

## **April 5, 2020 ORDER OF WORSHIP – Passion /Palm Sunday**

MUSIC for preparation and reflection is for QUIET meditation

Pre-Service Prayer:

*God of all time, as we prepare to worship you today and this week, help us to call to mind these events in Jesus' life so that we can see their significance for our present lives and for the future you are preparing for all creation. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

### **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:

- All indications are that we will be asked to forgo public gatherings for most of April. Therefore, we will continue to provide the NKP worship service in this written format. Please consider that a set time (**such as 11 a.m. Sunday morning!**) and place to read and follow the service provided is the best way to feel connected to our church family and to maintain the discipline of Worship. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.
- This week begins 'Holy Week' on the church calendar. I plan to provide a GOOD FRIDAY service in this same format and it will be emailed to you on Friday morning. After the Good Friday worship, the sanctuary will be open for a Prayer Vigil. This is a time to come to the church alone where you can spend an hour in prayer. You will need to 'sign up' (just call or send me a message) – choose an hour beginning at 12 Noon through until 6 p.m. I will

confirm your hour according to the # who are requesting to have this time for private prayer and meditation.

- No other events or meetings are at the church in this coming week.
- The church building has an 'ALARM' installed now, if you have a key to the church, you need to be trained to disarm and arm the system. Call the office for when you can come in to get instructions.
- Sumi & 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 recommended 2-meter distance.
- Please take note of this: the NKP website is up and active again. Here's the address: [www.nkpchurchregina.ca](http://www.nkpchurchregina.ca) We will be putting information on that site as well.
- One member reminded me that VISION T.V. will be providing many Easter specials during this coming week. You might want to look for 'The Tabernacle Choir' for an evening of inspiring music.
- Offerings: thank you for the many who have brought in or mailed in your offerings. You are welcome to continue to do so or call the church if you wish to have someone come to pick it up.
- A Sunday School lesson with a craft is being prepared each week and delivered to families who have indicated they want this – call the church office to get on the list in order to receive the lesson.
- It is so very sad that the Christian church will not be gathering together in celebration of the Resurrection next Sunday. We will become more like the early believers; in that we know 'Christ is Risen'! – but for fear of a virus we hide in our homes. However, please find ways to declare '**Christ is risen!**'
- The Easter Flower Fund will continue to receive donations –it is now called a **SPRING** flower fund and when we have that first Sunday back for communal worship in our sanctuary this Spring, we will have a beautiful flower display to welcome us back. You may donate 'in memory of' if you wish or an undesignated donation.
- Fun activity called 'Easter Baskets Contest & Auction' – this is now renamed '**Spring Basket/ Fancy Bag Contest & Auction**' and this fundraiser event will be held on a Sunday after we return to our regular sanctuary gatherings.
- We plan to provide a newsletter - it will be a SPRING edition. 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

Palm Sunday. It is one of the most important days in the Christian calendar and marks the beginning of Holy Week, immediately preceding the week of events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection. Palm Sunday derives its name from the palm branches that were waved by the crowds of people and strewn in the path of Jesus as he entered Jerusalem for the Passover riding on a donkey. They shouted: 'Hosanna!' (Liberate us) believing that Jesus was the Messiah coming to free them from Roman oppression.

### CALL TO WORSHIP:

Sing for joy! The Master comes!

**Riding on a colt, he enters in victory!**

If all shouting stopped, the rocks would ring with joy.

**But there will be some who will not sing or shout.**

There will be some who will cling to their fear.

**Be ready, O Jerusalem, for your king truly is coming!**

**Hosanna in the highest! AMEN.**

### SPECIAL OPENING SONG: *'The Holy City'* (Sumi Jung)



*(picture of Jerusalem taken February 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 by KimMcMurray)  
[if you can open the link – please enjoy listening as Sumi sings...]*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eOjGcl\\_-iE&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3eOjGcl_-iE&feature=youtu.be)

*Last night I lay asleeping  
There came a dream so fair  
I stood in old Jerusalem  
Beside the temple there  
I heard the children singing  
And ever as they sang  
Methought the voice of Angels  
From Heaven in answer rang  
"Jerusalem, Jerusalem!  
Lift up your gates and sing,  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Hosanna to your King!"*

*And then methought my dream was chang'd  
The streets no longer rang  
Hushed were the glad Hosannas  
The little children sang  
The sun grew dark with mystery  
The morn was cold and chill  
As the shadow of a cross arose  
Upon a lonely hill  
"Jerusalem, Jerusalem!  
Hark! How the Angels sing,  
Hosanna in the highest,  
Hosanna to your King!"*

*And once again the scene was changed  
New earth there seemed to be  
I saw the Holy City  
Beside the tideless sea  
The light of God was on its streets  
The gates were open wide  
And all who would might enter  
And no one was denied  
No need of moon or stars by night  
Or sun to shine by day  
It was the new Jerusalem  
That would not pass away  
"Jerusalem! Jerusalem*

*Sing for the night is o'er  
Hosanna in the highest  
Hosanna for evermore!"*

**PRAYER OF ADORATION:**

With great joy we welcome you, Lord Jesus!

**The journey has been long and we have longed to enter the Holy City.**

You come into our hearts and our lives, humbly, patiently, encouraging us to learn and grow, to embark on journeys of hope and healing.

**Open our hearts today to hear your words, as we sing praise to you. Hosanna!**

Blessed is the One who comes in the Lord's Name. **AMEN.**

**GATHERING HYMN: # 214 'All glory, laud and honour'**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3a8fTTrAdE>

***Refrain:***

All glory, laud and honour  
to thee, Redeemer, King,  
to whom the lips of children  
made sweet hosannas ring!

Thou art the King of Israel,  
thou David's royal son,  
who in the Lord's name comest,  
the King and blessed one. ***Refrain***

The company of angels  
Are praising thee on high  
And mortals join with all  
Things created make reply. ***Refrain***

The people of the Hebrews  
with palms before thee went;  
our praise and prayer and anthems  
before thee we resent. ***Refrain***

To thee before thy passion

they sang their hymns of praise;  
to thee, now high exalted,  
our melody we raise. **Refrain**

You didst accept their praises;  
accept the prayers we bring,  
who in all good delightest,  
thou good and gracious King. **Refrain**  
(Refrain)

### **GOD DESIRES TO RECONCILE US . . .**

*Let us come together to a moment of confession.*

*Imagine Jesus entering our presence just as he entered Jerusalem some 2,000 years ago. Envision the palm branches, the donkey, the shouts of "hosanna." Understanding who he is and knowing who we are...*

#### **Prayer of Confession**

We pray together...

**O God, you know us well. We are quick to speak of faith, but slow to live it fully. We shout "hosanna" as Jesus approaches, as did the people of Jerusalem many years ago; but we do not want him to come too close -- not close enough to really see...**

*Silent Confession (30 seconds)*

And we pray together...

**O God, you know us well. We are quick to claim faith in Jesus as our Lord and Saviour; but, like the throng who greeted his entry into Jerusalem, we are fickle, slow to live fully and everywhere as faithful disciples. We know where we fail...**

*Silent Confession (30 seconds)*

And we pray together...

**O God, you know us well. We are quick to want the blessings of faithfulness; but, like the Twelve who spent the last week with him, we are slow to accept the pain and suffering of authentic Christ-like living. Forgive our weakness and fear...**

*Silent Confession (30 seconds)*

#### **Words of Assurance**

The Lord is God. The Lord brings light to those in darkness, forgiveness to those who truly confess, and pardon to all who seek to follow Jesus. Rejoice that the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever and ever. In the name of Jesus, the Christ, receive the love that never dies and never fails. Amen.

## HYMN OF ASSURANCE: 'Shine Jesus Shine'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3iB30gCqAc>

Lord the Light Of Your Love Is Shining,  
In The Midst Of The Darkness Shining,  
Jesus Light Of The World Shine Upon Us,  
Set Us Free By The Truth You Now Bring Us,  
Shine On Me. Shine On Me.

Shine Jesus Shine  
Fill This Land With The Fathers Glory  
Blaze, Spirit Blaze,  
Set Our Hearts On Fire  
Flow, River Flow  
Flood The Nations With Grace And Mercy  
Send Forth Your Word  
Lord And Let There Be Light.

Lord I Come To Your Awesome Presence,  
From The Shadows Into Your Radiance,  
By The Blood I May Enter Your Brightness,  
Search Me, Try Me, Consume All My Darkness,  
Shine On Me. Shine On Me.

Shine Jesus Shine  
Fill This Land With The Fathers Glory  
Blaze, Spirit Blaze,  
Set Our Hearts On Fire  
Flow, River Flow  
Flood The Nations With Grace And Mercy  
Send Forth Your Word  
Lord And Let There Be Light.

As We Gaze On Your Kingly Brightness.  
So Our Faces Display Your Likeness.  
Ever Changing From Glory To Glory,  
Mirrored Here May Our Lives Tell Your Story.

Shine On Me. Shine On Me.

Shine Jesus Shine  
Fill This Land With The Fathers Glory  
Blaze, Spirit Blaze,  
Set Our Hearts On Fire  
Flow, River Flow  
Flood The Nations With Grace And Mercy  
Send Forth Your Word  
Lord And Let There Be Light.

## **GOD TEACHES US . . .**

### PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION:

Illuminating God,  
today, you march into Jerusalem to save us.  
Guide us, through the wisdom of your Spirit,  
that we might see what you are calling us to see,  
to know what you are calling us to know,  
and to feel what you are calling us to feel,  
that we may respond to your Gospel call of grace  
with gladsome hearts and minds. **Amen.**

### SCRIPTURE READINGS:

Psalm 31:9-16 New International Version (NIV)  
*(a Responsive reading if possible)*

<sup>9</sup>Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;  
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,  
my soul and body with grief.

<sup>10</sup>**My life is consumed by anguish  
and my years by groaning;  
my strength fails because of my affliction,  
and my bones grow weak.**

<sup>11</sup>Because of all my enemies,  
I am the utter contempt of my neighbours  
and an object of dread to my closest friends—  
those who see me on the street flee from me.



**<sup>12</sup>I am forgotten as though I were dead;  
I have become like broken pottery.**

<sup>13</sup>For I hear many whispering,  
"Terror on every side!"

They conspire against me  
and plot to take my life.

**<sup>14</sup>But I trust in you, LORD;  
I say, "You are my God."**

<sup>15</sup>My times are in your hands;  
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,  
from those who pursue me.

**<sup>16</sup>Let your face shine on your servant;  
save me in your unfailing love.**

The Gospel of Matthew 26:14-30

*(I chose 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](http://www.biblegateway.com))

<sup>14</sup>Then one of the twelve followers went to talk to the leading priests. This was the follower named Judas Iscariot. <sup>15</sup>He said, "I will hand Jesus over to you. What will you pay me for doing this?" The priests gave him 30 silver coins. <sup>16</sup>After that Judas waited for the best time to hand Jesus over to them.

The Passover Meal

<sup>17</sup>On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the followers came to Jesus. They said, "We will prepare everything for you to eat the Passover meal. Where do you want us to have the meal?"

<sup>18</sup>Jesus answered, "Go into the city. Go to a man I know. Tell him that the Teacher says, 'The chosen time is near. I will have the Passover meal with my followers at your house.'" <sup>19</sup>They obeyed and did what Jesus told them to do. They prepared the Passover meal.

<sup>20</sup>In the evening Jesus was at the table with the twelve followers. <sup>21</sup>They were all eating. Then Jesus said, "Believe me when I say that one of you twelve here will hand me over to my enemies."

<sup>22</sup>The followers were very sad to hear this. Each one said, "Lord, surely I am not the one!"

<sup>23</sup>Jesus answered, "One who has dipped his bread in the same bowl with me will be the one to hand me over. <sup>24</sup>The Son of Man will suffer what the Scriptures say will happen to him. But it will be very bad for the one who hands over the Son of Man to be killed. It would be better for him if he had never been born."

<sup>25</sup>Then Judas, the very one who would hand him over, said to Jesus, "Teacher, surely I am not the one you are talking about, am I?"

Jesus answered, "Yes, it is you."

### The Lord's Supper

<sup>26</sup>While they were eating, Jesus took some bread and thanked God for it. He broke off some pieces, gave them to his followers and said, "Take this bread and eat it. It is my body."

<sup>27</sup>Then he took a cup of wine, thanked God for it, and gave it to them. He said, "Each one of you drink some of it. <sup>28</sup>This wine is my blood, which will be poured out to forgive the sins of many and begin the new agreement from God to his people. <sup>29</sup>I want you to know, I will not drink this wine again until that day when we are together in my Father's kingdom and the wine is new. Then I will drink it again with you."

<sup>30</sup>They all sang a song and then went out to the Mount of Olives.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

Sermon Title: ***'If the price is right...'***

T.V Game shows have long filled the evening hours of T.V. watching. It is generally believed that the viewers, often of a certain age bracket, watch and participate as a way to keep the brain active - for deep in the recesses of grey matter there lies the knowledge to answer the questions, to gain the points, to be the armchair winner. There is a certain satisfaction in knowing the answers, being

the winner – even if it is from your own living room. The longest running game show – its' been on the air since 1956 - is the one called '**The Price is Right**'. Every product on the show has an actual retail price, confirmed by a set group of retailers. The game contestants need to guess the price, come close to the price but not go over. The one to do so wins the item. Things have a price, but there's a popular saying that '**everyone has their price**'. In other words, everyone can be persuaded to do what you want if they are offered a large enough amount of money. If you follow sports, you are quite aware of this when it comes to inviting, recruiting, persuading a top player to switch teams.

Judas wanted to win. This is the Sunday of the church calendar that goes by 2 titles– Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday. This year the Lectionary focus on 'Passion' and so the Gospel reading from Matthew would have us consider the betrayal of Judas.

Judas.

We know the name. We also know the reputation. And knowing this, who would name a child Judas?

But initially was it not just a name. A name among others who were called by Jesus to be his disciples. That's how we first know the name and the person.

Judas, the disciple whom the Gospel writers always listed last. Mark and Luke both record the list of those Jesus selected to be disciples and who he named apostles – the list goes like this: "*Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), <sup>17</sup>James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), <sup>18</sup>Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot <sup>19</sup>and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.*"

Judas, maybe listed last - (*always the Gospel writers felt the need to identify what he had done*)- but not last in his own mind. In fact, Judas probably considered himself the one who was a cut above the rest. Why?

Maybe for 2 reasons – first by where he was from, and second by what was his profession. First – where he was from. He, and he alone in the group of 12, was from the southern part of Judea – closer to Jerusalem, the holy city. Judas grew up where there was a certain sophistication – the ‘country cousins’ to the north were mere farmers and fishermen. He was from the city suburbs. He possibly had a bit more education and probably had some exposure to things political or managerial or theological – even influenced by the zealots (they were those who were patriotic to a fault, and who wanted more than anything the overthrow of the Romans). We are also quite certain that most of the other disciples knew each other (there were brothers in the group, there were those who shared a trade, and all were from the same neighbourhood, more or less). Judas, however, was a complete stranger.

Besides that, the Galileans (the other 11) spoke with a distinct accent – a point of humour and ridicule by the Judeans. (*Comparable to our humour about Newfies!*) Judas was indeed more refined, quite self confident and likely a loner, he was the one ‘from away’. It is likely he never did fit in.

Still Jesus knew exactly who he was when he hand-picked him to be one of his disciples. Jesus knew all the good points of those he chose, he also knew all their weaknesses. However, Jesus took what we sometimes call a ragtag bunch – they were of every sort- because the kingdom Jesus was initiating would be for every sort. He did not call 11 for a positive purpose and one merely to serve as his betrayer. Judas would learn and grow and change with the rest. But restless he did become – restless because this new kingdom teaching and plan was not turning out as he had hoped. Restless because the prospect of an earthly kingdom was looking less likely and the leader of this new movement was stepping on the toes of the powerful religious and political establishment. Judas was not impressed.

The time seemed so right, as predicted and prepared by John the Baptist, for one to arise as the chosen One of God to bring God’s kingdom to earth. Many were eager for the Messiah to come. Evidence and the experiences of seeing Jesus in action began to attract people to become followers and to expect even greater

things. Judas gave himself to the cause and to the leader. He was interested in the person, the prestige, the position and the power. When the Bible reveals to us that he was the treasurer of the group, it does so to tell us that money was important to him. He believed or pretended to believe that money must be directed to worthy causes and to the places of need. You may recall how disturbed Judas was when Mary 'wasted' an expensive amount of perfume by pouring it on Jesus' feet when it could have been sold and the money given to the poor. In such a protest, echoed by the way, by the other disciples, Judas sets the stage for further inconsistencies and deceptions to which no one would suspect his true motives. On the surface, it appeared his intentions – and the influence of the master Teacher when Jesus did say the poor should be cared for – was appropriate.

After all the monetary value of Mary's jar of perfume was equivalent to a full year's wages. Imagine the sacrificial love that represented as it was poured out as an anointing oil upon Jesus. Hidden behind Judas' protest however is a rising hatred for the one he expected to lead the overthrow of the Romans. The contrast is not missed in the Gospel account – such love by one who was near and dear to Jesus. Such hatred by another who was among his closest friends. And this became the tipping point.

Judas, frustrated that a coup under Jesus as leader was unlikely, he left to meet up chief priests and religious leaders in Jerusalem. He already knew they had been watching and waiting for an opportunity to get Jesus off the scene. There was an increasing number who were aware that the kingdom of Jesus was a kingdom of heart change not political change. They wanted Jesus silenced. Judas, an insider, was in the best position to make that possible.

"What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?" he said. Everything has a price. Everyone has a price. To betray Jesus, Judas was offered and accepted 30 silver coins – a mere pocketful of change. That's all the commitment, the 3 years in the presence of the Master teacher, the lessons, the sermons, the miracles, the conversations were worth. Thirty pieces of silver. (In Exodus 21 that same amount was mentioned as the price of a mere slave.)

Up to this point, Judas blended in – even as they gathered to share the Passover meal. Judas reclined at table with the rest of them. Judas watched as Jesus began to go from one of his disciples to the next one, washing each one's feet. Judas listened to Peter's protest and the casual answer "you are not all clean." Judas' own feet were washed by Jesus in this display of servanthood. Jesus revealed his knowledge that one of this inner circle was the betrayer – shockingly to us as we read this account, Judas, maybe faintly, but he too echoes the question "is it I, Lord?"

As the supper progressed, the time had come, Jesus offers the bread to Judas who immediately leaves to fulfill his plan. In his mind, Jesus had failed. Jesus was one big disappointment. Jesus was not who or what he expected from the Messiah. In his soul, well – he had made his decision and he sold his soul to Satan. Betrayal had a cost. And Judas had paid the price. In return he had a pocketful of change.

There is another tidbit about Judas which I didn't share in my introduction to him today. That is about his name – a name we now associate with 'betrayal'. We should think about 'betrayal'. For here we see a most bitter betrayal – it is a betrayal within an intimate relationship. When Jesus called his disciples, he called them to be with him, to get to know him, to become disciples – and yes, he would call them all 'friends', he would pray for them all – including Judas. Terms and expressions of endearment were shared – even by Judas – even at this time.

Jesus called him 'Friend'.

He called Jesus 'Rabbi'.

Still the name 'Judas' has come down through history associated with betrayal. Scripture goes on to tell us that Judas did become remorseful, so much so that he took the 30 silver coins back to the chief priests and elders with the words "I have betrayed innocent blood." But they were unmoved – they had accomplished what they wanted. Judas was alone with his guilt. The tragedy of what he did, and the tragedy of the cross are part of a bigger picture.

And that bigger picture – well one part of it is another tidbit about the name Judas. The name, the reputation, the person.

There once was another game show (no one here would remember it) – it was a radio only show called ‘What’s my Name?’ Contestants had to identify a famous or historical person given a series of clues... top prize for a correct guess on the 1<sup>st</sup> clue was \$10.

But my last clue for you this morning is another consideration of the name ‘Judas’. We need to know that the name Judas is actually a form of the name ‘**Judah**’. And Judah means ‘Jehovah leads /’Praise to God’.

The entire Passion story – beginning here today and coming to a conclusion next Sunday - will lead us to indeed conclude ‘Jehovah leads’ – Praise be to God!  
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](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:

We come to meet you Jesus in this ritual of giving.  
You gave your life for us, walking the road to Jerusalem.  
Freely we have received, freely we give.  
We lay these resources at your feet:  
our hosannas to the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

## Response: Prayers and Songs of Hope and Encouragement:

Words of Encouragement:



I am already thinking about our next road trip. Most of you know that Arend & I usually do at least 1 road trip per year. It is our preferred vacation – to road trip, especially around the lesser known parts of this beautiful province or beyond. We call the trips ‘Explore SK’ – and we have a road map where every road we have travelled is highlighted. We are good at stopping when we see... this sign,



not so good at turning off for the rest areas. Because rest for the sake of rest, is just not productive enough. My personal view and habit has been, that after months of work, I get to enjoy ‘no

REST AREA  
NEXT RIGHT

work’ and so that’s when rest begins. Once or twice a year for designated periods. In between, yes, there’s occasionally some mini-rest periods.

The picture provided by Kim for the opening of this worship service reminded me of our recent study trip in Israel. We arrived in Jerusalem on a Friday afternoon. We had just a couple of hours before ‘Shabbat’ (*the Jewish day of rest*) would begin at sundown on that day. We checked into the hotel and then took a walk to **Yehuda Market.**







What an experience that was – the crowds, the vendors, the displays of fresh products, the hustle and bustle, and the calls of “come in here”, “buy this”, many bargains as the hour moved closer to sundown. When we started to walk back to the hotel, we noticed an eerie silence beginning. The sundown hour approached and suddenly the vendors packed up, the shops shut down, the people scattered towards their homes, and even as we walked to the hotel, we noticed less people, less traffic and less noise. In a very short time, all was quiet. Going home, staying home was the expected and accepted routine – and that is the pattern repeated every Friday. The shut down of everything from sundown on Friday until sundown on Saturday seemed to be fully embraced.

Yet it also seemed to be a ‘forced rest’. A few of my bus mates and I talked about this in that the culture of western individualism – our rights and freedoms and privileges – how hard this would be to expect, even if not enforced. We could imagine the protest – coming even from our own families. Suddenly though, upon returning from Israel, Covid-19 hit and by Government law we are expected and, in some cases, forced to ‘stay at home’.

As Christians, could we not view this as REST? /enforced rest! But not just physical rest – although many of us, probably, are finding some benefit to not being so busy. We could learn from our Jewish friends that REST might be good for our whole way of life. Practical rest, relational rest, business rest – rest from mental weariness, rest from week-day routines, rest even from the things we think are merely leisure – yet drain our energy. Many of us grew up with the experience of Sunday being a day different than the others – a day when stores were closed, or sports events were not held and you were not even allowed to play games or do homework. It was a stay at home, do nothing kind of day. We all have stories and impressions of whether it was good or not.

During my university years I was introduced to the writings of a Jewish Scholar by the name of Abraham Joshua Heschel. He wrote this “the Sabbath was to be a transcendental oasis in time.” From creation, God had scheduled a weekly rest for humanity. Sabbath was a gift of grace for humanity. There’s a verse in 2 Chronicles (36:21) that says this *“Thus the word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah came true, that the land must rest for seventy years to make up for the years when the people refused to observe the Sabbath.”*

Exile had messed up the sabbath – the people had become too occupied or preoccupied with discouragement and despair of their plight as captives to stop and observe that 1 day in 7. When restoration came it was for all, people and land and they were to make up for what they lost – primarily they had lost their rest. Maybe this period of isolation could be likened to exile – but maybe we will be better in the long run, if we do not forget the Sabbath – the rest God had always intended for us. We, and the land, and the nations of the world would do better, I believe, if we remembered and valued REST! That’s something we can do in these days of forced isolation – or should I say of forced rest!

Praise Song: ‘Be Still my Soul /In you I rest’ *(the 1<sup>st</sup> part of this song will be familiar, sing along if you can; the 2<sup>nd</sup> part is newer – listen or read and reflect...)*

<https://www.worshiptogether.com/songs/be-still-my-soul-in-you-i-rest>

Be still, my soul, The Lord is on thy side.  
Bear patiently, The cross of grief or pain.  
Leave to thy God, to order and provide.  
In every change, He faithful will remain.

Be still, my soul, Thy best thy heavenly Friend.  
Through thorny ways, Leads to a joyful end.

### *Verse 2*

Be still, my soul, thy God doth undertake.  
To guide the future as He has the past.  
Thy hope, thy confidence, let nothing shake.  
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.

Be still, my soul, the waves and wind still know.  
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

### *Chorus*

In You I rest, In You I found my hope.  
In You I trust, You never let me go.  
I place my life within Your hands alone.  
Be still, my soul.

### *Verse 3*

Be still, my soul, the hour is hastening on.  
When we shall be forever with the Lord.  
When disappointment, grief and fear are gone.  
Sorrow forgot, Love's purest joys restored.  
Be still, my soul, when change and tears are past.  
All safe and blessed, we shall meet at last.

### *Bridge*

Be still, my soul

In You I rest, In You I found my hope.  
In You I trust, You never let me go.  
I place my life within Your hands alone.  
Be still, my soul.

Be still, my soul

In You I rest, In You I found my hope.  
In You I trust, You never let me go.  
I place my life within Your hands alone.  
Be still, my soul. Be still, my soul. Be still, my soul.

HYMN: 'It is well with my soul'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=22&v=AHe\\_gmo3gX4&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=22&v=AHe_gmo3gX4&feature=emb_logo)

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll  
Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say  
It is well, it is well, with my soul

It is well  
With my soul  
It is well, it is well with my soul

Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ has regarded my helpless estate,  
And hath shed His own blood for my soul

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, o my soul

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

It is well (it is well)  
With my soul (with my soul)  
It is well, it is well with my soul

PRAYERS of the People and the Lord's Prayer:

Heavenly Father in stillness and confidence we bow in prayer. We come in prayer and we call you by name – we call you our Father. We thank you for placing your love upon us even before we knew you. We thank you for drawing us into relationship, for showing us grace and mercy, for giving us a Saviour and for filling us with Spirit. Kind and merciful God, you have always called your people by name – you have called out a nation. You called forth your only Son to be the

Saviour of the world. You called to those who would be His disciples – and they followed. You call us still today to take up the cross and follow Jesus. Lord Jesus, it is hard to do so. It was hard for the first disciples because the path you set them upon was contrary to the ways they had known before – it was a new way - a way of loving the unloveable, a way of forgiving 7 times 7, a way of blessing not cursing, a way of caring for the least of those, a way of washing the feet and offering humble service to each other, a way of building your kingdom and being your kingdom people right here and now.

Lord Jesus, we hear your teaching, we observe your example, we have experienced such love – yet we stumble and fall in our attempts to be like you. Strengthen us we pray to be more faithful and worthy witnesses to who you are and all that you have done in us, for us and through us.

We come to this week, this Holy Week, and we journey again to the cross. We come there because we need to remember the cost of our salvation. We come there because we need to seek forgiveness. We come there because we need to worship – to worship the One who paid it all and to again offer our all. At this time our experiences in life and in worship are so different because of the virus that has invaded our community, our world. We feel lost, confused and sometimes lonely. We pray for ourselves and we pray for others. We pray for our day to day life – we pray we will abide by the current restrictions, accepting that they are given with the best intentions and the best prospects of halting the spread of this disease. We pray for our families and friends, and that in this time we can find ways to encourage and support each other. We pray for our church family – we pray that in our worship and prayers we will know we are one in faith and love and support. We pray for the world – we pray for the places where this virus continues to spread rapidly and for Government and Health authorities that are trying their best to educate, to impose rules, to attend to the sick and dying, to provide goods and resources that sustain life and prevent such massive loss. We pray for Italy, Spain, the U.S., Germany, India. We pray also for our own country – we pray that here in Canada that we will know and support the good efforts of all who are endeavouring to keep us safe. We pray for accurate information to be shared, we pray for the policies and procedures which are put in place will be effective, we pray for those who are at risk whether because of the work they do or because they are susceptible to the disease, we pray for patience as we all adjust to this new way of living. We pray also that we might find good in this – that we might use our time wisely, that we might accept the REST which these circumstances afford, that in Rest and in Confidence we draw closer to YOU. Be pleased, O God, to hear our prayers as we pray also for the concerns on our hearts at this time... (silence)

We pray in faith, and in the words Jesus taught us...

**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: #587 'Called as partners in Christ' service'

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo\\_SV0r5IHs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo_SV0r5IHs) (with Geneva Presbyterian church congregation)

<https://hymnary.org/hymn/GG2013/761>

(with piano; you'll need to 'click' audio recording for each verse)

1. Called as partners in Christ's service,  
Called to ministries of grace,  
We respond with deep commitment  
Fresh new lines of faith to trace.  
May we learn the art of sharing,  
Side by side and friend with friend,  
Equal partners in our caring  
To fulfil God's chosen end.
2. Christ's example, Christ's inspiring,  
Christ's clear call to work and worth,  
Let us follow, never faltering,  
Reconciling folk on earth.  
Men and women, richer, poorer,  
All God's people, young and old,  
Blending human skills together  
Gracious gifts from God unfold.
3. Thus new patterns for Christ's mission,  
In a small or global sense,



Help us bear each other's burdens,  
Breaking down each wall or fence.  
Words of comfort, words of vision,  
Words of challenge, said with care,  
Bring new power and strength for action  
Make us colleagues, free and fair.

4. So God grant us for tomorrow  
Ways to order human life  
Then surround each person's sorrow  
With a calm that conquers strife.  
Make us partners in our living,  
Our compassion to increase,  
Messengers of faith, thus giving  
Hope and confidence and peace.

### **GOD SENDS US . . .**

**\*BENEDICTION:**

Go now in joy!

Remember the day of celebration when Jesus boldly and humbly rode into the city of fear and anger.

Do not fear.

Do not be afraid.

Go in peace. AMEN.

**\*GOING OUT SONG: #216 'Hosanna'**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E1X-VDCMyAc>

Hosanna, Hosanna

Hosanna in the highest!

Hosanna, Hosanna,

Hosanna in the highest!

Lord we lift up Your name  
with hearts full of praise  
Be exalted oh Lord my God!  
Hosanna in the highest!

Glory, Glory

Glory to the King of Kings!  
Glory, Glory,  
Glory to the King of Kings!

Lord we lift up Your name  
with hearts full of praise  
Be exalted oh Lord my God!  
Hosanna in the highest!