

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

A service for personal meditations at home
Lent 2021 (week 6)

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 Hebrew Psalm 118:1-2,19-29

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his steadfast love endures forever!

Let Israel say,

“His steadfast love endures forever.”

Open to me the gates of righteousness,
that I may enter through them
and give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord;
the righteous shall enter through it.

I thank you that you have answered me
and have become my salvation.

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.

This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Save us, we beseech you, O Lord!

O Lord, we beseech you, give us success!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

We bless you from the house of the Lord.

The Lord is God, and he has given us light.

Bind the festal procession with branches,
up to the horns of the altar.

You are my God, and I will give thanks to you;
you are my God, I will extol you.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,
for his steadfast love endures forever.

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

Candle Meditation:

We gather in spirit, weak and strong, fearful and fearless, sharing a common quest for a deeper faith and a deeper experience of the divine. I invite you now to take a breath and let go of the things that distract and concern you. Listen! The time is drawing near. Jesus has entered Jerusalem. The forces of darkness are gathering, plotting his destruction. What is our place in this story? Will we follow Jesus all the way to the Cross? Are we willing, as he was, to act on our convictions, even if that causes us to suffer? He lived with an abiding awareness of God, radiating the light of God in all he said and did. But that light was too much for the world. There are forces today, as there were in ancient Judea, that conspire to put it out. Where are we in this drama? What are we willing to risk to follow Jesus?

(Silent time.)

As we extinguish this light, we acknowledge the darkness, and the pain caused by our disregard for the Earth, its ecosystems, and the delicate balance between the natural world and the activities of man. Our world will only sustain human life as long as we maintain respect for its requirements. Our earth is also our brother and we are our brother's keeper

(A candle is extinguished.)

Prayer of Reflection:

Loving God, there are so many choices before us every day. But the choices that stand out the most starkly this day are the choices between fear and love, scarcity and abundance. In the midst of the pandemic that is Covid 19 help us to distinguish between them. May we learn from the choices of Jesus and embody compassion, justice, and inclusion in all we say and do. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray saying:

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: (VU652) Be Still, my Soul

Be still, my soul; for God is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Trust in Your God to guide and provide;
Who through all changes faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul; your best, your heavenly, Friend
Through stormy ways leads to a peaceful end.

Be still, my soul; your God will undertake
To guide the future surely as the past.
Your hope, your confidence, let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul; life's tempests still obey
The voice that once the waves' wild fury stayed.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever in God's peace;
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Love's joys restored, our strivings all shall cease.
Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

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.