

LIGHT FOR THE WORLD – March 22, 2020

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CENTERING OURSELVES FOR WORSHIP:

If you have a candle – real, battery-operated or imaginary -- please get it ready to light.

Remember that this is Lent, and we are choosing to leave the Christ candle unlit until Easter. If we were worshiping all together, there would be 6 Lenten candles at the front, and the first three candles for Lent would already be lit. Picture that in your mind.

- The first candle commits us to saying “yes” to the ways of Jesus.
- The second candle is our promise to being a blessing to others.
- The third candle signifies that we will worship anytime, anywhere.
- And today we light the fourth candle ...

Our material, consumer-driven world encourages us to want more: more stuff, more experiences, more technology, more success... more, more, more. But we are reminded that: “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

For we have been blessed with all that we need.
As we light the Fourth Lenten Candle,
may we reflect upon our abundance and the truth that
“The Lord is our shepherd and we want for nothing. It is enough.”

Light the 4th candle for Lent

OPENING PRAYER

As people of hope and wonder,
as people of peace and joy,
as disciples of Jesus, wandering his Way—
let’s get ready to worship God!

To prepare ourselves, join me in the Prayer of the Three Deep Breaths!
Take a deep breath, and as you breathe out say, “Thank you, Creator.”
Take a deep breath, and as you breathe out say, “Thank you, Jesus Christ.”
Take a deep breath, and as you breathe out say, “Thank you, Holy Spirit.”

Thank you, loving God,
for being with us, always,
and helping us to make time in this place.
We ask you to help us remember
all the moments of gratitude that have filled this week,
and we ask you to help us look forward
to all of the moments of gratitude that are still to come.

Blessed are you, forever and ever.
In Jesus name we pray, Amen

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6: 25-33 (NIV)

Do Not Worry

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

MESSAGE: “I have enough”

This message has been prepared by Glad Faith Klassen, LLWL, for the Faith United Milton congregation on March 22, 2020. Any comments you might like to pass along after reading it can be sent to gladfaith@gmail.com. ©Glad Faith Klassen 2020. Provided here with permission.

I grew up on a small farm in southern Manitoba, the youngest of five children. Aside from the chores of gathering eggs, cleaning my room and shelling peas from the garden, I enjoyed a pretty carefree childhood. I loved playing with the cats and riding my bike and catching tadpoles and fireflies.

We all worked together to keep the farm going and to make sure there was food on the table every day. Most days it was chicken and veggies. Sometimes soup. Sometimes bread with butter and jam.

Sometimes it wasn't much. But it was enough.

It was always enough.

Every Saturday night brought the same ritual: baths, pajamas and Lawrence Welk or Hockey Night in Canada. And then as the rest of us shuffled off to bed, Dad would sit at the dining room table, adding machine and notebook in front of him. Crunching the numbers.

I didn't know it at the time, but years later I came to realize that those numbers never looked really good.

But we had enough.

There was always enough.

I'm often brought back to the sounds and sights and smells of that old family farm when I read the words of both scripture passage for today, Matthew 6: 25-33, as well as Psalm 23. The rich image of green pastures and quiet waters, the aroma of fragrant lilies and the sound of mourning doves at dusk.

And in those moments as the words of the Psalmist and Matthew speak to my senses, I once again know that I have enough. I have everything I need.

Don't get me wrong, there are certainly times I give in to worry, and I'm sure you do as well. Will I have enough to pay the bills? How long will I have my health? Who will be there for me if I get lonely? Maybe these are some of the same questions and worries that go through your mind, or maybe others as well.

And then there is this time and place, and our current crisis.

These are strange and unprecedented times we are in. Worry and fear are so easily found front and center in our days. There's much uncertainty.

So what does "enough" look like in times like these?

Enough groceries, enough books to read or movies to watch, enough hand sanitizer, enough toilet paper? Is any of it enough?

The Reverend Nadia Bolz-Weber, in a Facebook sermon she delivered a few days ago, said this: "Maybe the opposite of fear isn't bravery. Maybe the opposite of fear is love."

She went on to talk about all the frightening things that are happening around us. Things we've never witnessed before. Things that have stopped us in our tracks.

All the unknown, all the sickness, all the death.

And then she reminded us that all of it, all these things that look like "evil" and feel like an attack don't DEFINE us. They can't. And why?

Because love defines us.

Love defines us.

And love... is enough.

How many times do we read in scripture that "there is no fear in love" and "perfect love casts out fear".

Love defines us.

Love, the love that IS God... is enough.

These aren't just words on a page. They aren't just theological phrases or ramblings.

God's love for us is in our DNA. It courses through our veins. It defines us.

It's stronger than any fear or worry. It's all we need... and it's enough.

It may not look like green pastures or quiet waters. Maybe it doesn't smell like the lilies of the field or sound like the cooing of mourning doves.

Maybe it looks like a bag of groceries left on your porch.

Maybe it sounds like the voice of a friend who just called to check in.

Maybe it smells like fresh hot coffee in the morning, when you see the promise of a new day.

It's the sound of our Shepherd's voice, restoring our soul, comforting us with rod and staff.

God's unfailing love, casting out all fear, giving us all we need... giving us enough. Amen.

HYMN: Goodness, Love And Mercy

By Chris Tomlin (4:18)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kg7K0-Cd4i8>

CLOSING PRAYER:

Adapted from a prayer written by the Rt. Rev. Richard Bott, Moderator of The United Church of Canada for the "Loving Our Neighbours" 2020 Lenten worship resource.

Please cup your hands together,
and place them close to your mouth.

Think about:

something in your life that makes you smile;
something in your life that makes you happy;
something in your life for which you are grateful.
When you're ready, please whisper, into your hands,
what it is or what they are.

Now think about something that's happened
that is causing you pain, right now.
Perhaps it is something that you've done.
Perhaps it is something that has been done to you.
Whatever it is, please give it to God,
that the hurt might be healed,
and whatever is broken might be made whole.
When you're ready, whisper that into your hands.

Finally, please think about
someone or something or some place you know of
that is in need of God's particular attention.
It might be something quite personal to you,
or it might be something far away.
Take a moment to whisper into your hands
a little about that person or situation.
Perhaps you could ask God to help you understand
how you might be of help.
When you're ready, whisper that into your hands.

Now comes the time to offer the prayers that are in our hands.
Open the cup so that your hands are flat
and bring them up to your lips.
Take a deep breath and...

BLOW!