

03-30-2025 Morning Prayer

Announcements –

- Welcome back to Mitch Stutzman this morning... I originally invited Mitch to come for this Sunday and next Sunday because my youngest daughter Anna was expecting a baby in the first week of April and I wanted to be freed up to go and be with her. As it turns out, we gratefully welcomed baby Alora into the world this past Wednesday evening! Because Mitch is gracious and because of the circle of life – we had a birth, but two families had a death, so there will be a couple of memorial services in the coming weeks. So Mitch will come back again to preach next Sunday, as planned!
- Also, Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter are coming up! There's an insert in the bulletin that lists all the events and services planned for that week. Please be attentive to these opportunities, sign up for Maundy Thursday and for the potluck breakfast on Easter Sunday morning. Don't hesitate to call if you have any questions!

Morning Prayer – Steve B is at NMC with fever and infection; they're running tests to try to pinpoint and treat it.

God, we know that you are Love. That you are the Creator of our planet and of all the planets, the stars, the galaxies... you're the Creator of everything that is, and has ever been and is yet to be. And yet, throughout the scriptures we're reminded of your intimate knowledge of us and your constant presence in our lives. And over and over again we're instructed, encouraged... Don't be afraid! The Lord, your God is with you.

And so, as we look around at the world and hear the news, we confess, God, that sometimes we are afraid. And sometimes we're angry. And often we're grieved. And so we're grateful that part of what you created is the rhythm and the pattern of our lives, that for six days we work and on the seventh we rest. We come together here, in this place to be reminded of your love and of your presence with us. We also come to be challenged to remember how it is that you want us to live and to BE your love and presence in the world. Open our spirits to your Holy Spirit so that we can be guided and encouraged and focused on you.

We bring you our prayers, God.

We pray for families who are grieving loved ones. For Glen Unrau's family and Eulalia Schroeder's family, for Phyllis Nickel and the other family members of her brother, Vernon. Be with each one of these – and with all who grieving losses of loved ones. Give them your comfort, your assurance of their loved ones' peace. May they also find your peace.

We pray for those we know and love who are healing from surgery or illness, for those with uncertain health concerns. We thank you for the healing that Ann Hiebert has experienced over these last weeks and continue to pray for her as she begins physical therapy now and gets stronger. We thank you for the healing that Connie Wiens has experienced these weeks after her knee replacement. We're grateful, God, for the birth of babies and the hope and joy they bring. We pray for Garrett and Brittany and Elliot and Reagan as they eagerly anticipate the birth of this baby. We pray for Marilyn U-F as she heals and regains strength. We pray for Steve B – in the hospital again, that his doctors would continue to give him their best skills and know-how. Give both Marilyn and Steve and others who come to mind, your spirit of encouragement, of

comfort and patience. In these moments we pray for those who we're concerned about...
(silence)

Oh God, we pray for your world. For those in Myanmar and the surrounding area where the powerful earthquake caused so much damage and destruction. We pray for those who live in the midst of fear, violence, hunger and of not having enough of what they need to thrive. In Sudan, in Ukraine, in Gaza, the DRC – and in places much closer to home. Be with those who have boots on the ground in ways that bring aid, comfort, food and care. Bless their efforts and may your love be shared.

Continue to be present with us now through this worship service, God. Bless Mitch as he brings the message. May his words inspire, challenge and encourage us. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Offering Prayer –

Bless these gifts of money, O God, and all who've given them. Bless *each* gift that is given out of gratitude and with humility. May you be honored and may your kingdom be brought a little closer, here on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.

Benediction –

Go in peace – with the God of love and courage at your side.