

Psalm 27

The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes— they shall stumble and fall.

Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.

One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.

For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.

Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud, be gracious to me and answer me!

“Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!” Your face, LORD, do I seek.

Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help. Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

If my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will take me up.

Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me, and they are breathing out violence.

I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD!

Together, let us praise God's greatness
LET THE HUMBLE LISTEN AND REJOICE

This Psalm provides a marvelous meditation on how we sort of live in a rhythm with prayer and adoration and, on the other hand, the vicissitudes of our lives, the people, the events, the adversities. There is this steady focus on God-----on drawing near, on seeking intimacy...and this focus, while distracted by occasional adversities, seems steady.

This is the art of being a spiritually grounded person... .. committed to the prayers, the seeking, while being aware of how-----well let's just say---violence and suffering and death, can threaten to consume us, to overwhelm us with fear and or rage.

Without prayer, without the practices whereby we hold ourselves in the light and in the presence of the Divine, this is exactly what can happen, fear and rage overtake us, overwhelm us, harden us, spiritually cripple us, deform us. Without prayer, we are highly vulnerable to the adversities around us and their crippling, deforming influence on our souls.

These adversities can turn us into haters. They can turn us into perpetrators of atrocities-----massacres.

This is an extreme example but an appropriate example with which to begin. Hate crimes, atrocities, are committed by people who have lost sight of the light of God shining in the depths of their souls. It's there to be found and loved and savored in everyone. To have glimpsed this, to know that the deepest reality of your being is a sanctuary, where God abides, where God does not hide God's face from us, to know this holds us on a level path, high on a rock, where fear and hate cannot swallow us up.

Of whom shall I be afraid? These are the words of a person who has settled deeply into an ongoing communion with God.

The term "thoughts and prayers" has become a locus of ridicule in our culture. Some of this for good reason. There has been a perception that saying "thoughts and prayers" has been a way for people with not much demonstrable compassion to appear to be compassionate.

It is also true that, coming from the church, "thoughts and prayers" rings hollow because the church, all kinds of churches, have become swamped by scandal and squabble. Evidence of depth lacking in the Body of Christ

Looking out ahead across the 21st century during which our children and grandchildren will live the span of their years on this planet, the great religions are going to have to recover prayer for themselves and teach the wisdom of Psalm 27... wisdom that is also written about in other traditions. The 15th century Hindu Poet Kabir writes

*Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale. From what land do you come,
O Swan? to what shore will you fly? Where would you take your rest, O Swan,
and what do you seek?*

*Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!
There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule:
where the terror of Death is no more.*

*There the woods of spring are a-bloom,
and the fragrant scent 'He is myself' is borne on the wind:
There the bee of the heart is deeply immersed,
and desires no other joy.*

The kind of prayer we need to recover for ourselves and teach the world is characterized by the line in our text-----to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

This is the prayer of face seeking-----prayer with communion as its aim. Nothing specific, just holding ourselves in the light and allowing the light to illumine us.

There is power, a force of healing and creating grace in this kind of prayer. The Sufi poet Rumi writes this:

*Forget your life. Say God is great. Get up
You think you know what time it is. It's time to pray.*

*If you are here unfaithfully with us, you're causing terrible damage.
If you've opened your loving to God's love, you're helping people you don't know
And have never seen.*

Wendell Berry asks in one of his poems:

How is it we can know so much and do so much and live so badly?

Without prayer there is only madness, writes an orthodox sage.

For us, maybe not madness or mass violence-----but without prayer we are all of us more inclined to pettiness, self- righteousness, impatience, arrogance, negativity, hopelessness, cynicism.

If you are unfaithfully with us you are causing terrible damage.

***What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.
And when we bring what is within us out into the world, miracles happen. Henry Stanley Haskins***

Seek God's face friends-----this is the summons of our time to those who would make of our world a land of the living.

...LET YOUR HEART TAKE COURAGE

NORTH OAK CHRISTIAN CHURCH-DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

March 10, 2019 SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

In Jesus' Name, Greetings!

Music for Gathering

We arise today through the strength of heaven

LIGHT OF THE SUN, SPLENDOR OF FIRE

Swiftmess of wind, depth of sea

STABILITY OF EARTH, FIRMNESS OF ROCK

We arise today, God's might to uphold us

GOD'S WISDOM TO GUIDE US, GOD'S HAND TO GUARD US

Lighting of the Candles

"Christ Jesus we welcome your inner light..." Brother Roger of Taize

18 All People That on Earth do Dwell

Sharing Christ's Peace

Quietly, Peacefully vss 1, 4, 5

The Morning Prayer and Musical Response

Silence

"Descend into silence and worship the Father in secret." Thomas Merton

Children's Circle

All children thru 5th grade are welcome to come forward. A small outreach offering will be collected for our money jar. Following this time of sharing and prayer, children may attend their very own

"Worship and Wonder" time together in our classroom annex. Child care is offered for infants and toddlers but they are also welcome in the sanctuary.

Prayer for Illumination

Breath of God, breath of life, breath of deepest yearning,

COME HOLY SPIRIT, AMEN.

THE LESSON PSALM 27

The Meditation "Seek God's Face" Rev. Rob Carr

Stronghold of our lives, we pray today for the power to be gentle; the strength to be forgiving; the patience to be understanding. Grace us with trust in the power of good to overcome evil and the power of love to overcome hatred. We pray for the vision to see and the faith to believe in a world emancipated from violence, a new world where fear shall no longer lead men or women to commit injustice, nor selfishness cause them to bring suffering to others. Help us to devote our whole life and thought and energy to the task of making peace, praying always for the inspiration and the power to fulfill the destiny for which we and all men and women were created. Amen

Silent and spoken personal prayers of thanksgiving confession, intercession

The Offering

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow, Praise God all creatures here below

Praise God above ye heavenly host, Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost

CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION

We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world.
As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord's Table as God has welcomed us.

384 Here at Thy Table Lord

Blessed are you Lord God of the universe, you are the giver of this bread

LET IT BECOME THE BREAD OF LIFE

Blessed are you Lord God of the universe, you are the giver of this wine

FILL US WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Welcome to the Table
The Words of Institution

Lord Jesus Christ you told your disciples

PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE TO YOU

Grant us always this peace

AND GUIDE US TOWARD THE PERFECT UNITY OF YOUR KINGDOM FOREVER

The Communion Prayer

The Lord's Prayer—New Zealand Prayer Book

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:**

**The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the
peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings! Your commonwealth of
peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth!**

**With the bread we need for today, feed us. In the hurts we absorb from one another,
forgive us. In times of temptation and test, strengthen us. From trial too great to endure,
spare us. From the grip of all that is evil, free us. For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.**

Following the Lord's Prayer, please come forward by rows to receive the loaf and the cup.

The cup is non-alcoholic by choice of the congregation

Gluten free crackers are available on the table for those who prefer this option

Children also celebrate communion weekly as part of "Worship and Wonder"

"Blessings" Ladies' Ensemble

May we always walk in sunshine. May we never want for more.

MAY IRISH ANGELS REST THEIR WINGS RIGHT BESIDE OUR DOORS

TO OUR GUESTS-----WELCOME!

SHAPED BY GOD'S WORD AND GRACED AT CHRIST'S TABLE

WE WALK HUMBLY, LOVE DEEPLY, LIVE SIMPLY, AND SERVE JOYFULLY

**We are delighted to include you today. Your presence and participation is a gift to us all. We hope
you experience among us the warm spirit of our family of faith and the gracious touch of Christ upon
your life. Refreshments and welcoming conversation are available after worship in the Community
Room just down the hall. More information about NOCC and the Disciples of Christ is available via**

Facebook and these websites

www.nocckc.org www.kcdisciples.org www.disciples.org

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

THIS WEEK

Today 530PM NOCC Youth
Monday 6PM Troop 900
Tuesday 945AM Men's Bible Group
Tuesday 6PM Pack 900
Wednesday 6PM SOUP SUPPER
Wednesday 7PM Music Ministry

UPCOMING

POT LUCK! SUNDAY MARCH 31

SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS APRIL 7 5PM

REZOUND BELL CHOIR IN CONCERT APRIL 14 3PM

EASTERTIDE RETREAT APRIL 26-28 MARILLAC CENTER

YOU, ME AND THE ENNEAGRAM MAY 11, 16, 23

JULY 22-23 DISCIPLES GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN DES MOINES

Keep these items in mind as you consider the remarkable ministry of our friends at CHERITH BROOK with those experiencing homelessness. Blankets Blankets Blankets! Tennis Shoes, Cold Meds, Band-aids, Bike Locks, Gloves, Hats, Chapstick, Belts of any size, men's and women's undergarments. Cherith Brook Local Honey for Sale! Contact Eric 816-241-8047

