



Morning Worship Prayers

2011 Assembly

Tuesday (A new heaven, a new earth)

I invite us now into a time of prayer as we focus ourselves and commit this day into God's service. I will open and offer some words to guide our thoughts, but I'll also give us some space for silent reflection and meditation. Last night Nelson Kraybill suggested that the New Jerusalem is an image for what Jesus meant when he taught us to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So we'll close by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

Let's join in prayer.

Our God, we come to you at the beginning of a new day. Thank you for the gift of blessings new every morning, for fresh enthusiasm and renewed energy. We come with anticipation at the outset of these days we'll spend together. We offer to you now our hopes for this gathering, as well as our concerns, our uncertainties and our fears. Hold them, and hold us in the assurance that you are present and at work in our time here.

(Pause)

We bring before you today the different parts of our Assembly – the children with their volunteers and workers, the youth together with the many pastors and sponsors who are learning and worshipping with them. And the Adult Assembly – for times of worship, learning, discernment and fellowship. We offer now our prayers for this broader gathering.

(Pause)

We remember too, O God, that our brothers and sisters at MC USA are also meeting this week in Pittsburgh. We are the church beyond national borders, and we offer now our prayers for our family of faith south of the border.

(Pause)

God, you know that each of us gathered here comes from a local congregation – each with its own gifts, opportunities and challenges for our time. We come as delegates and guests with particular contexts that we continually return to. We offer now our prayers for the various communities that we call home.

(Pause)

O God, you promise that a new heavens and a new earth are on the way. Your good creation restored in that beautiful city offered as your gift to the world. We gather as the church called to be that gift of newness made possible by the victory of the lamb. Form us into the image of your salvation as we pray together:

Our father, who art in heaven...

Wednesday (Behold the Lamb)

Pray through Psalm 63. Read it once slowly, pause, then read it a second time.

Thursday (Behold the Light!)

This morning we will spend some time in prayer offering our petitions to God together as a community of faith. I will open, and then I'll invite us to take turns speaking short petitions aloud from our seats: identifying issues, places or situations that we want to bring before God. After each petition, we will repeat together as a congregation: O Lord, hear our prayer. This will be a bit of an experiment – the sound moves pretty well from the stage out, but we'll see how well it moves from back to front. Let's speak up, and if we don't all hear the petitions that are spoken, we'll trust that God does hear our prayers and holds us together in the power of the Spirit.

Let's raise our voices in prayer together.

O God of miraculous and revealing light, you illumine the city of your new creation by your very presence that you promise will be among your people. We have seen the light of the world in your son Jesus, and we eagerly look forward to the day when all darkness will be vanquished and night will be no more. The dawn of your redemption is near at hand, and we strain our eyes to the dark horizon where your new day is coming. And as we wait in confidence and expectation, we bring to you the corners of darkness that still persist in our lives and in our world.

Hear our petitions, Lord, as we name out loud to you those places for which we long for your light.

(Response to each: "O Lord, hear our prayer")

God, you have heard the prayers of your people – those we have named and those that have kept silence in our hearts. May your glorious light burst upon our church and upon our world. For you are the light by which we walk, now and into the future that is in your hands. Make us to be witnesses of your grace, renewed in the dawn that is ever upon us.

We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, the light of the world.

Amen.

Friday (Behold... the Gates)

As we pray together this morning, we're going to try to get our bodies involved. So I'm going to ask that we all stand up together. We're going to try out three different gestures as we pray. I learned this from a local congregation in this area that practices these gestures regularly. We're going to pray first for our world, and for that we're going to raise our hands up in the air as we are able like this: Then we'll pray for each other as a community of faith, and for that we'll put our hands on each others' shoulders. Finally we'll pray for ourselves, and as we do that we'll hold ourselves to remind us of God's embrace over our lives. Just follow my lead as it's comfortable for you.

So, please join me as we pray in body, soul and spirit.

O God, we come before you with joy on this final day of our Assembly. Thank you for your unfailing presence that has remained with us in all things, and for the story of your future that has sustained us as a body united in your name.

(Arms up)

We pray today for our world – for the whole creation that we share our lives with day by day. We remember the many stories that we have heard this week from far and near – we pray for the work of your church in South Africa, in the Philippines, in Burkina Faso, in Colombia, in the Congo, in the United States and so many other places. We pray for situations of conflict and unrest in Israel-Palestine, in Libya, in Afghanistan and we know the list goes on. We long for the renewal of our earth, for the New Jerusalem of God's redemption that will cover the whole world with gates open to all the nations. We pray also for this community that has hosted us. For the region of Waterloo, for this university – its students, its teachers and its staff. We pray for the ministry of Conrad Grebel in the midst of this dynamic and challenging environment.

(Hands on shoulders)

We pray today for our community – for our national family of faith that is represented here in our worship. Thank you for the movement of your spirit among us in a time of so much change and uncertainty. We thank you again for faithful leaders who help us discern our times and your spirit. We thank you for congregations committed to your mission in their communities. We are your church, and we entrust ourselves into the memory of your future, as we have been doing for so many years. May the bonds of our fellowship stay strong in the grace of our Lord who has called us together into this one body.

(Arms around ourselves)

We pray today for ourselves. For each one of us gathered here. We commit to you our pains and frustrations, as well as our joys and celebrations. Continue to embrace us as we begin this day. Give us strength, patience, humility and wisdom sufficient to the tasks for which you have called us. For we are your beloved children, adopted into your own family by grace that knows each of us by name. Take our brokenness, our resentments and our pride. Take our wounds, our convictions and our certainties. And touch us with the healing and reconciling presence of your spirit in the places we need it most. For we know that you hold us fast, in the same love through which we were created.

Blessing and honour and power be unto you, O God, and unto the lamb.

We pray this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.