introduction: *There is no one like our God, nothing like His love to us. He is so perfect that He will love and remain faithful to us. His love is limitless. He is a master that can put back the broken pieces and make it new again. **God is the***

only one that can turn a mess into something beautiful. Let us invite Him in our life. He will change our world, He will bring joy that comes from heaven. How awesome He is. There is none like you oh God!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnhUh2tt97Q>

There is none like You,
No one else can touch my heart like You do,
I can search for all eternity Lord
And find, there is none like You.

There is none like You.
No one else can touch my heart like You do,
I can search for all eternity Lord
And find, there is none like You.

Your mercy flows like a river so wide,
And healing comes from Your hand.
Suffering children are safe in Your arms,
There is none like You.

There is none like You, (There is none like You, Lord)
There is none like You.

I can search for all eternity Lord,
There is none like You.
I can search for all eternity Lord,
There is none, (there is none,)
There is none Lord,
There is none like You.

PRAYERS of the People and the Lord's Prayer:

Heavenly Father, how can we say thanks for your love: your love for the world, your love for our community, our families, your love for me – personally. May we each know that surely Jesus loves me! Your love comes to us in our times of need. We need you today, we need your love, we need your care and protection, we need your mercy upon us and all in such a time as this. We join our prayers with those of the worldwide church, especially as called for on this day designated as a

Global Day of Prayer. Our one common prayer is 'Lord, help!' Help us all. Help in those places where the virus is spreading rapidly, help even in our province where there is an increase in cases daily, help governments to receive accurate information, help the development and instituting of policy that will make a difference, help suppliers of equipment and medical aids to produce all that is needed, help health care providers to administer the right care at the right time, help those on front-lines of care and provision to be safe, help those who are in countries where they'd rather not be and are seeking ways to get home, help those who have symptoms to isolate themselves and get aid when needed, help all who are frustrated, bored, and impatient with all this to know that their cooperation could make a difference.

Lord God, this world is in your hands- you loved the world so much you send your Son to seek and to save all who would turn to You. May we turn to You. We turn to you with our fears – calm us in the midst of this crisis and other things that affect us personally. We turn to you with our decisions – we need wisdom and guidance to know your will in our work, our relationships, our future. We turn to you in faith – help us to believe, help us to trust, help us to grow, help us to share with others that our strength does indeed come from You.

Lord God, our personal faith community prayers are for each other. As we are separated one from the other physically, may we reach out in other ways to offer our friendship and support. We give you thanks for the safe return of those who spend some winter months away. We pray for our children and teens who are not in their classrooms but for whom their educational progress must continue – we pray for teachers who will offer online learning and we pray for parents who will endeavour to guide their children forward. We pray for those of our church who are vulnerable due to health or age – keep them in your care and protection and may we assist when and where needed. We pray for those who are continuing in their work places or carrying on with duties even from a distance or in a new way – may the frustrations that often coming with doing things differently be lessened with each day. We do pray for your personal presence and your words of guidance. Bless us all – for we pray all these things in the strong name of Jesus our Lord and Saviour, who taught us to pray these words:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever. Amen.**

THE PARTING HYMN: *'O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing'*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7XVwxOfG1oY>

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise
The glories of my God and King
The triumphs of His grace

Jesus! the name that charms our fears
That bids our sorrows cease
'Tis music in the sinner's ears
'Tis life and health and peace

He breaks the power of canceled sin
He sets the prisoner free
His blood can make the foulest clean
His blood availed for me

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb
Your loosened tongues employ
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come
And leap, ye lame, for joy

My gracious Master and my God
Assist me to proclaim
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name

(Words by Charles Wesley)

GOD SENDS US . . .

*BENEDICTION: May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

*GOING OUT SONG: #358 *'There is a Redeemer (vs.2) (projected)*

*Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, hope for sinners slain,
Thank you, O my Father, for giving us your Son,
and leaving Your Spirit till the work on earth is done*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ldRcFz7rK7w>