



Desert Cross Daily Prayer, Scripture, & Devotion
Week of August 24—August 29, 2020

*You are encouraged to gather with the members of your household and join the members and friends of the Desert Cross community; though we be in separate locations, let us worship together at **6pm**.*

(We will be reading and reflecting on texts from the daily and Sunday lectionary.)

Pastor Doris Nolan calls you to prayer this week.

Monday, August 24, 2020

We turn to the Lord in worship and prayer, united by the power of the Spirit of God.

Let us pray,

Holy God, seeking your shelter from the cares of the world during these difficult times, we come to you in worship and praise. Remind us of our defining identity as children of God. Amen.

A reading from Isaiah 51:1-6

¹*Listen to me, you that pursue righteousness,
you that seek the Lord.*

*Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
and to the quarry from which you were dug.*

²*Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.*

³*For the Lord will comfort Zion;
he will comfort all her waste places,
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the voice of song.*

⁴*Listen to me, my people,
and give heed to me, my nation;
for a teaching will go out from me,
and my justice for a light to the peoples.*

⁵*I will bring near my deliverance swiftly,
my salvation has gone out
and my arms will rule the peoples;*

*the coastlands wait for me,
and for my arm they hope.
⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
and look at the earth beneath;
for the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment,
and those who live on it will die like gnats;
but my salvation will be forever,
and my deliverance will never be ended.*

Devotion:

The Israelites have been in exile for a very, very long time when the prophet Isaiah is writing these words of hope to them. In the exile, the Israelites had been removed from their homelands and from all that was familiar, they had to relinquish the customs of their native land; they were in a place in which it was very difficult to enjoy the practices that made them a community. Here, the prophet is trying to help them remember and refashion an identity as the people of God. The prophet, here speaking as the voice of God reminds them of their heritage and recalls for them how they came to be formed into a nation. The prophet recalls their common ancestors:

²*Look to Abraham your father
and to Sarah who bore you;
for he was but one when I called him,
but I blessed him and made him many.*

We are accustomed to thinking about Abraham as the father of the nations. This is the only time, outside of Genesis, where Sarah is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. Yet as this text rightly points out, Sarah was an essential participant in the birth of this nation of God's people. We are to remember that God had singled out this unpromising couple for blessings so grand that they would sire and give birth to a nation, a holy people who would be bound together by their focus on seeking God. For that is what unites us as people of faith, that is what unites us as children of Abraham and Sarah – we seek God and God's purpose and blessing in our lives. We are told that Abraham had faith, as did Sarah, and it was that faith that God rewarded.

We are in a bit of an exilic period ourselves during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. We, too, are missing some of the practices that have historically made us a community of faith. So, this is a good time for us to remember our identity – that we are children of Abraham and Sarah – and that God is still in the business of blessing and multiplying the faithful. Let us pray that the interruptions to our familiar ways of gathering in community will be blessed with an even larger community as this period of separation has forced us to expand our understanding of gathering in community. Let us pray that God turns this challenge into an opportunity for faithful growth.

Let us pray,

May the rich and powerful,
Remember to supply the needs of the poor and powerless,
May our leaders govern with compassion and justice,

Remembering that lives are priceless.
May we who are merely inconvenienced
Remember those whose lives have been completely disrupted,
May those who have no risk factors
Remember those most vulnerable.
We give thanks for the luxury of working from home,
We ask blessings for the essential workers who work to serve others.
May we who are financially comfortable,
Remember the needs of the unemployed and underemployed.
May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close
Remember those who have no options.
May we who have to cancel our trips
Remember those that have no safe place to go.
May we who live comfortably at home during this strange time,
Remember those who have no home.
In the face of fear and anxiety that swirls around us
Let us choose love.
During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,
let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.
Amen
(Adapted and edited from a prayer from St. Mary's Academy, Portland, Oregon)

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that 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 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

We give our hearts to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

Tuesday, August 25, 2020

We come before the Lord in worship and prayer, united by the power of the Spirit of God.

Let us pray,

God of grace, help us to trust in you during these challenging times when the normal routines and rhythms of life are still disrupted and we are anxious and afraid; we pray this in the name of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Psalm 138

¹I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I will sing your praise.

²**I will bow down toward your holy temple and praise your name, because of your steadfast love and faithfulness;
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.**

³When I called, you answered me;
you increased my strength within me.

⁴**All the rulers of the earth will praise you, O Lord,
when they have heard the words of your mouth.**

⁵They will sing of the ways of the Lord,
that great is the glory of the Lord.

⁶**The Lord is high, yet cares for the lowly,
perceiving the haughty from afar.**

⁷Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you keep me safe;
you stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand shall save me.

⁸**You will make good your purpose for me;
O Lord, your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon the works of your hands.**

Devotion:

I have to confess that my many 'smart' electronic devices are smarter than I am. Yes, it is okay to laugh, as long as you are laughing with me and not at me. (Since my kids and grandkids are probably not reading this, it is a safe bet that no one is laughing at me.) YouTube on my 'smart' TV knows my viewing habits and I don't even have to search for different videos on Sunday anymore. YouTube cues up the Desert Cross worship service first, then it plays the children's message; perhaps this is not that impressive. But this past Sunday, YouTube went next (with no prompting from me) to Holy Trinity, Chandler, then to University Lutheran, Tempe and then to Central Lutheran, Arizona City. For various reasons, these are the worship services I tend to watch on Sunday. These worship services at four ELCA congregations are remarkably similar yet also quite different.

What caught my ear, this past Sunday was the prayer of the day that I heard repeated in 3 of the services that I watched: **God of all peoples, your arms reach out**

to embrace all those who call upon you. Teach us as disciples of your Son to love the world with compassion and constancy, that your name may be known throughout the earth, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

The specific word that grabbed my attention was constancy, which is defined as **‘the quality of being unchanging or unwavering, as in purpose, love, or loyalty.’** We were praying that we would be able to love the world, like Jesus did, with compassion and an unwavering love.

In today’s psalm of praise, God is extolled for many of God’s wonderful attributes, including God’s steadfast love, faithfulness and protection, and also, and especially, because, as the psalmist states so simply: ³***When I called, you answered me.*** We are heard by God and God responds to our cries. We may not always like the answer, but we can trust that God hears us and does answer. We base our trust in God on God’s constancy. It is this constancy of God that we are called to replicate in our relationships with our neighbors, both near and far. When there is a need – for food, for medicines, for justice, -- let us respond with constancy.

Let us pray,

Gracious God, we know that you love all that you have made and forget none. At this time of continued anxiety and uncertainty, we bring before you this day the cries of the world and the concerns of our hearts. With deep gratitude for our many blessings, trusting in your continued care for all of humanity and your whole creation, we are so bold as to pray:

For all who are sick with COVID-19, for those who fear contracting this virus, as well as those suffering from other illnesses, we pray for healing and peace; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

For the medical professionals, hospital workers and first responders, protect them from this virus; we pray that you might be their source of strength and hope; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

For all decision makers who need wisdom and understanding to provide for the safety and care of all our people, we seek your guidance -- bless their efforts; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

For the unemployed and those facing economic hardships, provide for their needs; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

For those who are unsettled, anxious or lonely during this extended period of pandemic, grant them a sign of your presence with them and fill them with your peace; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

For the leaders of nations, as they struggle with decisions that affect the lives of millions of people, that their deliberations be grounded in truth and compassion; hear our prayer, God of mercy,

Loving God, grant us courage to face these days, not with fear, but with compassion, concern, and acts of service, trusting in the promise of new life through our Lord and Savior. We trust that you hear our prayers. Amen.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that 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 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

We give our hearts to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

Wednesday, August 26, 2020

We come before you, Holy God, to offer worship and praise and prayer.

Let us pray,

God of grace, we trust that you journey with us during these difficult days. We pray for strength and adaptability, wisdom and courage. We come before you in the name of our Lord, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

A reading from Romans 12:1-8

¹I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ²Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

³For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. ⁴For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, ⁵so we, who are many, are

one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. ⁶We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ⁷ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; ⁸the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

Devotion:

For the past couple of months, I have been slowly making my way through the book “Boundless Compassion; Creating a Way of Life” by Joyce Rupp. Living compassionately is described as ‘rarely convenient and often downright challenging.’ Compassion requires that we see, acknowledge, and try to do something about suffering – our own and others’ suffering.

So, I am surprised to read at the end of this familiar passage from Romans that the gift of compassion is accompanied by cheerfulness. Having served as a chaplain, I am very familiar with the concept of compassion fatigue, but linking compassion and cheerfulness is a much less common connection.

Paul is lifting up the value of compassion as a spiritual quality. When we react to the suffering around us with compassion, we are encouraged to do so not with sadness or anger, but with a cheerful and glad heart. This speaks to the transformative nature of compassion. You have heard me say this before: when we react with love and compassion to the needs of our neighbors, we find our own goodness in our acts of kindness and mercy. And then we find ourselves in God’s perfect circle of love – because of our compassion, we reach out to others with mercy and love, and in the act of caring and giving, we come to know our own goodness. When we react with compassion to the brokenness of this world, we find that the kingdom of heaven has come near and is present, in us and around us.

Let us confess our faith in God,

You, O God, are supreme and holy.
You create our world and give us life.
Your purpose overarches everything we do.
You have always been with us.
You are God.

You, O God, are infinitely generous,
Good beyond all measure.
You came to us before we came to you.
You have revealed and proved
Your love for us in Jesus Christ,
Who lived and died and rose again.
You are with us now.
You are God.

You, O God, are Holy Spirit.
You empower us to be your Gospel in the world.
You reconcile and heal;
You overcome death.

You are God.
We worship you.

Let us pray,

We pray for all those affected by this pandemic:
the medical professionals and all care givers,
scientists and researchers,
first responders,
all who work in hospitals, elder care facilities, and prisons,
our nation’s governors,
all our political leaders,
the poor, the unemployed and all suffering financial insecurity,
the children, youth and young adults,
parents, grandparents, and our extended families.
the students, teachers and administrators,
the anxious, fearful and lonely
those who inflict violence
those upon whom violence is inflicted,
the angry and the misguided,

Gracious Father, Mother God, you know everyone’s needs; provide for them according to your benevolent will.

Deepen our faith and trust; grant us peace. Amen.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that 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 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

We give our hearts to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

Thursday, August 27, 2020

Let us come before the Lord, our maker, and offer worship and praise and prayer.

Let us pray,

God of grace, we pray that you would deepen our faith, so that through these unusual and uncertain times, we may trust completely in your abiding presence with us. Amen.

A reading from Exodus 1:8—2:10

⁸Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹He said to his people, “Look, the Israelite people are more numerous and more powerful than we. ¹⁰Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, or they will increase and, in the event of war, join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land.” ¹¹Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor. They built supply cities, Pithom and Rameses, for Pharaoh. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread, so that the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites. ¹³The Egyptians became ruthless in imposing tasks on the Israelites, ¹⁴and made their lives bitter with hard service in mortar and brick and in every kind of field labor. They were ruthless in all the tasks that they imposed on them.

¹⁵The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, ¹⁶“When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, she shall live.” ¹⁷But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live. ¹⁸So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, “Why have you done this, and allowed the boys to live?” ¹⁹The midwives said to Pharaoh, “Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are vigorous and give birth before the midwife comes to them.” ²⁰So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong. ²¹And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families. ²²Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Nile, but you shall let every girl live.”

^{2:1}Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. ²The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. ³When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. ⁴His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

⁵The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. ⁶When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. “This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,” she said. ⁷Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?” ⁸Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Yes.” So the girl went and called the child’s mother. ⁹Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed it.

¹⁰When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, “because,” she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

Devotion:

Oppression of minorities has been part of a despot’s playbook for ruling their countries for centuries. This dramatic, yet familiar story about the birth and rescue of Moses has two unlikely heroines who marshalled their courage to defy the execution order of the Pharaoh and saved the lives of many Israelite baby boys. It was the courageous midwives Shiphrah and Puah, who obeyed the law of God that always honors life and defied the Pharaoh’s order to destroy life.

Because of the midwives’ brave defiance of the sinful command of the Pharaoh, the life of Moses was saved. Through Moses, God accomplished the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and their journey to the Promised Land. Moses is the main character in the defining story of God’s people – the Exodus story in which God’s daily provision and care for God’s people is so beautifully illustrated.

Taking a stand against oppression takes courage – it puts one on the side of God. God is always on the side of the oppressed and the downtrodden. Look around – there are signs of oppression of minorities in our country and around the world. How can you stand in the defiant footsteps of Shiphrah and Puah? What can you do to represent God’s honoring of the life of all peoples and to oppose the oppression of any of God’s children? Pray that God will guide you in how you can make a difference in the life of the oppressed and scorned.

Let us pray,

O Great Love, thank you for living and loving in us and through us. May all that we do flow from our deep connection with you and all beings. Help us become a community that vulnerably shares each other’s burdens and the weight of glory. Listen to our hearts’ longings for the healing of our world. We pray:

For the doctors, nurses, researchers, scientists, and all medical personnel and caregivers,

For the sick and the dying,

For all who are anxious and fearful because of this pandemic,

For the unemployed, for those suffering financial hardships,

For those who are lonely or depressed,

For those who are forced to stay at a home where they are not safe,

For those whose mental illness and anger issues are made worse by the disruption of their schedules and routines,

For the children and families who are struggling in any way,

Grant wisdom, compassion, and the desire for truth and to serve selflessly to all of our political leaders.

Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers in all the holy names of God. Amen.

(Adapted from a prayer by Richard Rohr)

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that 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 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

We give our hearts to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

Friday, August 28, 2020

We come before the Lord, to offer our worship and praise and prayers of intercession.

Let us pray,

Gracious God, we thank you for the many blessings that we receive from your hand each day. But, O God, the uncertainty and disruption because of this virus continues; help us to center ourselves in your peace. Amen.

A reading from Psalm 124

¹*If the Lord had not been on our side,
let Israel now say;*

²*if the Lord had not been on our side,
when enemies rose up against us,*

³*then would they have swallowed us up alive
in their fierce anger toward us;*

⁴*then would the waters have overwhelmed us
and the torrent gone over us;*

⁵*then would the raging waters
have gone right over us.*

⁶***Blessed be the Lord***

who has not given us over to be a prey for their teeth.

⁷*We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowler;
the snare is broken, and we have escaped.*

⁸***Our help is in the name of the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.***

Devotion:

There have been times in my life when I have been afraid. As an antidote to my fear, at those times, I try to quickly recall times when I have strongly felt God's presence and power in my life. Reminding myself of God's past providence helps me to grasp on to the hope I need to cope with my fears and my doubts.

Fears about the unknowns that we face in life, and doubts about whether God cares and is paying attention to us, are part of the life of a person of faith. Everyone has doubts and fears; what makes us faithful is how we respond to our fears and doubts.

The psalmist is here engaged in that important practice of remembrance and is retelling the events of the Exodus, the time in the history of the Israelites when God decisively acted to liberate and protect God's people. The psalmist remembers a time when God's protection allowed the Israelites to escape the bondage of Egypt.

God is consistent towards God's faithful people; God will assist us to escape the bondage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us pray for the wisdom, emotional strength, and selflessness we need to make the good, hard choices that protect our family, our neighbors and ourselves. Let us always remember that in all times and in all circumstances: ⁸***Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.***

Let us pray,

Merciful God, we count on you being with us, on our side during these difficult days. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of life and death.

Merciful God, we are growing weary and frustrated by these continued alterations to our way of living. Grant us patience, send your Holy Spirit to guide us in adapting to our present reality so that we can live in health and harmony for as long as this lasts. Help us to find creative and life-giving ways to stay connected to our loved ones, friends, and neighbors; move us with compassion and tenderness for our neighbors who are suffering in any way. Help us to place their needs ahead of ours.

Merciful God, we trust that you hear the cries of all who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit because of this pandemic or from any other cause. Grant them healing and give them a sign of your presence and power in their lives, we pray this in the name of Jesus

Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that 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 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,
forever and ever. Amen.**

We give our hearts to the Lord, who is gracious and merciful and abounding in steadfast love. Amen.

Saturday, August 29, 2020

We come before you, Holy God, to offer worship and praise and prayer.

A reading from Matthew 8:14-17

¹⁴When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; ¹⁵he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. ¹⁶That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Devotion:

This reference to Isaiah 53:4 is from the section of Second Isaiah which includes a characterization of the person described as the Suffering Servant. Isaiah proclaims that this servant is exalted through his suffering and his suffering is transformative for the community of God's people. The gospel of Matthew makes a strong connection between Jesus and this figure from Isaiah and, in Matthew, Jesus is understood to be the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

Sickness and death are unavoidable in this life. During his time on this earth, a

major emphasis of Jesus' work among the people was healing. As a follower of Jesus, we too, are called to try to provide healing and care for the sick to ease and minimize their pain and suffering.

However, it is also important to consider the place of suffering in the life of a person of faith. What effect does suffering have on our lives as people of faith? I am reminded of the expression, 'we are stronger in the broken places.' Suffering does demand a response from us and perhaps the nature of that response indicates if we are being transformed by our suffering. The faithful response embraces hope in God, and that in the end, all will be well; the other alternative is to sink low into despair or self-pity. When we face the inevitable suffering in our lives, let us call out to Jesus for healing and hope.

Let us pray,

Loving God, in whom we place our trust, grant wisdom and compassion to all leaders, as they make important and difficult decisions that affect all of us.

We pray for all affected by this virus: the front line medical providers, the EMTs, all hospital and care facility workers, scientists and researchers, all who are ill with this virus, all who are ill in body, mind, or spirit from any cause, the homeless, unemployed and those with inadequate financial resources, the lonely and the anguished, the fearful and the despairing. Comfort all who mourn.

Give us courage to face these days not with fear, but filled with your peace. Grant us compassion, and love for our neighbors. We pray this in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit

Gathered into community through the power of the Holy Spirit of God, let us pray the prayer that Jesus taught us,

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
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For thine is the kingdom,
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