

December 27, 2020 Morning Prayer—Pastor Caleb

Incarnate God,

We praise you, forgetting, if need be, the many things that might weigh heavy on our spirits.

Our praise is inadequate compared to the praise that resounds from all of creation: from sun and moon and shining stars.

We praise you both as creator of the trillions of stars and yet we see you in the face of a vulnerable child, born next to animals and laid in a feeding trough.

Today is a day of joy, when we set aside the burdens we carry and simply meditate on this mystery.

Help us to remember as well that Christ didn't remain for ever a little baby but grew to be the Messiah whose life, death, and teaching open the way of healing and reconciliation to us.

We offer you our requests and concerns, knowing that the Spirit intercedes for us.

We pray for those feeling the darkness of shortened days, colder days, and concerning pandemic news. May we carry one another's burdens and find hope in our faith in Christ.

We continue to pray for those navigating challenging medical diagnoses or treatment.

We pray for Mary Lou as she recovers from a broken bone in her left leg. We pray for healing, perseverance and comfort for Mary Lou. We also ask for your presence with Mary Lou and Glen as they adjust to their new realities and continue to support each other.

We lift up Joyce Bergen as she anticipates a bronchoscopy tomorrow. May your peace hold her up, and may you give wisdom to doctors as they diagnose Joyce's condition and work through them to advise the best way to care for her wellbeing.

We raise fervent prayers for Don Hiebert as doctors and medical staff at Newton Medical work to give him the best changes of recovery. We pray for comfort for Don and strength within his body to fight the virus.

We pray that Don might be accompanied by a sense of the love of his family. Let your strength be especially with June as well as Devon and Craig and DeWayne and Amy and their families.

We pray for a spirit of hopefulness at the close of an unusual and challenging year and the beginning of a new year in which to follow Christ's light.

In a year of so much loss, weariness, and challenge, we also want to be grateful with the help of your Spirit.

We give thanks for the ways that this year gives us a different vantage-point on life, and a better appreciation of what really matters most.

We give thanks for the opportunities we've had to express meaningful support to both family, friends, and church family in the midst of the losses.

We give thanks for technology allowing us to communicate in ways that would have been impossible in the past. We give thanks for the alternative ways we are finding to celebrate the holidays with people we care about.

We give thanks for our outdoor services, including this unique opportunity to sing carols and celebrate the incarnation of Christ, even though it's a hard Christmas for some.

We give thanks with Eulalia Schroeder as she becomes a great-grandmother. We celebrate with Eulalia the birth a baby girl to Eulalia's grandson.

We also give thanks for the milestone that Marlin and Sheri Janzen celebrate with their son Evan as he has married Steph Khair Allah and begins this new chapter of life.

We give thanks for this final Sunday of the year of the ministries of Alexanderwohl in this very unusual year. The pandemic has certainly made this a challenging year, and yet we have also learned a lot through this historic event that we will take with us into future years.

We give thanks for the resources that have allowed the church to do its work.

Change us, O God, through our patterns of giving as we learn to fully grasp that we are only caretakers of resources that belong to you.

As we enter a new year, we pray for the guidance of your Spirit as we seek to align what we do in this community of Christian seekers with the movement of your Spirit.

A year with multiple crises continues to call us to remember your unchanging character that we see most clearly in the human face of Jesus.

It's the mystery of your full living incarnate presence in Jesus that we celebrate at this time of year.

But let us not make Christmas into merely a festivity or a looking back at a relic of the past.

Let us embrace that you are Immanuel – God with us here and now, through the Spirit of Christ in this chilled air, in our faces and singing voices, and in our feeble attempts to love as you love throughout the year.

In the name of Jesus, Amen