

Reign of Christ Prayers, Sunday, November 22, 2020

Celebrations

Birthdays

22nd Carol Maes
 23rd Mary Lou Pearson
 25th Nick Dale
 27th Cameron Dale
 27th Liam Bradley

Prayer Concerns

Betty Graham	Phyllis' aunt, Minea
Marilyn Cartwright	
Jason Carnegie	Milt Springer
Dick Ronald	
Carol Maes	Sally Paul
Rae Axford	Judy Jacklin
Mary Joan	Donna Ewart

Marilyn Smith
 Pete Schellenberger
 Carl & Leena & family
 Bonnie & family
 Hazel & family
 Allin & Kevin & family
 Cathy Tredenick
 Pauline & family

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious God in this time when physical distancing and masking is necessary for us to keep each other healthy, it is good to know that we can pray as we've always done, openly, boldly and freely without constraint. We put our trust in Jesus words, who encourages his disciples to speak to you as a child speaks to her loving parent.

We look to him as a model for how you see us, despite of or because of our weaknesses and faults. We think of how he said to his disciples on the night of his betrayal and arrest, "I no longer call you servants, but friends."

In this time when the world is facing a huge health crisis, we are learning who our friends are and we are being reminded of how important it is to befriend others.

Even though the pandemic has separated us physically from some people, it has also united us in a common purpose: to love our neighbors as ourselves.

We pray for our world as we continue to deal with this strange and pervasive virus.

We pray for our world community as they deal with rising cases of infection while struggling with economic recovery and other social and political issues. May this common threat persuade nations and leaders to co-operate together. May the bridges of co-operation built in this crisis aid our nations to deal with other issues such as climate change in a less contentious and more co-operative manner.

We pray for communities of faith world -wide including our denomination and its ministries in Canada and in other places. Enable us to be a blessing to our sisters and brothers who live in developing nations and are being affected by the virus in ways we can't imagine. May your blessing be upon the national churches that work with Canadian Baptist Ministries. We are grateful that with a click of a mouse, we can donate to worthwhile ministries nearby in St. Thomas or far away like India, Africa or Philippines.

We praise you, O God for news of viable vaccines. We are encouraged and so grateful for researchers and medical teams who, in many cases risk their own health and safety while trying

to preserve and protect ours. May your protection rest upon them, O God, and upon all essential workers who carry us with them even as they carry out their tasks. May we help to lighten their wearing face coverings in public buildings, physically distancing and washing our hands. As our best friend in the world, Jesus, taught us, the heaviest burdens are made lighter when they are shared. We are so grateful that our faith in your constant love and amazing grace lightens our burdens and comforts our sorrows.

We pray for our church family and friends named on our prayer concerns list.

May they see Jesus showing up to lighten their load of care as he comes disguised as a friend, a care-giver, educator, therapist, church friend, medic, or neighbor. May their faith be strengthened in trials, and their hope buoyed by evidence of your grace alive and well in the beauty of a sunset or the cheerful voice of a great grandchild chattering on Skype.

Be with our church family and our families and friends as they manage the daily challenges of going to school, working from home or outside home, caring for themselves or family members who require hospitalization, tests or treatments, coping with grief, and just living with the uncertainties and anxieties of this upside-down time.

O God our church and other churches and faith centers are feeling the weight of the burden of not meeting together weekly for worship and fellowship. Hear our gratitude for one another and for the ways that we are staying connected online, through emails, YouTube, Zoom, texts, regular mail, phone calls and safe visits.

We are grateful for our church leadership who are keeping the church building beautifully maintained and ministering loving care to our members and pastor. Make us mindful that we are members of Christ's Body. Each of us has a part to play, a ministry to do, a prayer to give, words to speak, resources to share to keep Christ's church true to its calling to share the good news of your love; a love that is forever and always here for us.

Thank you, loving God, Creator, Liberator and Friend for hearing our prayers. May we live our lives to please you first. Grant us Christ's wisdom, humor, patience and empathy so that we might follow him closely day by day on our journey. Amen

Gospel Matthew 25: 31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ ⁴⁰And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’ ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing,

sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’⁴⁴ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’⁴⁵ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Sermon: SMALL THINGS WITH GREAT LOVE

Today we’re going to celebrate
 all the small things God has done!
 That’s right my friends, I said small
 that would be opposite of Tall.
 Yes, we’re talking *wee* with double e’s
 and teeny, tinier than Scrooge’s Tim.
 We humans always focus on the BIG things don’t we?
 We can go on and on about the BIG day
 or the BIG race
 or the BIG SNOW
 or the BIGGEST Black Friday Sale Event EVER!
 O contraire, in an opposite vein
 we can whine BIG TIME.
 We can get ourselves
 into the BIGGEST BADDEST snits
 over problems and the people who went and
 messed up our day or our lives or our WHOLE, ENTIRE WORLD.
 And yes, folks there be a PILE OF
 Capital B’BIG problems, out there,
 Yes, sirree, Bob.
 That’s why we are in need of GOD
 in a BIG WAY, my friends.
 It figures then that in the church, God’s church,
 we’d have BIG stuff to say!
 We got some BIG words, too.
 Don’t try to spell these.
 We don’t have time for that!
Salvation, Ordination, Evangelization,
Pre-destination, transubstantiation---
 WHEW! a short list with REALLY BIG ideas.
 We like to sing and shout about the BIG
 God we serve, too.
 Our God is an AWESOME God
 who reigns from heaven above!
 Come Thou Almighty King!
 He’s got the WHOLE world in his hands.
 This BIG GOD, we’re happy to say,
 is all about LOVE.

His LOVE is BIG enough to O-bliterate,
 I know that sounds BIG but I like it.....
 O -bliterate ALL OUR SIN.
 That deserves a BIG AMEN! Let God hear you say it:
 but keep it small: AMEN!
 So today, as I maintain, we're going to
 think small and celebrate.
 BIG gets its due,as it should, but
 this time with maybe some rhyme
 we'll brag on the small
aka
 those small "b" blessings that God
 lays on little old me and you
 and all humanity, too.
 Cause we know, the Creator of all
 created BIG and small.
 He created the rhino and the Rockies,
 AND the mosquito and the flea.
 We don't know why, just let it be!
 God loves small, and, in fact
 God's love for small is BIG!
 How BIG does God love small?
 Let's start with the Bible.
 Let's train our brains
 upon the *small print*
 in Holy Writ...how hard can it git?
 Let's start at the start.
 Remember Adam's apple?
 "One small munch for man
 one giant mess for Human kind!"
 How about Noah?
 He was reduced to floating 2 of each
 critter-kind in his boat!
 Only two Jumbos you say?
 All things considered....that's ok.
 Don't forget that singular snow white dove
 that is famous for tweeting
 the first tweet in History: # Land ho!
 Why, there's a flock of micro miracles
 under *that* rainbow.
 Let's praise God for a few.
 How about five little stones
 that felled Goliath or a still small voice
 whispering after a whirlwind.
 There's the widow of Zaraphath:
 just a bit of oil and crumbs

remained before death.
 Her meagre last meal
 shared with an unexpected guest
 proved to be a wise move.
 Seems Prophet Elijah
 knew a God *who delivers*.
 Or how about a poem---
 six wee verses it be--
 only a blip in THE MASSIVE VOLUME---
 but it's Psalm 23.
 How small can we go?
 How small can you shrink your think ?
 As small as a mustard seed?
 As brief as Adam's first breath?
 A boy's lunch feeds 5000!
 What a meal deal!
What an awesome brown bag story!
 Then there's two wee
 coins from a widow's purse—
 a tragic trio of "NO's" from a friend
 just one stall left for
 a newborn baby
 in a small town called Bethlehem.
 Just three crosses
 erected on a Friday
 just a short wait until he was gone.
 Just a four-letter word
 uttered on Sunday: "Mary"
 and Death's LONG winning streak
 was *done!*
 Just a brief list, my friends
 of the 'small' things that God did
 to throw his awesome love
 our way from the very first day----
 But, I'd be remiss if
 that was all there was to say.
 Now, don't act surprised
 but it seems that for some time
 folks haven't been storming
 through stained glass doors
 to hear what we think
 about some of those BIG churchy words.
 For some reason noting the doctrinal
 do's and don'ts
 of predestination according
 to the Epistle of St. Paul doesn't turn many heads

or open a lot of ears.
Maybe it used to be that way--- Now, not so much.
But, the good news
is that what's always been BIG
with our God is still BIG with God.
God still loves small.
Small is BIG.
Are you still with me? Really?
Say, there once was this nun,
that is, a Sister named Teresa.
Only 4 and a half feet tall---
that's pretty small
but she knew God loved her.
And even though
God knew she was small
and just one woman
God knew she had a BIG love
in her heart for
the poor, just like his son, Jesus did.
Mother T said this:
*We can do no great things
but we can do small things with great love.*
That small thing
with GREAT love
is what she did over and over
and over again.
To her, every soul was Jesus.
A cup of water---
a piece of bread---
a visit in prison---
a vigil by the bed---
all these small things
she did for the least-----
who are, let's face it,
the smallest of the small
in the WORLD's eyes----
And whenever she did those
little things to bless
the least of these,
she did to Jesus.
Not her idea, not her words--
those be Jesus' own words
direct from the BOOK of Life!
In it, Jesus says that
it's the small things we do—
those tiny acts

of being kind and paying
no mind to the cost,
that's WAY BIG with God.
To re---iterate, that's another
BIG word; that says
what's already been said,
the small print in Holy Writ
is writ LARGE with hundreds of small
miracles—
micro morsels of a deep, deep love,
small droplets in that BIG ocean
of blessing—
All bits and pieces spun off of that
Divine Dancer who,
spins the Universe around
in his celestial ballroom.
God gives you
and me gazillions of small
opportunities, mini- miracles---
to share God's BIG love.
And it isn't even hard.
In fact, it's so easy- peasy
that most of the time
we're doing it without
giving our little noodles a work out.
In fact, God's face must get
tired from grinning
at all the people
in the WHOLE world
who get down and do the small,
little, teeny acts of kindness.
OK. Some don't---
but that isn't our responsibility.
God will see to them.
So, guys and gals,
let's tip our hats to small.
Let's thank God that we can't begin to keep count
of all the small acts of love that we do.
If we did, our heads would swell up
BIG, BIG, BIG.
But, keep it straight,
God's LOVE is greatly needed---
more folks need little miracles of kindness,
wee gestures of goodness,
now more ever before.
They can't come here to read about it--

They can't meet here to sing about it--
They likely ain't even knowin' how to pray about it--
But they're waitin' for it---
They're waiting for something BIG.
What they don't know is ---SURPRISE!
It's going to show up, all right,
but it'll start out small, that's all.
So, followers of Jesus,
when you buy a coffee for someone in line—
That's small but it's BIG.
When you write a short note to an old friend—
That's small but it's BIG.
When you pick up groceries for a shut in neighbor—
That's small but its BIG.
When you say a prayer to show someone God cares---
That's small but it's BIG.
When you drop a toonie in the Kettle—
That's small but it's BIG.
When you listen without interrupting, not once—
That's small but it's BIG.
When you read a bedtime book with a child—
That's small, but it's BIG.
When you wear a mask and wash your hands
not cause it be cool but because you can---
That's small, but its BIG.
We can do no great things,
just small things with great LOVE.
That's more than BIG,
it's downright AWESOME! Amen!

