

**Prayers of the People
January 24, 2021
“Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers”**

Good Morning to all of you.

When you hear the words “Giver of Gifts”, please respond with “Hear Our Prayers”. You will have time to reflect and pray before each refrain.

On January 20th, we were given a gift we have been waiting for for four long years. On that day, a new president and vice-president were elected in the United States, releasing us from the tension of daily instability and chaos. The inaugural address promised these gifts for all Americans: dealing with Covid-19, vaccinations, climate change, racial injustice, immigration, health care, the economy and recently, election reform. That’s a heavy lift. Let us pray that these plans and promises bear fruit for a country which has been beset by turmoil for so long. Let us pray in love for our neighbours. (Time for silent prayer.)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

On Gabriola, we enjoy the gift of a quiet and beautiful island which provides us with a spiritual home, peace, wonderful weather, space, still no traffic lights and people who can come together for the good of our community and especially our health. Each of us hopes that we can add to this good while we are here. Each gives according to their abilities, as issues such as poverty, hungry children, lack of affordable housing and health concerns are constant, even here. Let us reflect for a few moments on our current personal response to these issues. (Reflection time.)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

Every moment we draw breath, we know we have the gift of life. We pray and hope for the health of friends, family, pets and those we know who are suffering. Whether it is a kind word, silence, support, physical touch, understanding, cards, letters, loving thoughts or jumping in with assistance when trouble hits, we behave with generosity of spirit and goodwill. We do this not only out of love or because it makes us feel good, it joins us with the larger world in co-operation. We pay it forward. Let us think now in silence for a time how each of us can bring action to God’s command to love one another. (Silence.)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

God gave us this complex world and so many in it are suffering. There are times when we feel overwhelmed by the needs of our people, our country and countries around the globe, many of whose problems make us feel truly lucky. Each of our churches has an organization which works to help stem devastation, hunger, disease, and the aftereffects of war. The United Church Mission & Service arm and the Anglican World Primate Relief & Development Fund both have web sites worth visiting. For many of us, the number of charitable organizations seeking support has increased exponentially over our lifetimes. We meet the challenge of need for charitable giving with our priorities and the knowledge that giving is a form of loving prayer. (Silence)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

When we participate in the act of giving kind thoughts and deeds, we feel good. We feel balanced. Our lives branch out and touch others. In our good fortune, we give back. When we give ourselves the challenging gift of forgiving, our lives expand instead of contracting. We feel connected and at peace with our God. Who have we forgiven or not been able to forgive? Let us pray on that for a few moments. (Silence)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

The Lenten season is almost upon us, beginning with Ash Wednesday on February 17th It is a time when we give up something in our lives as a form of prayer and sacrifice, which in reality is a positive gift to ourselves. It brings us closer to what God wants for us. And perhaps, we will be able to keep this gift when Lent is over!

Let us turn now to the others in our little community of faith and in our lives, those who we know are in pain, recovering, convalescing, looking after others, anticipating surgery, unhappy about isolation, masks and sanitizers, and provide the gifts of sympathy, comfort, prayers and help as needed. And finally, to be kind to our imperfect selves every day. Let us pray. (Silence)

Giver of Gifts...Hear Our Prayers

Let us now say the Lord's Prayer as printed on your screen together.

Paddy