

Edgecomb Community Church

United Church of Christ

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Mironov, Andreï (Andreï Nikolaevich), Christ and the Pauper,

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 22, 2020

Scripture: John 9:1-41

Sermon: *Healing our Sight*

Even though we'll not be gathering for worship on Sunday mornings for a while, I will be staying in touch with you through email, regular mail and the phone. Please continue to join us at 8:00 a.m., wherever you are, to pray for all medical caregivers and for the end of the spread of the coronavirus. Please also continue to be diligent in keeping yourself safe as well as your family and friends.

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Image Attribution Mironov, Andreï (Andreï Nikolaevich), 1975-. Christ and the Pauper, from *Art in the Christian Tradition*, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=57309> [retrieved March 19, 2020]. Original source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ_and_the_pauper.jpg.



Happy Birthday Ruth!



Members and friends of ECC celebrated Ruth's birthday on St. Patrick's Day. Suzi made Ruth a birthday cake and gave a gift of a roll of toilet paper! Gail gathered us to sing Happy Birthday!

I hope you will find the following reflection written by Brother Richard Hendrick OFM, helpful and comforting as we move forward together as God's people in these uncertain times.

Lockdown

A Reflection by Brother Richard Hendrick OFM Cap

Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighbourhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Brother Richard Hendrick, 13 March 2020

<https://www.irishcentral.com/news/coronavirus-lockdown-poem>

Praying the Book of Psalms

People of God, since we are spending more of our time at home these days, this is a wonderful opportunity to spend time reading the Bible. One of the most important books of the Bible is the Book of Psalms. Generation after generation have used the words of the Psalms as prayer during unsettled and difficult times.

The book of Psalms was written between approximately B.C. 1440 to B.C. 586 and contain some of the most beautiful poetry ever written. Many people find them to describe a wide spectrum of human emotions and problems making the Psalms an

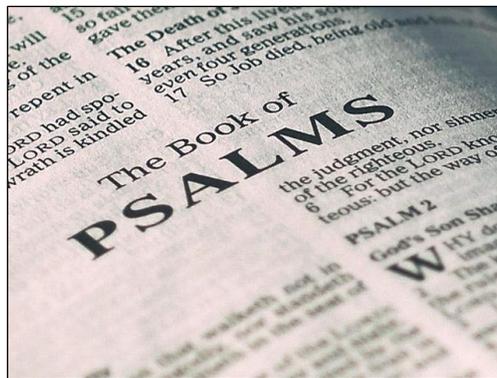
excellent source for use in prayer. Because the Psalms are poems, they use poetic expressions such as imagery, metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole.

The Hebrew title of the book translates to "praises" and the word "psalm" comes from the Greek *psalmoi*, meaning "songs". They were originally used in ancient Jewish worship services, accompanied by lyres, flutes, horns, and cymbals and were sung.

The Psalms cover timeless themes which explains why they are as important to God's people today as when the words were written. Trusting in God and praising God for God's love, mercy and forgiveness are the main themes found in the Psalms.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five books corresponding roughly to the five books of Moses. The first three books are considered mainly poems of lament, while the fourth and five books are poems of praise and thanksgiving.

So, let's challenge ourselves to take this time to read the Psalms. I believe you will find the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.



Below is one the quotes written on one of the handmade cards that will be given to healthcare workers as words of encouragement during the pandemic. If you would like to join in making cards, please contact Rev. Kate. Keep praying everyone!



Blessings and Peace, Kate