

The United Church of Canada
**St Francis Manoir & Grace Village
& Manoir Stanstead**

A service for personal meditations at home
Lent 2021 (week 5)

Grounding Prayer

(Take a deep breath, center yourself within the love of God)
God, You are present, may I be transformed by this encounter.

Opening Prayer:

Gracious God, I want to see your goodness in the land of the living—here and now, in this world of flesh and blood, in the midst of deep fears and desperate hopes. Give me grace to put my trust in your mercy, even when my heart aches out in fear. Help us notice the whisper of your presence amid all the noise and news that clamour and threaten. Let your love, like a healing stream, flow through us and carry us onward to a new day. May it be so, may it be so, Amen.

Christ Light:

I light this candle, remembering that I live in God's world and I am not alone.

Prayer of Illumination:

Challenging God, you have guided your people throughout the ages to sing and pray and reflect. You invite me to listen to timeless stories. Help us to receive the ever-new message of radical love. May it find a place to rest deep in our souls, so that we might draw strength and courage. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Hebrews 5:5-10

So also Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him,

“You are my Son,
today I have begotten you”;

as he says also in another place,

“You are a priest forever,
according to the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

The Living Word, I listen with my heart, my mind and my spirit.

Candle Meditation:

We miss praying together in our church building or in small groups but we are finding new ways of being church and of connecting to God. A sanctuary doesn't have to be a specific physical location. Consider our spiritual ancestors the Jewish people carted off into exile and far from their temple. Consider St Paul imprisoned in a Roman jail. Sanctuary can be any space set aside for sacred things, a place of refuge and protection. A sanctuary can be the space we create when we give ourselves quiet time, time to pray, to ponder our lives, to settle down and simply be. This virtual room can be our sanctuary today. What the season of Lent teaches us that **we** are a sanctuary. There is inside each of us a place for sacred things, a place where God abides.

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness and pain of tolerance for diversity in the areas of politics, religion and race. We lament the polarization of public opinion and the manipulation of citizens through false news and extremist propaganda. Our common humanity is first and foremost nurtured by a respect that appreciates diversity. We are our brother's keeper.
(A candle is extinguished.)

Prayer of Reflection:

Loving God, we open our hearts to you. We invite you into our inmost being, only to find you already there. Strengthen us in these troubled times, give us courage and strength, keep us on an even keel that we might be your hands and feet in the world of today. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;
Our Father, who art in heaven...

Blessing & Commissioning

May the path that Christ walks to bring justice upon the earth, to bring light to those who sit in shadows, to bring out those who live in servitude, and to bring new things to all creation, may this path run through our lives. May I be the road Christ takes. Amen.

Hymn: (VU703) In the Bulb there is a Flower

In the bulb there is a flower;
in the seed, an apple tree;
in cocoons, a hidden promise:
butterflies will soon be free!
In the cold and snow of winter
there's a spring that waits to be,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.
There's a song in every silence;
seeking word and melody;
There's a dawn in every darkness,
bringing hope to you and me.
From the past will come the future;
what it holds, a mystery,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.
In our end is our beginning;
in our time, infinity;
In our doubt there is believing;
in our life, eternity.
In our death, a resurrection;
at the last, a victory,
Unrevealed until its season,
something God alone can see.

Prayers by:

OP: John Moses, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.30.

CM: Rev. Lee Ann Hogle, Beulah United-St Paul's United-Georgeville United, Lent 2021.

PI: Laura Turnbull, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.

BC: Aaron Palmer , Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), pg.37.