

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

A service for personal meditations at home

May 2021

**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:**

Dear God, source of our being and home of our hearts,  
you guide us through our days, our weeks, our months,  
and our years, eternally available to us in love and love's  
power. You are author to joy and relief to sorrow. I see  
renewal in nature and know that I am part of that design. I  
find goodness in humanity and know that its origin is you.  
You are the inspiration of our souls, our highest calling.  
Here and now, I bring you my true self, gratefully  
answering your call, as I come to worship in Christ's name.  
Amen.

**Prayer of Illumination:**

Loving God , your word comes to us through the ages and  
reminds us that, though the details may change, your will  
is timeless. You call us to be a people whose love knows no  
bounds and whose service to others overcomes all barriers.  
Form us by your word, this day. Amen.

**A Reading from the Hebrew Psalm 23**

The Lord is my shepherd;  
I have everything I need.  
He lets me rest in fields of green grass  
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.  
He gives me new strength.  
He guides me in the right paths,  
as he has promised.  
Even if I go through the deepest darkness,  
I will not be afraid, Lord,  
for you are with me.  
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.  
You prepare a banquet for me,

where all my enemies can see me;  
you welcome me as an honored guest  
and fill my cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love will be with me all  
my life; and your house will be my home as long as I live.

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

**A Short Reflection by Rev. Linda Buchanan:**

I think it is safe to say that this Psalm evokes emotion in anyone who was raised in church. There is a comfort in returning to familiar words. I want to invite you to pray through this beautiful Psalm one line at a time. Walter Brueggeman as pointed out a 3 fold pattern in this Psalm that I think might help as you re-read the words as you pray. The first movement is ORIENTATION, feeling ground, feeling right and content; resting in the love and wonder of God. The second movement is DISORIENTATION, when life feels difficult, challenging, and broken; cries of lament, cries of despair. The third movement is RE-ORIENTATION, when God pulls us out of the brokenness of life; leading us to deeper awareness and gratitude. I invite you to know re-read the beloved psalm; reading one line at a time taking a deep breath in between each line. God is with you as you journey through the hills and valleys of life. Peace be with you, we are not alone.

**Prayers of the People:**

Compassionate God, I humbly come before you trusting in your deep love for all your children, and your deep love for me. I thank you for your gifts in my life (pause to reflect on your blessings). I am faced with challenges and struggles, and so I ask for your courage and strength (pause and reflect on your concerns). I know that you hear me when I call, and I ask that you remind me that you are with me in the challenges and joys of living. Inspire me with your love and empower me with your hope. I pray using the words Jesus gave to his disciples;

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.*

### **Blessing & Commissioning**

Go with joy to serve as God leads you.  
Notice the lost within you and beyond you.  
Celebrate the loving seeker we have in our God.  
Go with joy this day and always. Amen.

### **Hymn: (VU657) He Leadeth Me**

He leadeth me, O blessed thought!  
O words with heav'nly comfort fraught!  
Whate'er I do, where'er I be  
Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.  
*He leadeth me, He leadeth me,  
By His own hand He leadeth me;  
His faithful follower I would be,  
For by His hand He leadeth me.*  
Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom,  
Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,  
By waters still, over troubled sea,  
Still 'tis His hand that leadeth me. *(Refrain)*  
Lord, I would place my hand in Thine,  
Nor ever murmur nor repine;  
Content, whatever lot I see,  
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me. *(Refrain)*  
And when my task on earth is done,  
When by Thy grace the vict'ry's won,  
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee,  
Since God through Jordan leadeth me. *(Refrain)*

Prayers by:

OP: Cheryl Stenson, Toronto, Ont, Gathering Lent 2021 (Year B), p.43.

PI: Beth W Johnston, Gathering L/E 2021 (Year B), p.47.

BC: Elaine Bidgood Sveet, *Gathering L/E 2020 (Year A)*, 51.