©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2019
Permission granted for worship and noncommercial use.

Prayers of the People – Edition 1

++For whenever you are so led to pause, reflect, and pray++

(Drawn from the Worship Resource for Sunday, March 22, 2020, prepared for First Baptist Church in Needham, Massachusetts during COVID19.)

Lighting the Candle of Life

(You may wish to light a candle or use the photo of our Candle of Life as a focus.)

All: We light the Candle of Life — a candle that represents community, spirit, and the fullness of all of life — birth and death and all of the transitions in between and beyond.

Time of Reflection

- Imagine you are witnessing the events of Holy Week and Eastertide. How do I determine who to believe? How do I discern what is true and what is false, factual or made-up, today? In a world of constant contrasting information, how do I know what to believe?
- When have I "lost sight" of what is truly needed, important, and good this week? How is the impact of social distancing affecting my ability to "see" and participate in everyday joy, compassion, and hope?

Prayers of the People

(Many of the prayers are requests from members of our congregation during this season of COVID19. They are offered here for you to join our community of faith in keeping vigil and praying for you and the world today.)

Prayerful Meditation

lord
stand by me
that i not fear death
but rather find in its path something of the quiet
that was withheld from me in life
and grant that this quiet
might shape the course of my daily work[1]

[1] Said, "70," in *99 Psalms,* translated by Mark S. Burrows (Brewster, MA; Paraclete Press, 2013), 86.

©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2019
Permission granted for worship and noncommercial use.

We Hold in Prayer…

Medical personnel and hospital staff who offer continual expertise and care at their own personal risk to COVID19…and souls we know personally who are in this group whose names we speak aloud… ***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

Persons with health conditions that put them at greatest risk…and souls we know personally who are in this group whose names we speak aloud… ***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

People working in direct contact with the public to ensure that our needs are met: employees at grocery store, pharmacy, and service providers; restaurant staff and delivery services; school cafeteria staffs and food bank volunteers; veterinarians; hospice and funeral home staffs…and souls we know personally who are in these groups whose names we speak aloud… ***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

For government officials—right here and across the United States and the world—who are having to make constant and difficult decisions that impact millions of people's daily lives and future well-being. May they reserve time to rest and sleep, to stay hydrated and healthy, and may, O God, your hand guide them with wisdom and compassion in the weeks and months to come. ***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

For the well-being and health of loved ones who live elsewhere whose names we speak aloud… ***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

For people celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, and joys great and small…***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.***

For persons foregoing needed surgeries, tests, and preventative treatment in this season. May they find relief from pain and anxiety and may conditions known and undetected remain static, stable, or improve while they wait…***Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer…***

For the ingenuity of technologies that help us stay connected to one another through video, text, email, telephone, and mail. ***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.***

And for the prayers of our hearts that you, Holy One, know even when words cannot hold them… ***Hear my prayer, O Lord.***

©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2019
Permission granted for worship and noncommercial use.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Benediction

(Speak these words of benediction knowing that you are part of a loving community of faith. If you lit a candle at the beginning, you may wish to blow it out now.)

One: Our blessing to one another is that we are here for one another, that we are with one another, that we celebrate and remember one another along the journey.

ALL: We extinguish the Candle of Life, but the Light continues to shine within us. As we pass the peace we carry the Light of the Candle of Life from this hour into this world and beyond, offering peace, hope and light wherever the journey leads.

Passing of the Peace

(Picture in your mind's eye the faces of beloved souls with whom you would share the peace of Christ in person if you could, and offer each one your blessing of peace.)

One: The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: And also with you.

One: Let us greet one another in peace as we prepare for the journey ahead.

Text & Photo Attribution: "Candle of Life in the Chapel" and "Orchids Blooming in the Hallway at FBC Needham" by ©Holly C. Benzenhafer 2020.