

04-14-2024 Words of Worship, Morning Prayer

Welcome! Welcome to all! And a special welcome to Mitch Stutzman this morning. Some of us might associate Mitch with Everence – because he used to work there! NOW he works at MennoMedia, with Aileen and Alma and lots of other good folks! His position, his title, is Director of Development and Partner Engagement. Mitch is also a theologian, a student of the scriptures and a fellow follower of Jesus. He'll bring the message from THAT vantage point, grounding us in the scriptures, reminding us of *why* it's so important to include faith formation as part of "doing church". Then tomorrow evening he'll be back to lead us through some good information and time of processing about HOW we do faith formation. Thanks, Mitch, for being here with us today and tomorrow.

Opportunities for Celebration and Service

- MCC Sale report?
- Senior Coffee this Friday will be interesting – Christopher Dick is a English professor at Tabor College; he'll be bringing a presentation on J.G. Ewert, a powerful and inspiring man from this area, Marion County, who only lived for 48 years, from 1874 to 1923, but he lived those years fully. He was a writer, he wrote about socialism and pacifism – he advocated for conscientious objectors. And he was an activist in spite of a debilitating disease by which he was paralyzed and bedridden for more than 25 years.

Our call to worship this morning is in the form of a prayer so let's pray it together. You'll notice there's a line for those on the north side to read and another line for those on the south side.

Morning Prayer –

Gracious God we're grateful for this opportunity to be together, to worship and fellowship, to sing, to pray, to receive wisdom, grace and direction from your Spirit. We pray for open minds and hearts to hear and embody the message you have for us. In this Easter season we'll be reminded again of your essence, your presence with us through your Spirit continuing to meet us where we're at, to remind us of our need for your love and courage.

We're grateful for beautiful, warm days we've had recently - good days for planting, for gathering in Hutchinson to celebrate and raise money for your work through MCC, for being outdoors and appreciating the beauty of your creation, God.

We do thank you, God, for all that participated in the relief sale and for everyone who worked so hard for many months to make it happen. The sale shows how the power of your love can be felt around the world when your people come together for a singular purpose.

We bring your our prayers of petition, loving God. We pray for those who live in long-term care facilities or who cannot leave their homes easily. We ask for your presence of comfort and love with them and we're reminded that your comfort and love are often displayed through your people. We pray for friends and loved ones who have health concerns.

Come with your healing through medical means as well as spiritual and emotional healing. We pause now, and in these moments we call specific people to our minds in prayer...

We pray for our students, their parents, teachers and all who are involved in their education and nurture. Guide the students in your paths and guide the adults in their lives with your love and wisdom.

Be present with us now through the rest of this worship service and in the coming hours and days – until we gather as your people and in your name again. Amen.

Offering Prayer –

Creator of all that is and giver of all good gifts, we pray your blessing on these gifts and on those who have given them. We ask your blessing as we use ALL the gifts you've given us – in your name and for your praise. Amen.

Benediction –

Go into the world, sent with God's blessing. May all our living, our praise and thanksgiving give honor to Christ and his name that we bear. Amen.