

# Christ Church Gabriola

A Collaborative Anglican – United Church  
Open to All



## Home Church for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent March 22, 2020

*Rev. Karen Hollis*

**Welcome** to CCG Home Church!

*We've never done anything like this before and are feeling our way through. This order of worship will feel sometimes familiar and sometimes different. It is modeled and adapted from our Sunday morning experience, using familiar resources. There are suggestions throughout on ways to enter more deeply into the experience. Whoever you are, wherever you are, you are welcome here . . . the sacred space opened through this order of worship is available to you and holds us in a common space even if we are in our own homes. Christ meets us where we are . . . and we are One in Christ.*

## **Preparing the Space**

*I invite you to find or clear a space in your home that is relatively free of distraction. Maybe place a tablecloth down and light a candle; perhaps place with the candle an object or two that help you open to God's presence (item from nature, Bible, object with personal significance, cross).*

## **Gathering**

*Sit quietly for a moment perhaps with feet on the floor, taking a couple of deep breaths and bring yourself into this moment. Open yourself to the presence of God who is with us and within us as we turn to worship on this Fourth Sunday in Lent . . .*

## **Opening Prayer**

*Read slowly through this adaptation of St. Patrick's prayer and ponder what you call upon for strength today. If you're with another portion you can divide up the regular text and bolded portions:*

I arise today  
Through the strength of heaven;  
Light of sun,  
Radiance of moon,  
Splendor of fire,  
Speed of lightning,  
Swiftness of wind,  
Depth of the sea,  
Stability of earth,  
Firmness of rock.

**I arise today  
Through God's strength to pilot me;  
God's eye to look before me,  
God's wisdom to guide me,  
God's way to lie before me,  
God's shield to protect me,  
From all who shall wish me ill,  
Afar and a'near,  
Alone and in a multitude.**

Against every cruel and merciless power,  
That may oppose my body and soul.  
Christ within me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,

**Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
I arise today.**

**Song:**                    ***Come & Find the Quiet Centre***  
[click here for song](#)

Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room for hope to enter,  
find the frame where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes, that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace, and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace,  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, face to face,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith begun.

In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain,  
let our loves and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care,  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare!

### **Prayer of Confession and Emptying**

God, we come before you with our worries and anxieties, our feelings of loneliness and helplessness, our desire to manage and control; we acknowledge how difficult it is to wrap our minds around the state of the world and surrender to its reality. Help us to distinguish between things can and cannot control and give us grace to let go.

## **Palms Down Palms Up Prayer**

*from Richard Foster's book Celebration of Discipline*

### **Release**

*Begin by placing your palms down as a symbolic indication of your desire to turn over any concerns you may have to God. Inwardly you may pray, 'God, I release my control (anxiety, fear) over \_\_\_\_\_.' Whatever it is that weighs on your mind or is a concern to you .... release it. You may even feel a certain sense of release in your hands.*

### **Receive**

*After several moments of surrender, turn you palms up as a symbol of your desire to receive from the Lord. Perhaps you will pray silently, 'God, I would like to receive your peace (your patience, your joy or. . . ).'*

### **Commune**

*Spend the remaining moments in silence and stillness. Do not ask for anything. Allow God to commune with you, to love you.*

## **Scripture Readings**

*The first reading for today is **Psalm 23: A Song from the Flock of God***

O God, you are my shepherd,  
nothing needed shall I lack or want

**For in the meadows where you make me lie to rest,  
or on the paths you lead beside still waters,**

My soul revives, refreshed again,  
to follow further the pathways of your name.

**Even though the way that I must take leads through the deepest shadows**

**I shall not fear the lurking evil there, nor death.**

Your presence is my rod and staff,  
my comfort and my guide.

**And in those places where my foes rise up to trouble me  
you spread a table and make a feast;  
Anoint my head, and fill my cup to overflowing.**

So now I know, O Lord, that all my life-long through  
your goodness and mercy flows and follows after me,

**And at the last when journey's done  
your dwelling place shall be my home forever.**

*Translation by Lynn C. Bauman*

*The gospel reading for today comes from **John's Gospel** . . . glory to you Lord Jesus Christ.*

## John 9:1-41

As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet."

The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." They said to him, "What

did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him. Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind." Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, 'We see,' your sin remains.

This is the Gospel of Christ; praise be to Jesus Christ

### **Reflection:**

Most of what I've seen on social media lately has all blended together into a category I've been calling "all of your brilliant ideas" . . . because they are. Those in my facebook community have been very thoughtful about what people need during this time with messages of concern and hope, along with helpful resources . . . but one or two posts struck me like a bell. "What in your life has prepared you for this?" my friend wrote. Think about that for a minute . . . what in your life has prepared you for what we are going through? what *you* are going through?

Suddenly I wasn't wading through the brilliant ideas and suggestions of my friends and colleagues on how to stay safe, how to do church, where to find resources, helpful words of encouragement and life-giving humour. Suddenly I began thinking about what strengths I have to draw on. I've often wondered during challenging seasons of life, 'what I'm preparing for,' so it was an interesting reframe to ask how have I been prepared for this . . . and it was a difficult question to answer, but an empowering one. It's a question about my inner resources, the people with whom I surround myself, and the daily rituals like making a fire and

cooking breakfast that ground and frame my life. I thought of the new depths of empathy I found when we discovered my mother was sick and how that empathy is available to others. I thought about my growing relationship with God and the way I celebrate inside when I remember to ask God for help rather than try and struggle through things on my own.

So, what in *your* life has prepared you for this? I invite you to ponder it for a couple of minutes. If you're at home with someone else you might ask each other . . . what in your life prepared you for this? Perhaps you want to call a friend or family member and inquire: what in your life prepared you for this? and share your own thoughts.

After all, God doesn't leave us alone without resources, just have a look again at Psalm 23 (I promise you I did not alter the lectionary readings - this is indeed the psalm for this Sunday). As the psalmist reflects on life, they can see how the Shepherd has been there every step of the way, offering resources and nourishment. The flock receives the benefit of these gifts, cultivating postures like trust and gratitude in relationship with the Shepherd; these postures form them and become a resource for them. When darkness comes, the Shepherd gathers the herd with the staff and keeps them together, knowing their greatest strength and resource comes from being together . . . and because of their formation the herd knows the Shepherd serves their highest good. Gathered together at this time (not so much physically, but certainly spiritually and emotionally) around the fierce love of the Shepherd, we know that whatever we face, we face together, for our strength is in our connectedness in the One who leads us. Thanks be to God!

**Apostle's Creed:** *Let us affirm our faith . . .*

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

## **Prayers of the People:**

*Praise Song for the Pandemic from Christine Valters Paintner*

Praise be the nurses and doctors, every medical staff bent over flesh to offer care, for lives saved and lives lost, for showing up either way,

**Praise for the farmers, tilling soil, planting seeds so food can grow, an act of hope if ever there was,**

Praise be the janitors and garbage collectors, the grocery store clerks, and the truck drivers barrelling through long quiet nights,

**Give thanks for bus drivers, delivery persons, postal workers, and all those keeping an eye on water, gas, and electricity,**

Blessings on our leaders, making hard choices for the common good, offering words of assurance,

**Celebrate the scientists, working away to understand the thing that plagues us, to find an antidote, all the medicine makers, praise be the journalists keeping us informed,**

Praise be the teachers, finding new ways to educate children from afar, and blessings on parents holding it together for them,

**Blessed are the elderly and those with weakened immune systems, all those who worry for their health, praise for those who stay at home to protect them,**

Blessed are the domestic violence victims, on lock down with abusers, the homeless and refugees,

**Praise for the poets and artists, the singers and storytellers, all those who nourish with words and sound and colour,**

Blessed are the ministers and therapists of every kind, bringing words of comfort,

**Blessed are the ones whose jobs are lost, who have no savings, who feel fear of the unknown gnawing,**

Blessed are those in grief, especially who mourn alone, blessed are those who have passed into the Great Night,

**Praise for police and fire fighters, paramedics, and all who work to keep us safe, praise for all the workers and caregivers of every kind,**

Praise for the sound of notifications, messages from friends reaching across the distance, give thanks for laughter and kindness,

**Praise be our four-footed companions, with no forethought or anxiety, responding only in love,**

Praise for the seas and rivers, forests and stones who teach us to endure,

**Give thanks for your ancestors, for the wars and plagues they endured and survived, their resilience is in your bones, your blood,**

Blessed is the water that flows over our hands and the soap that helps keep them clean, each time a baptism,

**Praise every moment of stillness and silence, so new voices can be heard, praise the chance at slowness,**



Praise be the birds who continue to sing the sky awake each day, praise for the primrose poking yellow petals from dark earth, blessed is the air clearing overhead so one day we can breathe deeply again,  
**And when this has passed may we say that love spread more quickly than any virus ever could, may we say this was not just an ending but also a place to begin.**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

Glory to God **whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn:                    ***God Be With You Till We Meet Again***  
[click here for hymn](#)

God be with you till we meet again;  
loving counsels guide, uphold you,  
with a shepherd's care enfold you;  
God be with you till we meet again.

[Refrain:]  
Till we meet, till we meet,  
till we meet at Jesus' feet;  
till we meet, till we meet,  
God be with you till we meet again.

God be with you till we meet again;  
unseen wings protecting hide you,  
daily manna still provide you;  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

God be with you till we meet again;  
when life's perils thick confound you,  
put unfailing arms around you;  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

God be with you till we meet again;  
keep love's banner floating o'er you,  
smite death's threatening wave before you;  
God be with you till we meet again. [Refrain]

**Blessing: Beloved Is Where We Begin** by Jan Richardson fr.Circle of Grace

If you would enter  
into the wilderness,  
do not begin  
without a blessing.  
Do not leave  
without hearing  
who you are:  
Beloved,  
named by the One  
who has travelled this path  
before you.  
Do not go  
without letting it echo  
in your ears,  
and if you find  
it is hard  
to let it into your heart,  
do not despair.  
That is what  
this journey is for.  
I cannot promise  
this blessing will free you  
from danger,  
from fear,  
from hunger  
or thirst,  
from the scorching  
of sun  
or the fall  
of the night.

But I can tell you  
that on this path  
there will be help.  
I can tell you  
that on this way  
there will be rest.  
I can tell you  
that you will know  
the strange graces  
that come to our aid  
only on a road  
such as this,  
that fly to meet us  
bearing comfort  
and strength,  
that come alongside us  
for no other cause  
than to lean themselves  
toward our ear  
and with their  
curious insistence  
whisper our name:  
*Beloved.*  
*Beloved.*  
*Beloved.*