

Lendrum Mennonite Church Worship Resources
March 22, 2020



Anointing the Feet of Jesus by Ann Lukesh

Hello Friends,

The journey continues.

Things have changed quite dramatically, even since last week. Seven days ago, we wondered if restrictions would quickly lift. We hoped we would be cleared to gather together again sooner rather than later. Now, it is looking like we are going to be “worshipping at home” for a while yet.

The church office will keep you updated about resources and opportunities to stay connected. Please, reach out at any time if you are worried that you are not “in the loop” or if you need support. You can be assured that EVERY Sunday, for as long as our in-person gatherings are suspended, something will be available here on the website – to watch and to read. We’ll adapt these resources as we go, but know that you will always find some Lendrum Mennonite Church content in this place on Sunday morning.

The needs and concerns of our city and our country have grown and changed in the past week. These are difficult times. As God’s people, let us hold onto hope and let us be among those who share light and kindness with a world in need. This does not mean that we are shielded from the anxieties or the concerns of these days. Far from it. But, we do have a God we can turn to - a very present help in times of trouble. And, we have one another. In the hymn, “Will you let me be your servant” we find these words:

*Will you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?
Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too.*

*I will hold the Christ-light for you in the nighttime of your fear.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.*

Let’s hold the Christ-light for one another. Let’s **reach out and receive** words of encouragement and words of peace.

This is the second instalment of “LMC Worship Resources.” In here you will find:

- “**Anointing the Feet of Jesus**”, a painting by artist Ann Lukesh. To see more of her work, visit: <https://fineartamerica.com/profiles/ann-lukesh>
- **Music** that can be accessed via YouTube. Links to various songs (in various musical styles!) appear throughout this document. The videos include scrolling lyrics. Listen. Meditate. Sing Along.
- **Lenten Reflections** for the fourth Sunday of Lent: 40 Days – On the Run. Read, reflect, and pray for yourself. If you have a candle – light it and then blow it out.
- **Prayers of the People** that have once again been provided courtesy of Carol Penner in her *Prayer in Virulent Times (after St. Patrick)*. You will also find a refreshed list of concerns related to our community (and easily extended to many we know and love beyond LMC). Take a few moments to pray for family, friends, and neighbours. Prayer requests for specific individuals in our community have been distributed via email and posted in our members only Facebook group. They are not included in this document or on our public website to respect the privacy of our congregants.
- **Unnecessary Actions** is a short devotional focusing on the text of John 12:1-8. Remember that our actions matter and that Jesus sees our hearts.
- **Kids Colouring Page**: As mentioned in the video greeting, 3 prayers in the form of colouring pages are being provided this week. You will find them at the end of this document. These prayers have been generously provided without cost by the folks at illustratedministry.com.

Lenten Reflection: 40 Days – On the Run (1 Kings 19:1-9a)

On this fourth Sunday of our 40 day journey through Lent, we consider our fourth 40 day story from scripture: **40 Days – On the Run**

In 1 Kings 19, we read these words:

Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, 'So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow.' 3 Then he was afraid; he got up and fled for his life, and came to Beer-sheba, which belongs to Judah; he left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors.' 5 Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, 'Get up and eat.' 6 He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 The angel of the Lord came a second time, touched him, and said, 'Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.' 8 He got up, and ate and drank; then he went in the strength of that food for forty days and forty nights to Horeb the mount of God. 9 At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

This reading from 1 Kings 19 follows the story of the prophet Elijah's encounter with the 450 prophets of Baal and the 400 prophets of Asherah. It is a mystifying, brutal battle. In the end, Elijah is left standing, but now that he has angered Jezebel, he must run for his life.

In verse 4, we read that Elijah has had enough. He asks the Lord to take away his life. In verse 5-8, we read that an angel provides him with the food and water he needs to survive. This goes on for forty days and forty nights as the prophet makes his way towards the refuge of Mount Horeb.

For forty days and forty nights the prophet is alone, in the wilderness, and on the edge of survival. He is running for his life. We are told Elijah eats and drinks and rests. For what must feel like an eternity, he exists on what is graciously provided for him, even as he inches towards safety.

As things are changing rapidly around us. As the leaders and caregivers around us continue to increase the threat level we are facing as a society. As we feel increasingly distanced from family and friends, it may feel like we are running for our lives. And, it may feel like we are stranded in the wilderness, alone.

The angel speaks to Elijah and says:

Get up and eat, otherwise the journey will be too much for you.

The angel of the Lord provides Elijah with exactly what he needs to keep his strength up and keep going.

As we snuff out our fourth Lenten candle, ask yourself:

When the difficulty of the journey ahead feels overwhelming, what might God be calling you to let go of, to pray for, or to give that will sustain you and those around you?



SONG: *How Can I Keep From Singing* (<https://youtu.be/Li2hddmy63U>)

Prayers of the People

Meditate on this prayer written by Carol Penner as you lift your burdens to God.

Prayer in Virulent Times (after St. Patrick)

We bind onto ourselves
the loving power of God our Creator,
the enlivening power of the Spirit of Truth,
and the steadfast faithfulness of Jesus Christ.

We bind onto ourselves
the glories of the earth, this gift:
the power of heaven,
the light of the sun,
the brightness of the moon,
the splendour of fire,
the flashing of lightning,
the swiftness of wind,
the depth of the sea,
the stability of the earth.

Against the power of viruses,
against the sweep of pandemics,
against the selfishness that hoards for oneself,
against the anxiety that gnaws at our hearts,
good Lord, protect us.

Against sickness and pain,
good Lord protect us.

For all who do the work of caring for the sick,
good Lord preserve them.

For all who are grieving,
and cannot be comforted,
good Lord, hear our prayer.

We bind to ourselves today
God's eye to watch over us,
God's ear to hear us,
God's word to give us speech,
God's hand to guide us.

Christ with us, Christ before us,
Christ behind us, Christ within us,
Christ beneath us, Christ above us,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in mouth of friend or stranger.

With the steadfastness of God, our Rock,
and the love of Christ that will not let us go,
and the Spirit of Hope, who gives us peace,
we go into this day.

There are many in need of our prayers right now. Together, let us remember:

- Those in our community who are grieving the deaths of loved one, who also face the burden of not being able to freely gather for funerals and memorial services.
- Those whose in-home health care providers have been suspended and now face uncertain circumstances in terms of their ongoing care.
- Those travellers we know who have not been able to make it home to Canada and those who have recently travelled and are now self-isolating.
- Those we know who are awaiting COVID-19 test results because there is a risk they have been exposed.
- Those in our community who are vulnerable and who are taking measures to avoid contracting COVID-19.
- Those in our community who are feeling lonely or overwhelmed due to the social distancing measures being recommended in the interest of public health and safety.
- Those in our community who live in or have loved ones who live in care facilities that have now introduced stricter visitor policies.
- Those in our community adapting to “work at home” procedures and those who are continuing to go to work each day.
- Those in our community who are making the transition to having kids at home now that schools and daycares have been closed, including a prayer for all our kids and teens who are facing drastic changes in their daily routines and activities
- Those in our community who are anxious about or affected by losses of work due to the containment measures required by COVID-19.
- Those in our community who are suffering set-backs in their mental health.

SONG: *Lord Jesus, you shall be my song* (<https://youtu.be/XgwGPPM2ytc>)



Unnecessary Actions (John 12:1-8)

In John's Gospel, we read these words:

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2 There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' 6 (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) 7 Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. 8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

This is a familiar story, and it's one that appears in all four Gospel accounts (with a few variations in details from one to the next). In this telling of the story, the main characters – in order of appearance – are Jesus, Lazarus, Martha, Mary, Judas Iscariot, and presumably the rest of the 12 disciples (though they aren't named explicitly). They've come together for dinner and Mary does an unthinkable extravagant, and by some measures, unethical thing. She pours a large quantity of perfume on Jesus' feet and wipes his feet with her hair.

Judas doesn't like it, and it isn't much of a stretch for us to fall in line with Judas on this one (even if we know he is questionable company to keep the closer we get to the end of the Gospel story). Why did Mary do such an unnecessarily wasteful thing? Why does Jesus allow it, and why does Jesus defend her choices?

Reading these verses this week, amidst all the headlines and goings on in Edmonton and around the world, I felt this story speak a word to me. It caused me to pause and ask myself – what is the value in seemingly *unnecessary actions*, especially when *necessary actions* are all around us, demanding our time and our best efforts?!

These days we are up to our eyeballs in necessary actions. The dos and the don'ts of social distancing and care for the most vulnerable among us. Our top doctors and health professionals have implored us – Stay home! Keep your distance! Practice good personal hygiene! Self-isolate!

These are the *necessary actions*. The ones that directly impact our physical health and the well-being of those we may (or more precisely may not!) come in contact with. We are being asked to engage in these necessary practices because it's believed this is what will save lives and this is what will give us a chance to get ahead of this thing.

But, even our health professionals and those who are guiding us these days have been intentionally expanding the circle of what adequate care looks like. The seemingly *unnecessary actions* of the pandemic. These include reaching out to loved one, practising self-care by taking breaks from social media, cooking healthy meals, getting outside for a (socially distanced) walk. Checking in on our neighbours and our families to see if there is anything we can do. Thanking front-line workers in health care and retail services that are keeping the wheels of our society turning. Taking time to tell positive stories of kindness and generosity.

Does a phone call to a friend prevent the virus from spreading? Does a walk around the block guard against infection? Does a thank you provide a protective barrier for a grocery store cashier or a nurse?

No, of course not.

But, just like in the story of Jesus at Bethany, we need to be reminded that our lives are bigger than the things we can see – more expansive than the needs that are right in front of our face.

Jesus tells Judas and those listening that what Mary has done has prepared him for his death – a reality that his friends and followers will face in a very short time. Jesus pushes back against Judas' rebuke that Mary's action is unnecessarily wasteful by pointing him towards the realities that are difficult to see and respond to, but are just as real, taking a toll on the human heart. Realities that include grief and loss, loneliness and isolation. Realities that have the potential to wound us in profound ways if not attended to.

Each of us is carrying a burden right now. Perhaps it's a house that is far too quiet. Perhaps it's a home that is vibrating from too much activity. Perhaps it's the pressure to carry on with work. Perhaps it's the uncertainty of how long this will last.

As we strive to do the *necessary* things to care for our bodies and the physical health of those around us, let us look to Mary and be reminded that we are also called to consider and act on those things that are *just as needful*, but less apparent.

Maybe it's taking the initiative to reach out to someone.

Maybe it's stopping to answer the phone when someone calls to check in on us.

Maybe it's allowing ourselves to step back from caring for others.

Maybe it's adopting a new habit or practice that will allow us to grow during this difficult season.

Maybe it's admitting to ourselves that survival is the only thing we are capable of right now.

As we strive to carry out the *necessary actions* of these days that will preserve the health of our physical bodies, may we also consider the so-called *unnecessary actions* that will sustain our spirits over the long haul. Like Mary, may we minister to one another in ways that preserve us, not only in the moment, but for what is ahead. Let us hold the Christ-light for one another, friends. Let us speak words of peace to one another, today and every day.

SONG: *Will you let me be your servant* (<https://youtu.be/MYpH3y4608E>)

For a cool remix, check out ***Sister, will you let me be your servant*** (https://youtu.be/4iu_T_FRvbY)

SONG: *A Choral Amen* (<https://youtu.be/PQ7Fk0pGPTw>)

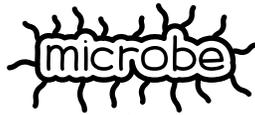
HOLY GOD

YOU ARE WITH US

from the spinning planets in our



to the



that lives on the tiniest paw
of the tiniest **mouse**.

you care for the

CREATION

you care for

US

&

WORLD

Whether we are out in the

or tucked
inside our

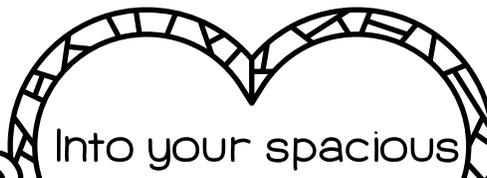
Home,

we know that You are as **CLOSE** as the

AIR THAT WE BREATHE.

Thank You for being our friend and comforter.

Amen



Into your spacious

heart

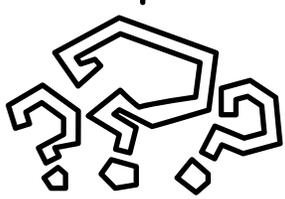
AND LOVING HANDS

dear God

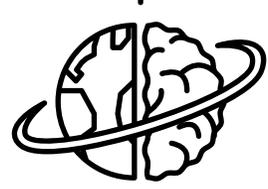
I place



my fears,



my "what ifs,"



my spinning world and mind

Comfort me with the

RUTH

NO FEAR

is too big for the

GREAT ONE

who is always with me.



am never alone.

CALMING GOD, BRING COURAGE

TENDER SPIRIT, BREATHE PEACE

GENTLE JESUS, BE CLOSE

Amen

GOD

OF

PRESENCE & STRENGTH

Help us feel you
here with us...

...when we are
anxious and afraid

WHEN THE FUTURE FEELS

UNWIELDLY

AND

UNCERTAIN

we know **nothing** is **unknown** TO YOU

WHO GOD

we know YOU ARE OUR ROCK

AND OUR COMFORT IN TIMES OF

TROUBLE.

Give us WISDOM and COURAGE...

...to make CHANGES that will help...

THINGS GET BETTER.

Amen.