

A Household Worship Resource

for Sunday, March 15, 2020

during the Coronavirus Pandemic

Prepared by St. John's Baptist Church

300 Hawthorne Lane, Charlotte, NC

www.stjohnsbaptistchurch.org



A Greeting

by Dennis W. Foust, Senior Minister

Although we will miss being the Gathered Church today, we are following Jesus who taught us to “*Love One Another.*” This Coronavirus Pandemic requires us to take detailed precautions assuring the safety of all vulnerable persons. Our nation has not dealt with a health issue of this severity since polio in 1952-53. Our current challenge is that we do not have all the information we will have in coming days. Therefore, we will be diligent in pursuing open communication as we go forward. Early this week, I will send out a church-wide email and St. John's Facebook post with more information including ways we can love one another as a servant church.

A Word About Worship

by Dennis W. Foust, Senior Minister

Today, we are providing resources to help you express your worship to God. Before Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt had to cancel her trip to Charlotte, on Wednesday of this week, we had planned a worship service focused on God's gift of forgiveness, a dimension of God's love. As you use these resources in your household, it is my prayer that we will use these days or weeks of social distancing to learn how to go deeper into the life Jesus teaches us to practice as we live more simply and less busy.

A Prayerful Call to Worship

*“Living God, every human heart is open to You.
You know our desires and secret thoughts.
You know our fears and self-centered ambitions.
You know our intentions and opportunities.
We ask You to receive our worship
Amidst these challenging times.*

*Lord, make us to be instruments of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.*

*O Divine Master,
Grant that we may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.
Amen.*



Where there is hatred
let us sow love—
Where there is injury, pardon
Where there is discord, union
Where there is doubt, faith
Where there is despair, hope
Where there is darkness, light
Where there is sadness, joy
Grant not so much that we
be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand
To be loved as to love
For it is in giving that we receive
It is in pardoning
that we are pardoned
And it is in dying that
we are born to eternal life

ATTRIBUTED TO ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Tim Botts Calligraphy

A Hymn of Public Witness

“God of Grace and God of Glory”

Words by Harry Emerson Fosdick

1. God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
crown the ancient church's story; bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour, for the
facing of this hour.
2. Lo! the hosts of evil round us, scorn thy Christ, assail his ways!
From the fears that long have bound us, free our hearts to love and
praise. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the living of these days,
for the living of these days.
3. Cure thy children's warring madness, bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy kingdom's goal, lest
we miss thy kingdom's goal.
4. Set our feet on lofty places; gird our lives that they may be
strengthened with all Christlike graces, pledged to set all captives free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, that we fail not them nor thee, that
we fail not them nor thee!
5. Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
let the search for thy salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving thee whom we adore,
serving thee whom we adore.

A Moment of Silent Meditation

Words of Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)

“Our works have no value unless they are united with faith, and our faith has no value unless it is united with works. May God grant us the ability to see how much we cost him, to see that the servant is not greater than the Master.”

A Choral Anthem

“I Believe” by St. John’s Chancel Choir

Soloist, Chloe Borgnis

<https://youtu.be/97sTAMKQNuM>

Prayers of the People

As you offer your prayers unto God, please remember the following:

- Virginia Allen (cataract surgery),
- Delbridge Narron (cornea transplant surgery)
- Emily Batts, RD Bond, Byron Bullard, Carol Drye, Teri Franklin, Don Furr, Camille Green, Carolyn Hall, Polly Hull, Johnnie Morcock, Carl Phillips, Gene Poole, Elma Thomas, Betty Thompson, Alison Zieglmeier (daughter of Ken and Donna Scott); Parker Jackson, military
- Sympathy to the family of Carolyn Hicks who passed on ahead of us on March 4, 2020. A memorial service to celebrate her life and ministry was convened on Saturday, March 14th, at McLean Funeral Home in Gastonia.
- Sympathy to Steve Carter and family in the death of his father.

Reading of Scripture

Matthew 6:9-15

“Pray then in this way: Our Father 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 debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

A Solo

“*Forgiveness*” written by J. Kevin Gray

<https://youtu.be/CbW3efg93GQ>

“Day by day, year by year, as we make our way
through life, there are mountains and hills we
must climb, but now and then we’re thrown into
the valley dark and deep filled with wounds we
try so hard to hide, dark and deep filled with
wounds we try so hard to hide

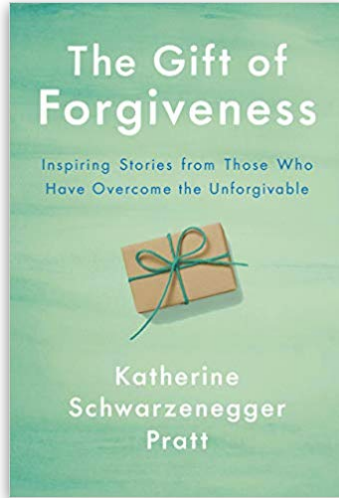
Oh, but where do you go when you step outside
the door of this lonely place of hurt and pain?
Do you run far away or do you stay another day,
lost in memories of hate that eat at your soul?

Step out of the past and into the light, leave behind
the weight that you feel. Grace is revealed when
wounds begin to heal. It’s only when we forgive
that we truly start to live, it’s the gift we give ourselves.”

A Devotional Reflection on Forgiveness

by Dennis W. Foust, Senior Minister

“The Shape of Forgiveness”



In her book, *The Gift of Forgiveness*, Katherine Schwarzenegger-Pratt reports interviews with individuals on a journey of forgiveness. One of these personal stories is that of Elizabeth Smart who was kidnapped in 2002 when she was 14 years of age. Another personal story is that of Mark Kelly, the astronaut husband of United States Representative Gabby Giffords who was almost killed by a gunman in Arizona in 2011. These are only 2 of 22 personal stories.

Each of us, at some point during our lives, is in the position of either asking for forgiveness or granting it. We can never meet nor become an expert at forgiveness. We are all novice learners. One of the most grievous wounds in life's journey occurs when someone acts destructively toward us or especially toward someone we love.

Jesus talked about forgiveness. This topic was so important to Jesus that he included forgiveness in his model prayer: “*forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.*” The phrase actually means, “Forgive us our sins IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO how we forgive those who have sinned against or hurt us.” Forgiveness is not a simple matter.

In his book, *The Death of Christ*, my friend, Baptist theologian Fisher Humphreys explains the shape of forgiveness is cruciform – meaning it has the shape of a cross. When you forgive someone, suffering is involved. Forgiveness costs you something. Costly forgiveness is very different from indulgence. Forgiveness is best understood in that it costs you your desire to hurt back, your desire to hold a grudge, your desire to

reciprocate or escalate the pain. When you forgive, you follow the way of Jesus by choosing to embrace the cost.

Forgiveness is one dimension of God's love. As we forgive one another, we invest in God's reconciling compassion and allow God's life-giving love to give shape to our living. Lewis Smedes offers wisdom in his words: *"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you."*

A Song of Perseverance ***"My Life Flows On"***

Verse 1

"My life flows on in endless song, above earth's lamentation.
I hear the clear, though far off hymn that hails a new creation.

Chorus:

No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that Rock I'm clinging.
Since love is Lord of heav'n and earth, how can I keep from singing?

Verse 2

Through all the tumult and the strife, I hear that music ringing.
It finds an echo in my soul, How can I keep from singing.

Verse 3

What though my joys and comforts die? I know my Savior liveth.
What though the darkness gather round? Songs in the night he giveth.

Verse 4

The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a fountain ever springing!
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from singing?

An Affirmation of Our Faith

We believe in the love of God that forms the basis of all human love.

We believe that God loved the world through Christ,

who showed what it means to love one another by laying down

his life for all those who would come after him, even in our time.

We believe love will eventually triumph in this world,

despite all envy, greed, hate, war, prejudice and spiritual blindness.

For love is of God and God is love.

We are investing our lives in God's reconciling compassion.