

The image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment line (bass clef). The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray: to see thee more clear - ly, love thee more dear - ly, fol - low thee more near - ly, day by day." The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Words: Att. Richard of Chichester (1197-1253)
 Music: *Summer*, Arthur Henry Biggs (1906-1954)

Day by Day, dear Lord

Meditations for the Season of Lent 2013

Saint John's Episcopal Church
 Tulsa, Oklahoma

Hymn authors:

Hymn 686	Robert Robinson (1735-1790)
Hymn 694	<i>Sarum Pimer</i> , 1514
Hymn 148	Donald W. Hughes (1911-1967)
Hymn 653	John Greenleaf Whittier (1807-1892)
Hymn 488	Irish, ca. 700; versified Mary Elizabeth Byrne (1880-1931); tr. Eleanor H. Hull (1860-1935)
Hymn 314	Att. Thomas Aquinas (1225?-1274)
Hymn 499	Rae E. Whitney (1927-); para. of The Song of Simeon
Hymn 698	Frank von Christierson (b. 1900)
Hymn 19	Ambrose of Milan (340-397)
Hymn 6	Charles Wesley (1707-1788)
Hymn 662	Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)
Hymn 692	Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)
Hymn 155	Theodulph of Orleans (d. 821); tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)
Hymn 470	Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)
Hymn 602	Ghanaian; tr. Thomas Stevenson Colvin (b. 1925)
Hymn 167	Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)
Hymn 173	Friedrich von Spee (1591-1635); tr. Charles Windred Douglas (1867-1944)
Hymn 180	Cecil Frances Alexander (1818-1895)

Texts come from Hymnal 1982.

All music reproduced in this booklet is used with permission and where necessary under one License A-716347 or LicenSing U16224.

Dedication

For His Sake



I am but one, but I am one.
I cannot do everything, but I can do something.
What I can do, I ought to do.
What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do.
Lord, what will you have me do?
The Motto of the Order

Booklet compiled by

St. John's Chapter
The Order of the Daughters of the King
Saint John's Episcopal Church
4200 S Atlanta Pl
Tulsa, OK 74105
www.sjtulsa.org

Under the direction of the Rev. Susanne Methven

During this Lent we explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus day by day through meditating on texts from hymns. Hymns are words of poetry that lift us up. We can't seem to stop singing in community because we need the truths that our songs offer us. These words help us to sit with profound, essential human experiences, such as sin, life and even death. The soaring beauty of music reminds us that we sing together in the presence of God who makes us, loves us and keeps us.

We have invited writers from Saint John's Episcopal in Tulsa OK, from the St. Patrick's Community at Eddie Warrior and Jess Dunn Correctional Facilities in Taft, OK, and members of Beth Dunkin's Bible Study group to write a devotion based on a hymn text.

This is the eleventh devotional booklet compiled by the Daughters of the King at St. John's Episcopal Church. This project is an outgrowth of the commitment of each Daughter to live out their vows: to make Christ known to others and to reflect God's love throughout the world. Each Daughter undertakes a Rule of Life, incorporating prayer, service and evangelism.

In addition to the Advent and Lent devotion booklets, the St. John's Daughters chapter prays for and supports the work of a Department of Human Services employee who works with children aging out of the foster system; responds to the prayer requests received from those in prison in Taft, OK (see March 13th for the impact of this ministry); prepares frozen meals for those who need them; and hosts receptions for various occasions.

If you are a woman feeling drawn to a deeper commitment to God and seeking the fellowship of other women, we invite you to join us. We meet monthly on the first Thursday at 9:00 am in the Fox Library. Our president is Kathy Magrini, who can be reached at 918-587-0389 or bellefont@aol.com. Those in other areas should look at the national website (www.doknational.com/) for chapters near you.

We are grateful that this booklet is also available on the Diocese of Oklahoma website: www.epiok.org.

Wednesday, February 13, 2013

Hymn 654

Day by day, dear Lord, of thee three things I pray: to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day.

Lent has always been my most personally spiritual season of the church year. I remember, as a child, looking at my Mite Box every day and thinking about Jesus. I loved putting my pennies in the box because I was helping little children learn about Jesus. Also it was fun to rattle the box. As a young adult I worked downtown near Trinity Episcopal Church where I had grown up. They had a noon time Lenten service that I would attend as often as I could.

It is the season of Lent that Jesus appears his most human self and is someone to whom we can all relate. He faces the same doubts, fears, and pains we do. But we also know the end of the story: the Love, the Peace, and the Glory that is with Him, the Holy Spirit, and the Lord.

At this time of the year I feel the need to follow Jesus through his journeys as God follows me. I have sung and prayed Hymn 654 since I was a little girl. These are wonderful words to start our Lenten devotion.

Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray: to see thee more clearly, love thee more dearly, follow thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.

Allison Warning

Thursday, February 14, 2013

Hymn 686-vs.1;

Come, thou fount of every blessing, tune my heart to sing thy grace! Streams of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above. Praise the mount! Oh, fix me on it, mount of God's unchanging love.

The words that jump out at me from this hymn verse are “blessing,” “grace” and “mercy,” which call us to sing His praise. We hear our wonderful choir sing His praises every Sunday, and they teach us to join in and sing from our hearts because of God’s unchanging love. How blessed we are to worship and sing at Saint John’s church surrounded by people of solid faith and sincere heart.

It is very appropriate that this meditation falls on Valentine’s Day because this hymn speaks of God’s unchanging love. Let us not forget, on this special day, to tell those near to us, especially our Valentines, how much we love and appreciate them. Since yesterday was Ash Wednesday, let us also make a point today and every day during Lent to give thanks to God and sing His praise.

Dear Lord, thank You for all of our many blessings, “tune our hearts” and “teach us some melodious sonnet” to sing Thy praises every day. Amen.

Friday, February 15, 2013

Hymn 686-vs.2;

Here I find my greatest treasure; hither by thy help, I've come; and I hope, by thy good pleasure, safely to arrive at home. Jesus sought me when a stranger wandering from the fold of God; he, to rescue me from danger, interposed his precious blood.

In life, my father was a complex man; so strong, fiercely independent, hardworking, a self-made business owner and operator. Cancer and other illnesses ravaged his body, taking away his voice and eye sight. It was easy to question and doubt, to ask all the WHYS. Why God? Why my dad? Why now?

One afternoon a couple of months before his death, I was thinking of my dad and of all that he has meant to his children. As I looked out my kitchen window, a beautiful ray of sunshine streamed down on the field out back. It was as though the heavens had opened. As the beams danced merrily down, it reminded me of my dad's love of nature and life. At that moment I realized to have 'voice' doesn't always require words and that 'vision' doesn't require sight; it is through our actions and examples that we are seen and heard.

In those times of questioning and doubt, loss and sadness, there are pearls to be found. I realized that the gifts given to me were the conversations and life lessons with my dad as we went to numerous doctor appointments, treatments and tests. I am thankful for the extra time we may not have shared if it weren't for these forced times together.

Despite the sadness, we as a family joined as one to help both Mom's and Dad's transitions. As I opened my heart and mind to acceptance, I realized how precious are the gifts given to us each day, if we just look for them.

Dear Lord, may my eyes be open daily to all your gifts of nature and nurture. May I realize and appreciate the beauty in each day. Amen.

Charlene Hanlon

Saturday, February 16, 2013

Hymn 686-vs.3;

Oh, to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be! Let thy goodness like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee: prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love; here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

The times in my life when I have truly trusted, walked and spent time with God have filled me with an incredible peace and joy. Why then do I wander away from all that goodness? Why do I allow myself to feel empty and helpless before I turn back to Him? If I know that the joy of the Lord only comes from giving Him all my heart, soul and mind, then why in the world don't I do it? It seems so simple, but it is not.

Please forgive me Lord for not always choosing you. Take my mind and my heart, Lord, and never let me go. Thank you, Father, for your grace and mercy to always welcome me back. Amen.

Sally Gibbon

Sunday, February 17, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in my head, and in my understanding.

Our faith is grounded on our understanding of God, as imperfect as that understanding must be. Without that understanding, we are empty, aimless wanderers. It is the gift of understanding, fostered by grace, that fills us with the appreciation of our own limits, our need for fulfillment which we alone cannot provide, and the recognition of God's redemption of us. Understanding belies purpose.

That this divinely bestowed understanding is in our heads confirms the timelessness of the Almighty since the mind, in our limited nature, is the seat of the past through memory, the present through recognition, and the future through hope.

O God , the source of memory, recognition and hope, give us that understanding of your divinity in the remembrance of things past, the appreciation of the present and the anticipation of the future so that You may move our minds to drive our actions to the glory of your name. Amen.

Dean Luthey

Monday, February 18, 2013

Hymn 148-vs. 1;

Creator of the earth and skies, to whom the words of life belong, grant us your truth to make us wise; grant us your power to make us strong.

Two months after moving to Tulsa my mom passed unexpectedly, and life became dark for me. I love the outdoors, and my escape became the river walk while praying fervently. Soon God blessed me with my Bible teacher and a beautiful group of Christian ladies. God has continually guided me with wisdom and strength through engaging in our weekly gatherings. God is always in my heart and in my head which gives me strength daily. God gives us power to make us stronger in these tough times, and I continue to praise Him daily.

Thank you Heavenly Father for creating the beauty that is right outside our doors. Give us the strength to keep us strong and wise to grow in your blessings and thoughts each day. Amen.

Julie Daniel

Tuesday, February 19, 2013

Hymn 148-vs. 2;

We have not known you; to the skies our monuments of folly soar, and all our self-wrought miseries have made us trust ourselves the more.

Our human condition leads us to go about our daily routine absent of God's love and trust. We are tempted to believe that we are in control of our lives. The comfort of our good deeds and monuments becomes the solution that drives one to self, away from God's undeserving gift of grace.

In a different direction, a life strategy can result in a feeling of self-wrought-misery, a 'victim mentality', rather than a life experience to learn and grow ... to make redemptive. We may tend to not always cherish the personal God that dwells in us until something catastrophic triggers a rethinking. This is when we grow in the deeper meaning, of grace through faith. Thus, not to indulge in a state of righteousness for our life's success or comfort nor as a victim in self-pity, but rather to seek to understand the true meaning of life, to feel the love which is to glorify God and enjoy Him, forever, in all our undertakings!

This is achieved, by God's free grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and not from anything we have done. When we are "right" with God, we will be "right" with all. Faith in Christ removes us from the despair of self.

Gracious and loving God, help me to see and feel your love around me in every action I take. Open my heart and mind to your grace and separate me from my human condition. Please instill, always, a thankful heart. In Christ's Name I pray. Amen.

Frank and Beth Fisher

Wednesday, February 20, 2013

Hymn 148-vs. 3;

We have not loved you; far and wide the wreckage of our hatred spreads, and evils wrought by human pride recoil on unrepentant heads.

When I was boy, I had the opportunity to be an umpire at a little league baseball game. I had no doubt that I could be impartial. When a close play was made at third base, I ruled the runner out. The truth is, I didn't know. I was not in a position to see the event clearly; but, since I was in authority, I was going to make a ruling nonetheless. The fact that it was a bad call was immediately evident by the uproar from parents – on both sides. Both coaches approached me and kindly asked if I was sure about it, that perhaps I should admit an error in judgment and reverse the call. Rather than confess my deficiency, concede to a bad call, and reverse it, I stood by the call – simply because I could not be wrong. It left the player I called out in tears and the coaches as well as spectators upset if not angry. It left me beet red with humiliation and feeling as if I had sacrificed integrity on the altar of pride.

Father, by thy grace through Christ our Lord, grant that I may be loosed from the bondage of self and, being absent ego, filled with thy humility and the true love and freedom afforded by the same. Amen.

Mike Cavert

Thursday, February 21, 2013

Hymn 148-vs. 4;

For this, our foolish confidence, our pride of knowledge and our sin, we come to you in penitence; in us the work of grace begin.

My personal understanding of the reality of what having God's grace means is not a concept that, at my baptism, I fully understood or could comprehend. It has been only through talks with God (prayer), the recognition of my "human" shortcomings (acknowledging sin) and with the desire to allow the Holy Spirit to mold me into the likeness of Christ (penitence) that I am gaining an understanding of God's grace. As I read the verse from Hymn 148, the phrase "in us the work of grace can begin" caught my attention...I was reminded that the work of God's grace is meant to be a "24/7" experience. I also realized that, when I truly acknowledge and experience God's grace on a personal level, I am motivated to be sensitive to the interactions I have on a day to day basis...hopefully so that those around me see Christ in my words and actions.

Dear God: Please grant us an understanding of your grace that motivates us daily in our words and actions. Amen.

Tommy Campbell

Friday, February 22, 2013

Hymn 148-vs. 5;

Teach us to know and love you, Lord, and humbly follow in your way. Speak to our souls the quickening word, and turn our darkness into day.

"Dear Lord, help me to know and understand what you would want me to do. My strength and comfort have always come from you. You have spoken quickening words to me through the Holy Spirit."

Those words brought a spirit that enlivened me and brought me hope and strength after the death of our son at age 8. They have sustained me through other trials in my life and darkness has been turned into light. This light comes from God's presence in my heart and my soul. His love allows me to reach out to others who have heavy burdens and help bring light and hope to them.

Lord, may your word dwell in me richly the rest of my days and may I humbly try to follow in your ways. Amen.

Phyllis Dotson

Saturday, February 23, 2013

Hymn 653-vs.1;

Dear Lord and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways! Reclothe us in our rightful mind, in purer lives thy service find, in deeper reverence, praise, in deeper reverence, praise.

As I pondered this passage I began to think of how I have lived my busy life, how many a mile post I have passed, and how I have chosen both the right and sometimes foolish paths to follow. I have witnessed great turning points in my life; birthdays, graduations, marriages, births, career changes, deaths, people, influences in and out of my control. I have had good days and bad days and have felt lost and been alone on more than one occasion.

Throughout time, everyone has sought peace and comfort in their lives and hearts. When life becomes hectic and I feel that I am spiraling out of control, I need to remind myself of the mercy and love that is given to me and has always been with me when I choose to listen, listen in that deeper reverence.

Sometimes I hear what I need when I need it most. I found this true in the simplicity in John Whittier's poem. I find that, in time, everything will be found.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:
a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

Doug Crews

Sunday, February 24, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in mine eyes, and in my looking.

"Whenever you look at people around you, look for the Christ in their eyes."

This was advice given to our Bible study class years ago by our teacher, Beth Dunkin. It has served me well.

Many years ago, when our Sunday school class took our small children to feed the homeless, my kids would comment on the eyes of the people they served. The kids could tell something was different, but they also served without judgment. They accepted the people we were feeding as they were. Children do that, don't they?

During Lent, isn't that what Jesus calls us to do – to look for the Christ in those we meet. It changes our perspective on strangers and family alike.

Dear Lord, please grant us the softness of heart to look for the Christ in all we meet. Amen.

Karen Johnson Brownlee

Sunday, February 24, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in mine eyes, and in my looking.

Do you see what I see? Yes, no, maybe so? Each one of us can see the same person, event, situation, or even sunset at the same time and not see what the other sees. This can be beautiful or frightening when one sees peace and the other sees war.

To take the blinders of this world off is no easy task. But just as I want to be the apple of God's eye always, I must ask God to be in my eyes and in my looking. If not, I see the evil, bad and the ugly in people and I don't love my neighbor as myself.

Dear God, I pray to have your kaleidoscope of beauty in my eyes and to see the world without blinders or prejudice and to see Jesus in everyone. Amen.

Monday, February 25, 2013

Hymn 488-vs.1;

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; all else be nought to me, save that thou art - thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

I was angry with my Vo Tech instructor. He cancelled class and I wanted the hours. How could I work on a devotion and be so angry at the same time? I had to allow the Lord to be my vision, day by day.

The Word spoke to me and revealed that regardless of my feelings He blesses the just and the unjust and that I should be one of those blessing. My co-workers could use an extra hand on a busy day. I decided to go to work on an unscheduled day to help and be a blessing to others. His presence became my light so I could see past my feelings and find my direction for the day.

Lord, be our vision daily and let your presence light our path in life to see your direction. Amen.

Travis

Monday, February 25, 2013

Hymn 488-vs.1;

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart; all else be nought to me, save that thou art - thou my best thought, by day or by night, waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

In my life, I don't consciously ask the Lord for help on a particular issue in exchange for me being a better Christian, such as I have a big lawsuit going and if you would only help me win this one, I will do _____ (fill in the blank with I will go to church more often, or I will be a better Christian, or I will make my pledge to St. John's larger, etc.), if only you will help. But when I do unburden myself and ask for guidance or direction, invariably I find that help and divine guidance is there. The right kind of prayer works.

Lord please be patient with me that I will see your true way and not be led astray by false idols and unclean ways. Amen.

Tuesday, February 26, 2013

Hymn 488-vs.2;

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word; I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord; thou my great Father; thine own may I be; thou in my dwelling, and I one with thee.

We are in such need on a daily basis of God's wisdom, guidance, understanding and love. Being ever with Thee and Thee with me is being truly blessed. Giving one's self to others is difficult in a world of me first instead of 3rd -- God, others, and myself.

I watched my wife care for my mother in a major way for over 10 years. In the last few years, she was bedfast for the most part but still had all her mental faculties. My wife provided constant care with God ever with her and her with God. It was truly a case of being 3rd and entirely selfless. It was a major sacrifice of her time and emotions -- all of this while having two kids in college, working, and all the responsibilities of maintaining a home. I hope this example of God's love and oneness in a time of sacrifice provides strength through Lent.

Dear God, thank you for guiding us in our daily lives and giving us the strength to help others with your blessing and kindness. Amen.

Wednesday, February 27, 2013

Hymn 488-vs.3;

High King of heaven, when victory's won, may I reach
heaven's joys, bright heaven's Sun! Heart of my heart,
whatever befall, still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Recently I learned that a man with whom I had gone to grade and high school had passed away. My wife asked me what kind of person he was. I responded that he was a little weird, chubby with slicked back hair, and dressed funny with his pants belted above his waist. All in all, I said, not someone I'd ever wanted to befriend.

I've since learned from others schoolmates that, though shy, he was intelligent and capable, only reticent because others picked on him. However, he grew into an accomplished man, perhaps with lots of friends.

On reflection, I felt a loss. It's clear that my eyes were Godless as I looked at him. Who knows what good I might have done him, and he me, had I but overcome my prejudices and looked for the Christ in him.

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; be in our eyes and in our looking; and unite us in bonds of love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

John Staedke

Thursday, February 28, 2013

Hymn 314-vs.1;

Humbly I adore thee, Verity unseen, who thy glory hidest
'neath these shadows mean; lo, to thee surrendered, my
whole heart is bowed, tranced as it beholds thee, shrined
within the cloud.

The beautiful imagery in this hymn reveals God as exalted, shrined within the clouds, almost beyond our understanding. It is pictorial and beautifully envisioned. I am reminded of God's beauty whenever I am surrounded by nature. I love hiking and exploring God's magnificent topological creations. I am often stunned by the billowy clouds that meander through the lapis skies in Colorado, or by the delicate shells that roll in with the celadon waves in Florida. It is essential for us to see our surroundings and feel the presence of God. To me it is as if God has wrapped his arms around me to comfort, to encourage, and to give a glimpse of his majestic grace.

We feel His grace when we are humbled before Him. Humility is the right understanding of who you are before God, bowed and tranced before Him. There have been many times in my life where I have been on my knees before God as I shed another vine of self deception. During these difficult times of pruning the arrogant human qualities, I have felt the closest to God. I know that I am being reshaped for his purposes. I am becoming inwardly strong in order to be outwardly focused on God's purposes.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, I pray that I come before you on my knees in reference, humility, and adoration. May my human self diminish in order for you to fill me with your grace and your will. Amen.

Friday, March 1, 2013

Hymn 314-vs.4;

Jesus, whom now hidden, I by faith behold, what my soul doth long for, that thy word foretold: face to face thy splendor, I at last shall see, in the glorious vision, blessed Lord, of thee.

It is sometimes hard to see and hear Jesus as He speaks to us with his love. When we are questioning this we are so blessed to have his word (the Bible) to go to in order to increase our faith and experience the many splendors He has in store for us.

Dear Lord help me to see your splendor. Amen.

Anne Nunnelee

Saturday, March 2, 2013

Hymn 499;

...my eyes have seen the Savior, Christ the Lord, prepared by you for all the world to see, to shine on nations trapped in darkest night, the glory of your people, and their light.

God is everywhere. One need look no further than a playground with children going about the business of being children. The miracle of birth puts them there. As parents we search all known sources for guidance since babies don't come with instructions. I remember my first Father's Day because that was the day the oldest child, Kevin, was born. He was premature, arriving at 3 lb. 4 oz. There was only small hope that he would make it through the first few hours or days, and I felt trapped in darkness. However, a light shone brightly in my world because Kevin survived. I wondered all through that period about the miraculous birth of Christ and, in a different way, my Kevin. I was premature as a parent, not fully matured as a man, wondering "what do I do now?" I believe that nothing less than divine providence changed hopelessness into a bright future.

In looking back, I can see over the course of my lifetime all of the blessings bestowed upon me by my Lord, my savior, to allow me to grow as God's child and become a better father and later a grandfather and perhaps someday a great grandfather.

Father, thank you for the miracle of birth. Thank you for giving us your son to be our savior. Amen.

Jack Kelly

Sunday, March 3, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking.

God said through the prophet Isaiah, “So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

Some years ago our grandson was lying in ICU at St. Francis Hospital. The waiting room was overflowing for days with family, friends and support groups. Prayers were said quietly and out loud by many who may have never before prayed. The Catholic nuns and Asbury staff led the family and supporters daily with powerful prayers of hope, healing and love. Then the unthinkable – our Jeff was released from this mortal life into Heaven. Now we were truly desperate for God’s words which we knew in our hearts to be true. And we received them, thankfully!

Dear Lord: help me to always be able to speak your Word to others especially in times of trouble or sadness knowing the power of these words to help heal those in need. Amen.

Ann Maske

Monday, March 4, 2013

S-1;

Lord, open our lips. And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

I don't always know what my prayer will be. This is when journaling or free writing helps me. I can quickly jot down my concerns and all of a sudden a very clear picture begins to form about what my prayer should be. After I have prayed I always have to remind myself that I'm not finished. I need to be quiet and thoughtful so that I may hear God's message for me.

Dear Lord, please give me patience not to hurry through my prayers but to listen to your wisdom. Amen.

Penny Johnston

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

Hymn 698-vs. 1;

Eternal Spirit of the living Christ,
I know not how to ask or what to say;
I only know my need, as deep as life,
and only you can teach me how to pray.

I was introduced to the heavenly Father four years ago by my handsome husband Richard. I would wake up and tiptoe towards the kitchen and see Richard reading the very same Bible I read to this very day. He started his day by reading the Word which gave him peace and a glow on his face. I wanted the same relationship he had with the Lord.

We were newlyweds and he had just been released from prison. We were very happy with one another and our new lives. As time went by life became struggles, arguments, and then drinking, drugs and abuse. We both fell away from the Lord.

In 2010 I cried out privately and went to the Lord on my knees wholeheartedly. I asked him to help me, to hear my cries because I hurt so badly. I don't know what to say but here I am. James 4:2 says, "You do not have because you do not ask God."

My gracious heavenly Father, please guide me with the right words of love, compassion and wisdom so that I share your word with others. Amen.

Cherokee

Tuesday, March 5, 2013

Hymn 698-vs. 1;

Eternal Spirit of the living Christ,
I know not how to ask or what to say;
I only know my need, as deep as life,
and only you can teach me how to pray.

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm a novice when it comes to prayer. It's ironic because I've never had a tough time putting thoughts into words and sharing with others. But when it comes to speaking with God, I've never felt comfortable praying aloud. I'm not exactly sure why, but I think, for me, prayer is something more private... a closeness just between me and God.

And somehow, God always recognizes my need to be close to Him. The other day I was driving by a church marquee and there they were... words I needed to read:

When in deep water, trust the one who walked on it.

And there you go, as simple as that... inspiration, given to me like some sweet gift and I feel Christ's love all around me. That's it. A quiet moment of reflection and thanks. Nothing fancy, but it works for me.

Lord, thank you for giving me my eyes to see your miracles, my ears to hear your words and my mouth to share your love. Amen.

Ann Halloran

Wednesday, March 6, 2013

Hymn 698-vs. 2;

Come, pray in me the prayer I need this day;
help me to see your purpose and your will
where I have failed, what I have done amiss;
held in forgiving love, let me be still.

...held in forgiving love, let me be still.

It is in those still moments that I really feel the presence of God. When life slows and I can concentrate on the forgiveness of God, I am overwhelmed by his matchless love. Unfortunately, life is a whirlwind – working, studying, sleeping, eating – and I find that those quiet moments seem few and far between. But God is faithful and he meets where I am, in the hectic, busy moments of my day. I always find him waiting for me. And he never lets me forget that I am forgiven, that I am his chosen child, and that I have been marked with the cross of Christ forever. This is the knowledge that drives me to seek the Lord and his face in those times of frantic activity.

Lord, remind us that you are there in the busiest times of our lives. Teach us to seek your face and your love throughout all of the times of our lives. And show us that you are there with your forgiveness and love, welcoming us into your presence. Amen.

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Hymn 698-vs. 3;

Come with the strength I lack, the vision clear
of neighbor's need, of all humanity;
fulfillment of my life in love outpoured;
my life in you, O Christ; your love in me.

When reading The Synthesis in preparation for the lesson at our Brotherhood meeting, I have always enjoyed reviewing the *Hymnody* section listing suggested hymns for our Sunday service. You can see how those hymns are not only appropriate to the season, but can be tied to the scripture readings for that day. I love singing our traditional hymns that emphasize the total worship experience in our church. In the selected verse above we ask God for the resources that we need to better serve Him and our fellow man being equipped with Christ's love for us.

Lord thank you for our beautiful worship space filled with the magnificent music from Michael's organ, our choirs and the congregation. God be in my mouth and in my singing. Amen.

Bob Baker

Thursday, March 7, 2013

Hymn 698-vs. 3;

Come with the strength I lack, the vision clear
of neighbor's need, of all humanity;
fulfillment of my life in love outpoured;
my life in you, O Christ; your love in me.

Love outpoured – my life in Christ – vision and strength: these are elements of prison ministry, my calling as a deacon. The most important element is love and Christ speaks of it constantly.

Nothing is scarcer in prison than love. Those incarcerated find themselves in a gray, restricted world, filled with rules, angry people, and inmates as victims of their own crimes. With no access to technology, they live for letters promised but never received, collect phone calls unanswered, limited visits (if any) from family and friends. Most people in their lives want nothing to do with them; they are forgotten, an embarrassment, a source of shame.

Recently I greeted about 400 of the 800 women at Eddie Warrior Correctional Center as they received their Christmas gift bags. Wearing goofy reindeer antlers I took their cold hands in mine, looked deep into their eyes and with a smile wished them a Merry Christmas. I loved them, each of them and felt an outpouring of Christ's love for them. And I know they felt it too; I could see it in their eyes –some filled with tears, some with surprise, some with joy, but all receiving an offer of Christ's redeeming love.

Thank you God, for allowing me to serve you with all my heart. May I inspire others to know you, love you, worship you and change their lives by keeping you and your redeeming love as the center of their being. In Christ's Holy name, Amen.

Mary Lord

Friday, March 8, 2013

Hymn 19-vs. 2;

Let mouth and tongue, mind, sense, and strength God's mighty actions tell at length; let love in flames of living fire the hearts of all the world inspire.

This hymn verse reminds me of the story when Jesus is being quizzed, "Teacher, what is the greatest commandment under the Law." Jesus responds, "You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and all of your mind" (Matthew 23:37). Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27 both add "and strength" to how we are to love God. Jesus is quoting directly from Deuteronomy 6:5. The subsequent commandment "to love your neighbor as yourself" is a direct quote from Leviticus 19:18b. Both of these commandments go back to the Torah, the most ancient of the books ascribed to Moses.

Daily I forget these commandments; they are not always foremost in my heart, soul, mind and strength. If they were, then "God's mighty actions tell at length" would be manifest in my behavior. My model is Jesus who did love God in this way, which His behaviors manifested. I have empathy with Paul who says in Romans 7:15 "I do not understand what I do, for what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate, I do."

God, we thank you for the ancient commandments that Jesus brought again to us, so that we know how to love you fully. We thank you also for the gift of Jesus to show us how and to lead us to You. Amen.

Marilyn Bedford

Friday, March 8, 2013

Hymn 19-vs. 2;

Let mouth and tongue, mind, sense, and strength God's mighty actions tell at length; let love in flames of living fire the hearts of all the world inspire.

God says that life and death are in the power the tongue and that I will be satisfied by the fruit of my lips. Out of the abundance of my heart, my mouth speaks. God's words are life to those who find them.

I will speak faith-filled words. I will learn to be quick to hear and slow to speak. Jesus said I will be judged for all empty and idle words. Either I can speak words of love, faith and hope or I can speak words filled with doubt, unbelief and hate. I choose to speak God's words because I know that good words are sweet to hear and they bring life to people.

Dear God, help me always to be someone who says good things. Amen.

Saturday, March 9, 2013

S 306;

I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise will be ever in my mouth.

Words can sometimes leave people wanting when it comes to trying to communicate a particular point. Especially in this day and age where so much is written out and so little is actually said, it can be that much harder for people to effectively say what they mean. We're rushed to make our points, and even when we find words to say, are they the right words?

I find that if I try to let go of the pressure to make my point as soon as possible and that if I really look within, think, and *listen*, the words that I come back with are clearer, more concise, better organized, and many times more effective at communicating my point than the words that would have spilled out earlier.

I do my best to try and be a good messenger and faithful servant for whatever purpose He may have for me in this life. If I remember to slow down and reflect for a moment before talking, I can praise God and show him to others in a clearer way that leaves me feeling like I've done my job.

Heavenly Father, I thank you for this day and for the blessings you've bestowed upon me, and I pray that you continue to guide me with the strength and courage to say what I mean and to let the words from my mouth inspire others to see your glory. Amen.

Brian Hasse

Sunday, March 10, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking.

As we encounter the world around us with all its imperfect parts, see negativity that bleeds from people, and pain and suffering in so many shapes and colors we ask the question on so many of our hearts: God, why? But the simple truth is that God gave us all the freedom of choice, and with that choice a great responsibility. Unfortunately we all are weak in the flesh...some more than others! Ultimately we cause this pain and suffering by letting Satan have the tiniest places in our thinking. Satan comes to kill, steal, and destroy. And through our weaknesses he uses us.

We must keep God in our hearts and in our thinking. The only way to keep him first in our minds is through the word of the living God. With the word we can clear our minds of weakness. Hebrews 12 says that we can lift our drooping hands, strengthen our weak knees, and make straight paths for our feet. We must make a change in ourselves before we will ever see a change in the world.

I pray that we all make an effort in our walk with God. Stop focusing on the bad and go out to look for beauty. Then sing praises to the Lord. Amen.

Sarah Anne

Sunday, March 10, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking.

What does it actually mean for God to be in my thinking? As I sit writing this devotional, I welcome the idea. But most of my thinking today has been things I can't even remember. I'm not at all sure I want God present in those thoughts. Fortunately (unfortunately?) it's not up to me. The same Spirit that brooded over the waters of chaos at the creation broods over each chaotic moment of my life.

When I sing this hymn, what I'm praying for is my own presence in everything I am, think and do. God is already there ahead of me. If I am to actually realize God's presence with me, I can't refuse to be present with my own thoughts. I can't just sweep things under the rug and ignore them. I can't go through my day without noticing what I'm doing. As painful as it sometimes is, God is calling me to be aware of my own life. Only then can I be fully aware of God's presence in it.

O God, my heart is open to you, my desires are known, none of my secrets are hid from you. Give me the grace to wake up to my own life and to accept those parts of it I'd just as soon hide. Reveal your presence to me by helping me become truly present to myself. Amen.

Tom Vinson

Monday, March 11, 2013

S 312;

Create in me a clean heart, O God. And renew a right spirit within me.

Each morning, as I awake to a new day, a feeling of urgency enters my life; and the world creeps in — routine of the day — bills to be paid, beds to be made, committee meetings, book clubs, and classes. Then, before I am aware, twilight begins and the day winds down.

During these periods of daily life, O God, enter my heart, fill my thoughts with your forgiveness, and create within my soul a clean heart. Each morning, open my heart and mind; renew a right spirit within me. Amen.

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

S 344;

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.

Every day I try to listen --listen to and how God is speaking to me. I have learned to stop searching for the dramatic ways God will get my attention. Instead, God speaks to me in the blessings of an ordinary day – blessings such as waking up each day, having people in my life to love and be loved in return, knowing I have purpose and make a difference to others, and the privilege of being a Christian American woman. For these blessings and many more, I give thanks to God, recognizing that the ordinary is a precious gift, a gift given by God when I turn my heart to him.

Lord let me turn my heart to you every day and to all you have prepared for me. Let me live a grateful life close to you, walking in your ways to the glory of your name. Amen.

Susan Lyons

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

S 344;

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.

A hymn that best describes my life is “It is well with my soul.” My life has not always been peaceful. I have had many struggles in my life which have brought me to prison. I searched for happiness in many things and places. I always had a disappointed ending.

There is an old saying, “When you have been laid out, the only way is to look up.” And this is what happened when I returned to God, on whom I had turned my back many years ago. Our God is forgiving and always has his arms open wide. For the first time in my life I can truly say that I am at peace and it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul,

It is well with my soul,

It is well, it is well with my soul. Amen.

Steve

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

S 382;

Lord you know the secrets of our hearts; shut not your ears to our prayers, but spare us, O Lord.

I am presently incarcerated for the second time, which to some people would seem ridiculous. But others would understand that sometimes it takes extreme measures to get someone's full attention – especially mine!

For the first seven months I received no help financially regardless of the promises my “friends” made. I eventually came to accept that. After all, I am guaranteed three meals a day. But what really broke my heart was the complete lack of mail. After a two month spell of receiving no mail whatsoever, I finally broke. That night while the dorm slept I cried out to God with all my heart and soul begging for someone, anyone, to simply remember me.

My prayer was immediately answered the next day. When I went to my mailbox I found inside a postcard from Saint John's Episcopal Church with a handwritten note saying, “God loves you and hears your prayers.” Amazing!

Kristi

Wednesday, March 13, 2013

S 382;

Lord you know the secrets of our hearts; shut not your ears to our prayers, but spare us, O Lord.

From the time I was a child, somehow, I have known there was a higher power watching over us all. As I grew to be an adult, it was apparent to me that the higher power – God – was aware of me.

A few years ago my doctor died suddenly two days before my next appointment with him. I attended his standing room only funeral. As I stood under one of the sconces one of the lights began to flicker. It took me a little while to realize that my doctor was trying to tell me something. Suddenly I heard his voice clearly say, “You are going to be in good hands.” About two weeks later I met my new doctor and I knew that I was in good hands.

In spite of the scary things that happen to me and to the world, because of these messages I receive, I know that God is still in charge.

Kind and merciful God, forgive my errors, known and unknown, and when my path here ends guide me safely back home, where I belong in your heavenly kingdom. Amen.

Shirley Elkins

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Hymn 6-vs. 1;

Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true, the only Light, Sun of Righteousness, arise! Triumph o'er the shades of night: Dayspring from on high, be near; Daystar, in my heart appear.

How many words in this hymn verse can be associated with light? Glory...light... sun...dayspring...daystar. Light is a life-giving element. Without it our bodies and minds suffer, and our souls go un-nourished. Depression tends to be more prevalent in people who live in darker climes.

When we sing a hymn or play a piece of music, no matter what the nature of the text or tune, we are on a journey. This journey can be solemn and serene, frenetic and tense, jubilant and joyous. Whatever the mood, the element of light is at work. It can take the form of a gentle ray, a periodic glint, or a flash of brightness. I feel certain that as Christ overcame each of Satan's temptations in the wilderness, he experienced a sense of God's light that gave him the courage to continue.

In this hymn verse, light dominates us within and without. When God is truly in our hearts and in our thinking, things become clearer. We see God's purpose and God's plan. For even in the darkest of times, a single ray of light can guide our thoughts and actions if we allow ourselves to be aware of its presence.

God of light and life, be in our hearts and in our thinking. Brighten our paths as we continue to serve you and share your glory. Amen.

Michael Bedford

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Hymn 6-vs. 1;

Christ, whose glory fills the skies, Christ, the true, the only Light, Sun of Righteousness, arise! Triumph o'er the shades of night: Dayspring from on high, be near; Day-star, in my heart appear.

At first I didn't think anything about my day to day life was interesting enough to write about. I wake up every morning put on the same clothes, eat the same food and do the same thing. But then I realized I do have something to write about and it's about an epiphany that happened to me on a Sunday afternoon at Kairos. We sang a song with a verse that said, "God danced when I was born." That's when it hit me and I finally knew how much God loves me. Now His glory not only fills the skies, but also fills me. So now when I am feeling down I think of God dancing and his light brightens my spirit and fills me with love. Thanks be to God!

Dear God, help me to always let your light shine through me so that I am pure of heart and mind. Amen.

Marty

Friday, March 15, 2013

Hymn 6-vs. 2;

Dark and cheerless is the morn unaccompanied by thee;
joyless is the day's return, till thy mercy's beams I see,
till they inward light impart, glad my eyes, and warm my
heart.

The last two years have been particularly difficult, running out of money often. At Christmas this year I was down to \$19.00 to my name. Not enough money to even buy gas to get to a job interview. I knew God would take care of me, He always has. A very dear friend gave me over \$400.00 and that got me through till I got my job. A Christmas miracle. God has a plan for each of us and He will take care of us even if we don't understand His thinking. I knew He would come through. I give Him my problems and He takes care of me. He is always in my heart and I hope that with his help I can pass on his example.

Dear Lord,

Please help me to be a better person in my thoughts and actions. May I cause no harm but bring a smile and kindness to everyone I meet. Let me love and help others as you have done for me. You have carried me and wrapped me in your warmth when I was cold, given me sustenance when I was thirsty and hungry, fed me with your love when I was lonely. May I carry that in my heart and bring that care and love to all I meet.

You have given us so much, the beauty of the earth and its bounty, the stars and the moon in the sky, the richness of friendships, the love of families. Oh Lord I thank you for all in my life. Amen

Laura Gubser

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Hymn 6-vs. 3;

Visit then this soul of mine! Pierce the gloom of sin and grief! Fill me, radiancy divine; scatter all my unbelief; more and more thyself display, shining to the perfect day.

When I visit this soul of mine and pierce the gloom of sin and grief I see the little girl inside my 51-year old body. That is when Matthew 15:35 overwhelms me.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you come to visit me.

He has done all this for me.

A sister in Christ shared a saying with me that touched my heart. I would like to share it with you:

Every saint has a past, every sinner has a future.

At my point of hopelessness I found hope and the true meaning of life in Jesus Christ.

Dear God, I thank you and I praise you for not leaving me in here too long, for filling me up and giving me that perfect day. Amen.

Maria

Saturday, March 16, 2013

Hymn 6-vs. 3;

Visit then this soul of mine! Pierce the gloom of sin and grief! Fill me, radiancy divine; scatter all my unbelief; more and more thyself display, shining to the perfect day.

My dog is a dachshund named Brutus. Each morning we share the same routine. Being a dachshund, Brutus insists that I step outside with him in order to suffer with him whatever weather may await us. Brutus also has his own routine. He always steps out and faces the direction of the sun and performs a marvelous dog stretch. He then pauses a moment, turns and looks at me, then he heads off to sniff or bark or whatever else nature requires of him.

Hymn 6 is a hymn for Morning Prayer. The second verse begins, 'Dark and cheerless is the morn,' which many mornings describes my own attitude. My mind is often focused on the worries and cares of the day. But Brutus does not experience the world this way. He faces the morning sun with the same awe and reverence of a creature for his creator. He does not need to see the sun to know it is there. The light makes it known to him.

So, I find myself inspired by the meanest of creatures who can greet the morning in innocence and trust. Yeah, we could prattle over animals and souls, but why should we. A small creature insists that I come out and face the morning sun each day. And it is my soul and spirit that recognizes the hand of the creator; yes, even when I cannot see the sun because the light has made the spirit of God known to me as well as to Brutus. And each day is made perfect.

Creator of the earth, sun and stars, visit us each morning with your light. Amen.

George Ratliff

Sunday, March 17, 2013

Hymn 694;

God be at mine end, and at my departing.

One of my favorite verses in Genesis is chapter 5:24 “Enoch walked with God, and then he disappeared because God took him away.” To live a life with God, holding hands with Jesus day by day as I grow older, is what I desire. I can think of nothing greater than to walk so closely with God in this life that death would just be another step with God. I pray I do not look back over my life dwelling on the times I did not walk with God for I do believe that God has always walked with me. Since we never know when the end to our life on this earth will come, I choose to walk with God at my side and death is just another step with God.

Dear God, Hold on to my hand through this life and never turn loose of me. May my death be just another step with you into eternity. May I die with the name of Jesus on my lips. Amen.

Beth Dunkin

Monday, March 18, 2013

Hymn 662-vs.1;

Abide with me: fast falls the evening tide; the darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide: when other helpers fail and comforts flee, help of the helpless, O abide with me.

At my confirmation at Trinity Church, Excelsior MN my grandfather gave me a Bible with the following inscription:

When you were born, a helpless child,
you only cried, while others smiled.
So live that when you come to die,
you there may smile while others cry.

I have used this at all family weddings and funerals, adjusting the words as appropriate.

My mom was an active member at Saint John's from 1975-1999. She died of Alzheimer's. I used the inscription given to me by my grandfather at my mother's memorial service at Trinity Church, Excelsior MN.

Says it all about a Christian life well lived.

Fred Ballard

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Hymn 662-vs.2;

I need thy presence every passing hour; what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power? Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I watched a movie on TV once, based on a true story, where a brilliant young Chinese woman, Neng Yee, was instructing political science and history to a class of young Revolutionary Guard officers during the Mao Tse-Tung revolution. Inquisitors discover that she had attended a Presbyterian missionary school in her youth and accused her of having stronger allegiance to Christianity than to Mao and the Revolution. The inquisitors resort to lengthy, violent interrogation to force her to give exclusive allegiance to the State. Exhausted, she confesses: "I will not deny His Presence" and is led out to be executed.

At this point in the movie, I was stunned. Many thoughts were going through my head: admiration for her courage to make this statement, knowing that the firing squad was assembled in the courtyard just outside her classroom; and wondering, if I were put in a similar situation, what I would have the courage to say. After some thought, I found myself agreeing with her that "I cannot deny His Presence."

I need thy presence every passing hour; what but thy grace can foil the tempter's power? Who, like thyself, my guide and stay can be? Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me. Amen.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Hymn 662-vs.3;

I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless; ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness. Where is death's sting? where, grave, thy victory? I triumph still, if thou abide with me.

This hymn to me really sums up the Easter message. We don't have to be afraid---Jesus goes before us always. Grief, illness and death are all part of our life on this earth. It is a comfort to know that Jesus will be with us always to carry our burdens, to dry our tears, and, in time, to allow the clouds to part and the sun once again to shine on our faces, whether in this world or the next.

Another song, written some 150+ years later by Vince Gill, reminds me of this same message:

What's the worst thing that could happen
If they say my time is through?
Can they take away the love or the years I've shared with you?
What's the worst thing that can happen?

What's the worst thing they can do?
Threaten me with Heaven,
Is all that they can do.

Gracious Lord, thank you for taking away our fear and making us an Easter people. You abide in us and we in you. We know that you will be with us, even unto the end of our days. Amen.

Kristin Bender

Thursday, March 21, 2013

Hymn 662-vs.4;

Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes; shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies; heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee; in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Abide, as used here, means to stay. As in, stay with me. Verse one begins with this request, with the hymn concluding with the same request. I'm sure this hymn is sung at many funerals. As I am writing this, the world is cold and gloomy. And I recently lost two team members who both died suddenly. I had worked with one of those guys for over 23 years. I have been in a bit of a funk.

Thinking about this, I find comfort in knowing, really knowing, that He was with both at the end. I am reminded that the Lord does not cause the pain. He will abide to the end, whether or not we ask. And by the "end", I mean the worldly end. There is great promise in "point me to the skies" and "heaven's morning breaks". I see this more as abide with me through the process rather than just to the end.

Dear Lord, please give me the strength to see death as a journey into your dwelling. Amen.

Don Niemeyer

Friday, March 22, 2013

Hymn 692-vs.1;

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest; and in your weariness lay down our head upon my breast." I came to Jesus as I was, so weary, worn and sad; I found in him a resting place, and he has made me glad.

I sat at the side of the bed of my 89 year old grandmother as she was dying of cancer. We had an especially close relationship. She had survived her husband, only child my mother, and all of her siblings. We had a discussion about heaven and being reunited with all those she had loved. She said "I definitely believe that, but you know I have never done this before and it is a little scary." She died 20 minutes later.

I believe that Jesus brought us together for that special moment and was there with us as were those anxiously awaiting her arrival as she died peacefully.

I believe He is also there with us, sending others to help during other difficult times of our lives as well as the joyous times we celebrate with our families and friends.

Dear Heavenly Father we thank you for being with us, comforting us, and sending others to be with us as we are sent to be with others. Most of all we thank you for sending Your Son our Savior Jesus Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

Richard Medlock

Saturday, March 23, 2013

Hymn 692-vs.2;

I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold, I freely give the living water; thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live." I came to Jesus, and I drank of that life-giving stream; my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

When I think about the hymn, what springs to mind is the old saying about leading a horse to water. I'd wager, if you are reading this, you know about the next part of the story or the one about a free lunch? Where does all this skepticism come from? Past devotionals from me have pondered the best way to bring our secular society to the living water the hymn talks about. Our society is the horse in that saying. Most would never stop to drink from the stream Jesus is offering. Friends close to the church may admit it's difficult to truly understand God. What is our best chance to get the horse to drink? Those same friends seem to agree – the best way is to show love, kindness, compassion and understanding to everyone we come across every day. If they see us showing these virtues and are inspired, then the stream might become a raging rapid that will wash the skepticism away.

God grant me the strength to live in such a way that will inspire others to kneel at your stream. Amen.

Jay Cline

Sunday, March 24, 2013

Hymn 155;

All glory, laud, and honor to thee, Redeemer, King!
to whom the lips of children made sweet hosannas ring.

Hosanna (save us now). The crowd shouts "Hosanna" as Jesus triumphantly enters Jerusalem. Hosanna was originally a prayer requesting God's help, but at this time in history it had become a cry of joy or a shout of welcome. The word Hosanna was also associated with Jewish hopes for deliverance, it indicates they saw in Jesus the fulfillment of their Messianic expectations.

As a child my grandmother taught me The Lord's Prayer and shared with me her faith. She took me to her church and showed me the custom of enjoying a Sunday dinner with family. (Sunday dinner was always special.) I didn't know it then, but as I look back and reflect, this was my time to make sweet hosannas ring. Today when I sing hosanna, it is with awareness of my praise and confidence that Christ has come. Saving me from my guilt and fear and hopelessness. Hosanna in the highest!

Today when we sing "Hosanna" let's make it very personal. Let's make it our praise and our confidence: The Son of David has come! Saving us from our guilt and fear and hopelessness. Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

Deborah Kurin

Monday, March 25, 2013

Hymn 470-vs. 1;

There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea; there's a kindness in his justice, which is more than liberty. There is welcome for the sinner, and more graces for the good; there is mercy with the Savior; there is healing in his blood.

As a physician, I have witnessed God's grace so many times in health care. But, if I grow complacent and do not watch for it, I will miss the signs and miracles that happen every day. God helps those in need, those in prayer, and those crying for mercy. The answer may not be ours, or the one we desire but always is HIS divine plan. I find myself seeking these signs, or guideposts, in my day. I try to always give a smile of recognition and offer up a quick prayer of gratitude to the Great Healer, Jesus.

Dear Lord, help keep my heart soft so I may be aware and keep my eyes on you so I can see the great things you bless me with every day. I give my life to you. Amen.

Tuesday, March 26, 2013

Hymn 470-vs. 2;

There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven; there is no place where earth's failing have such kindly judgment given. There is plentiful redemption in the blood that has been shed; there is joy for all the members in the sorrows of the Head.

As I think of God looking down on us from Heaven, I relate to what it feels like to watch my children grow and make decisions. It hurts to watch my children fall, but I love them with all of their faults. I am thankful that, even though God feels sorrow in some of my bad choices, He loves me in spite of them. Christ took on all of our bad choices (sin) by dying for our redemption. We should feel such joy by His unconditional love.

God give us the heart of spirit to look at ourselves and others with the love of Christ Jesus. Amen.

Kimberly Osgood

Wednesday, March 27, 2013

Hymn 470-vs. 3;

For the love of God is broader than the measure of the mind; and the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind. If our love were but more faithful, we should take him at his word; and our life would be thanksgiving for the goodness of the Lord.

When I focus on the phrase “if our love were but more faithful,” I try to remember that my faith in God’s love and kindness should supplant all my worries and fears. When my love for God exemplifies my faith in Him, then there is no room for worry in my heart; it is filled with thanksgiving.

I am walking that walk this very day, as our little company is struggling to retain business as the financial markets settle and investors make their plans for 2013. Both my husband and I rely on our faith that God knows what we need, and when we need it, and that His loving plan is a good one for us. Therefore, I will choose to give thanks to God for all His opportunities – and try not to put my timetable on them. I will practice replacing worry with gratitude.

Dear God – Thank you for struggles that make us rely on you. We know that your love is our strength and foundation. Amen.

Joyce Sullivan

Maundy Thursday, March 28, 2013

Hymn 602-vs. 1;

Kneels at the feet of his friends, silently washes their feet,
Master who acts as a slave to them. Jesu, Jesu, fill us
with your love, show us how to serve the neighbors we
have from you.

December 28, 2012 was a momentous day for our family. My brothers and I, along with our spouses and seven of the grandchildren, moved our father into an assisted living facility. My father, a retired Disciples of Christ minister of forty years, was leaving his home and his wife in order to receive the assistance he needed to live a more comfortable life. We all rallied around to make this transition as fun-filled and painless as possible. However, as the holidays faded, family members returned to their homes, grandchildren went back to college, and reality set in, I found myself alone in the day-to-day visits, laundry runs, and endless chores. It was difficult not to feel overwhelmed physically and emotionally.

Last Friday, I made my daily visit on what I thought might be a lonely Friday evening. After finishing dinner, we settled into his apartment to visit. He asked me, "Do you suppose you could help me clip my nails?" I replied, "Oh, sure. Let's play beauty shop!" He grinned from ear-to-ear as I sat in his walker and worked on his nails. We sat in silence as I held these beautiful soft hands. I thought of the thousands of sermons written, hundreds of children baptized, numerous couples united in marriage, countless births celebrated, and copious funerals performed by the hands of this servant. In that moment, I understood the utter joy of having the privilege of serving this man who had served others his entire life.

Dear Heavenly Father, help us to understand the value and joy of serving others in your name, especially during this Lenten season. Amen.

Meredith Miller

Good Friday, March 29, 2013

Hymn 167-vs. 2;

We may not know, we cannot tell, what pains he had to bear, but we believe it was for us he hung and suffered there.

This verse clearly describes the suffering which Jesus endured on the cross. I cannot begin to fathom the depth of pain and anguish he experienced. God offered up His Son as a true sacrifice so that we might enjoy what Christ alone deserved – eternal life. Jesus suffered so that we would not have to experience suffering; and yet, in all of our lives, we have. Could it be that God allows us to suffer to protect us from greater evils? We may not understand it at the time; but, through this suffering, we have the choice to either trust God or distrust Him as if we know better than He does. Could it be that God allows suffering to alert us to our sins and help us repent and ask for forgiveness? It is a reminder that Jesus endured great pain and sorrows for our sin. He died that we might rise to new life and be forgiven. The significance of Jesus' suffering is the true testament of the love of God.

Dear Heavenly Father, just as your Son suffered, by His wounds I am healed. Help me today to be mindful of that ultimate sacrifice, entrusting myself to You, in all I say and do, knowing your love will never fail me. Amen.

Kathleen Pettigrove

Good Friday, March 29, 2013

Hymn 167-vs. 2;

We may not know, we cannot tell, what pains he had to bear, but we believe it was for us he hung and suffered there.

It is hard to imagine a love that willingly takes on the kind of pain and suffering that Christ took on for us. We tend to spend our whole lives trying to escape anything that brings even the least bit of discomfort.

Yet it is in those very times I learn and grow, I experience his grace and share his strength. It is then that I come to the end of myself and reach out to him in total surrender. No, I'll never fully understand on this side of heaven what he accomplished through his pain and suffering, but I can rest assured he knew it would be worth it all because he loved us that much.

Thank you for not running from the very thing that caused you the most pain because your suffering was for the greater good. Help me to not be so quick to look for a way out but instead to trust you for the way through. You are sovereign, I am your servant. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Tammy

Holy Saturday, March 30, 2013

Hymn 173;

O sorrow deep! Who would not weep with heartfelt pain and sighing! God the Father's only Son in the tomb is lying.

Mary watched her son, Jesus, be crucified. I believe the hardest thing for a mother to endure is watch the pain and suffering of her child.

I was pregnant with my second child, my son; and, at the beginning of my 26th week of pregnancy, I had an emergency C-Section. My son was delivered at 1 lb., 13.8 oz. and almost 13 inches long. The first minutes, hours, weeks were critical. He was in the fight of his life. The doctors and nurses did what they could, but they were limited. There were so many obstacles to overcome -- underdeveloped lungs, bradycardia and retinopathy of prematurity. It was by the grace of God that these things regressed, and he became stronger each day. After 107 days in the Neo-Natal Intensive Care Unit, we were finally able to bring our son home. Today, he is a healthy 17-year-old with no limitations. My husband and I have always known that the power of prayer is what saved "our son" and got us through a very difficult time.

Dear Heavenly Father, please grant us the ability to see past the immediate situation, to be patient, to have faith, and to know that You are there, holding our hands and listening to our prayers. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Glenna Nelson

Easter Day, March 31, 2013

Hymn 180;

He is risen, he is risen! Tell it out with joyful voice; he has burst his three days' prison; let the whole wide earth rejoice; death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.

Through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ I have also been set free. Even though I sit in prison Jesus has given me a freedom that only comes from Him: a freedom to express the new life that He has given me through His death. There's a light that shines that I have never seen before. There's a newness every day when I rise in the morning, there is a joy, a peace, a love, a faith, and a future. I've been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. I walk in victory because of the risen king who gave it all for you and me.

I thank you for new beginnings each and every day. I thank you for your Spirit that lives in me. Amen.

Easter Day, March 31, 2013

Hymn 180;

He is risen, he is risen! Tell it out with joyful voice; he has burst his three days' prison; let the whole wide earth rejoice; death is conquered, we are free, Christ has won the victory.

As a former teacher, I made many close relationships with the families of my students. Earlier this year, I received a text from the mother of a former student. Her father had a routine surgery and, unfortunately, suffered a massive brain hemorrhage. She asked for my prayers that he would accept Christ as his Savior. Her fear was that she would not get to see her dad in heaven. I was profoundly moved that she would ask for my help with prayer for such an important task.

Jesus paid the penalty for all of us by dying on the cross for our sins. All we have to do is accept his gift of salvation by receiving Jesus in our life as our Lord and Savior. The resurrection of Jesus is my treasure and proof that Jesus has indeed conquered death forever.

We say Christ is risen because He rose body and soul and is still alive with us today. That is the true meaning of Easter to me. On this special day called Easter, we commemorate and celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Dear God, we rejoice! He is risen, death is conquered, we are free, Amen.

Victoria Ann Parker

**WE LOVE BECAUSE
GOD FIRST LOVED US**

1 John 4:19



Saint John's

EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Solid Faith. Sincere Heart.

4200 South Atlanta Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74105

918.742.7381

<http://sjtulsa.org>