

## **Hearts of Love, Lives of Magic**

A prayer service for the differently abled

P: Creator God, we come together in your midst today as people with different abilities, strengths and some weaknesses. May a community of acceptance and inclusivity be cultivated from within our hearts and minds so that no one may feel unwanted or forgotten. May we each find peace and fulfilment in knowing you and discovering your will in our lives and work towards building a space of love and hope with your word as the foundation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

### **Opening Hymn**

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!  
Sing, ye saints! His wonderful love proclaim!  
Hail Him! hail Him! mightiest angels in glory;  
Strength and honour give to His holy name!  
Like a shepherd, Jesus will feed His people,  
In His arms He carries them all day long;  
O ye saints that live in the light of His presence,  
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer,  
For our sins He suffered and bled and died;  
He, our Rock, our Hope of eternal salvation,  
Hail Him! hail Him! Jesus, the Crucified;  
Loving Savior, meekly enduring sorrow,  
Crowned with thorns that cruelly pierced His brow;  
Once for us rejected, despised, and forsaken,  
Prince of Glory, ever triumphant now.

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer,  
Heavenly portals, loud with hosannahs ring!  
Jesus, Savior, reigneth for ever and ever;  
Crown Him! crown Him! Prophet and Priest and King!  
Death is vanquished! Tell it with joy, ye faithful,  
Where is now thy victory, boasting grave?  
Jesus lives! No longer thy portals are cheerless;  
Jesus lives, the mighty and strong to save.  
Text: Fanny J. Crosby, Music: Chester G. Allen

### **Kauma**

**P.** †Glory be to the Father our Creator, to the Son our Redeemer and to the Holy Spirit who sanctifies us.

**C.** As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

**P.** Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory, Hosanna in the highest.

**C.** Blessed is He that has come and is to come again in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

**P.** Holy art thou, O God.  
**C.** Holy art thou, Almighty Lord.  
**P.** Holy art thou, Immortal Lord.  
**C.** O Lord, the Messiah who was crucified for us † have mercy on us.  
**(To be repeated thrice)**

**P.** O Lord, have mercy on us.

**C.** O Lord, have mercy on us and bless us.  
**P.** O Lord, accept our prayers and worship and have mercy on us.  
**C.** Glory be to you, O God.  
**P.** Glory be to you, O Creator.  
**C.** Glory be to you, O King the Messiah; who has mercy on us sinners. Bless us, O Lord.

(Let us say together the prayer that Jesus taught us)

**All: Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name,  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, On earth as it is done in  
heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, Forever.**

**Amen.**

**(Cong to be seated)**

1st Lesson: Isaiah 34:1-10

2nd Lesson: Acts 14: 1-10

### **Meditation: Embracing God's Love as a Special Needs Parent**

One day I was experiencing an unusually hard day. I was frustrated with my children who had missed their nap because we had been at an appointment that lasted way longer than it should have and now they were fussy and tired. I was tired and cranky myself and I asked God, "Where are you in all of this? Why aren't you helping me?" I desperately wanted to be alone with God, but the kiddos needed dinner and attention. And then, bedtime rolled around.

After my older son, about four years old at the time, was all snuggled in bed and we had read his book before bed, we prayed together. Sometimes I did the praying, sometimes I did it fill in the blank style as he could only say one or two-word phrases. I decided to go with the fill-in-the-blank prayer.

Me: "Thank you God for \_\_\_\_."

He said his name in response.

"Me," I corrected. "And thank you God for \_\_\_\_."

"Eesus!" he said with a grin.

I choked back tears as I told him, "Yes, thank you God for Jesus." I've never had any indication that he understood anything relating to God, Jesus or Bible stories, except for identifying "baby Eesus" at Christmas time. I've never prayed before using the words "Thank you God for Jesus." It was his own spontaneous thought and it filled my heart with hope and joy.

We finished our prayers and I kissed that precious little guy goodnight and as I left his room it hit me: God had answered my angry prayers through the mouth of a child who would need years of speech therapy to be able to talk like his peers. I had demanded God tell me where He was and why it felt like He wasn't caring for us. And He gently reminded me that He loved me and my children enough He gave us Jesus.

Then I realised that God had similar experiences with parenthood.

Jesus hadn't yet done a single thing, ministry-wise, and yet God was proud of Him. He called Jesus His beloved Son. He found great joy in Him. And as parents, we do the same thing. Before we even met our child, we loved them and excitedly prepared for their arrival. When they are born and as they grow and need us to do everything for them, even though they cannot do a single thing for us in return, we love them. No matter how much care they need in their lifetime, we will still love and treasure our child.

God also knows what it's like to see your own child suffer and struggle. He watched people not understand His son, watched them mock and test His son. He witnessed His child get beaten and whipped, carry a heavy wooden cross, and then have nails hammered through His wrists and ankles pinning Him to that cross. His son suffered for hours, and I'm sure God longed to take His son off of that cross, to hold Him tight in His arms, and take His beloved, innocent son far away from the cross.

And so, He understands our pain when we watch our children go through medical procedures. He knows what it's like to watch our children struggle to do things that come so effortlessly to other children. He knows what it is like to long to change the circumstances for our children, but helpless to do so because there is a plan and a reason you can't always see. He fully understands our pain when we see our children not be understood by others or mocked and excluded by others. He knows how much we love our children, and He loves them even more than we do!

But God had a plan, He knew there was a glorious purpose in His child's struggles and suffering. I'm sure that didn't make the pain and helplessness any less for Him though. His love for His son was still as strong as ever, but His love for you and me and for our children kept Him going with the plan.

We may not see the greater plan on this side of eternity. We will see glimpses of it here and there. For example, I see how much stronger God has made me, not just in my faith, but in life, as a mother to two children with special needs. It is knowing that there is a greater plan that brings hope, purpose, and meaning to this special needs parenting journey.

## **L: A WALK WITH JESUS**

I took a walk with Jesus

Just the other day

And here are but a few things

My Savior had to say

My child I know that life is hard

The road is rough and long  
But always know that I'll be there  
To fill your heart with song  
When on that road you stumble  
Reach out and take my hand  
I promise I will hold on tight  
And I will help you stand

Sometimes you'll think I've left you  
But remember that's not so  
I gave my life to save you  
And I'll never let you go  
When friends and family hurt you  
Through this life that you must live  
Do not respond in anger  
Bow your head and then forgive  
Bring all your troubles to me  
Place them here beside my feet  
You'll find there's not a problem  
Your Savior cannot beat

Please learn my child to trust me  
Let your faith become your guide  
For then we'll walk together  
Forever side by side  
Now as we part remember  
You'll never walk alone  
And I'll be here to welcome you  
When it's time to travel home.

Marlene Bullis

### **Hymn**

Loved with everlasting love,  
Led by grace that love to know;  
Gracious Spirit from above,  
Thou hast taught me it is so!  
Oh, this full and perfect peace!  
Oh, this transport all divine!  
In a love which cannot cease,  
I am His, and He is mine;  
In a love which cannot cease,  
I am His, and He is mine

Things that once were wild alarms  
Cannot now disturb my rest,  
Closed in everlasting arms,  
Pillowed on His loving breast;  
Oh, to lie forever here,  
Doubt and care and self resign,  
While He whispers in my ear  
I am His, and He is mine;

While He whispers in my ear  
I am His, and He is mine.

His forever, only His;  
Who the Lord and me shall part?  
Ah, with what a rest of bliss  
Christ can fill the loving heart!  
Heav'n and earth may fade and flee,  
Firstborn light in gloom decline,  
But while God and I shall be,  
I am His, and He is mine;  
But while God and I shall be,  
I am His, and He is mine.

George W. Robinson

### **Psalm 34:23-40**

**P:** <sup>23</sup> The LORD makes firm the steps  
of the one who delights in him;  
<sup>24</sup> though he may stumble, he will not fall,  
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.  
**C:** <sup>25</sup> I was young and now I am old,  
yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken  
or their children begging bread.  
<sup>26</sup> They are always generous and lend freely;  
their children will be a blessing.<sup>[b]</sup>

**P:** <sup>27</sup> Turn from evil and do good;  
then you will dwell in the land forever.  
<sup>28</sup> For the LORD loves the just  
and will not forsake his faithful ones.  
Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed<sup>[c]</sup>;  
the offspring of the wicked will perish.

**C:** <sup>29</sup> The righteous will inherit the land  
and dwell in it forever.  
<sup>30</sup> The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,  
and their tongues speak what is just.

**L:** <sup>31</sup> The law of their God is in their hearts;  
their feet do not slip.  
<sup>32</sup> The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,  
intent on putting them to death;  
<sup>33</sup> but the LORD will not leave them in the power of the wicked  
or let them be condemned when brought to trial.

**C:** <sup>34</sup> Hope in the LORD  
and keep his way.  
He will exalt you to inherit the land;  
when the wicked are destroyed, you will see it.

**P:** <sup>35</sup> I have seen a wicked and ruthless man  
flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,

<sup>36</sup> but he soon passed away and was no more;  
though I looked for him, he could not be found.

**C:** <sup>37</sup> Consider the blameless, observe the upright;  
a future awaits those who seek peace.<sup>[d]</sup>

<sup>38</sup> But all sinners will be destroyed;  
there will be no future<sup>[e]</sup> for the wicked.

**P:**<sup>39</sup> The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD;  
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.

**C:** <sup>40</sup> The LORD helps them and delivers them;  
he delivers them from the wicked and saves them,  
because they take refuge in him.

### ***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

***Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson***  
***Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***

L: Loving God, you make each living person in your image and likeness and present us as a gift and seed of love to the human race.

C: We praise you, Lord, for all of your gifts. Before You, all human beings are precious for we are all created in your image. You are known through the Scriptures as the Friend of the Poor, The Father of Orphans and the Defender of the Widow. We see you in all those living with special abilities, and give you thanks for loving parents who welcome and nurture them even in the face of obstacles and rejection. Guide our hands to build access and welcome. Guide our minds to understand the power and wisdom of human vulnerability. Guide our actions to create communities open to the gifts of each individual. Help us to recognize the goodness in others, even when they struggle to see the good in themselves. Shift our mindsets from what we are not, to what we are and are yet to be. Move us forward together as a community for your glory and our neighbours' good. May we understand that your body is incomplete when people are left behind. We pray through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

***Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson, Kyrie Elieson***  
***Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy***

### **Intercessory Prayers**

**L:** Lord our God, You know our needs and You fulfill our desires. You protect us when we are fragile and give us courage for each new day. Help us to understand the power and wisdom of human vulnerability. Open our hearts to accept our weakness in your strength. Give us the courage to break down the barriers that separate us from one another. Enable us to reach out lovingly to all your children, so that, together, we may all participate fully in making this world a better place. Guide our actions to create truly welcoming communities that are open to the gifts of each individual, celebrating our interdependence with respect for all life. Help us to appreciate all those, living with special abilities, who contribute their time and talents, even in the face of obstacles or

misunderstanding. We look to the future with optimism and with faith in you. We pray that every person, irrespective of ability in mind, body and spirit may find solace in you, and may rest on your promise of hope, now and forever more.

***C: To be sung***

**Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord  
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.**

**L:** Creator of all things, we talk about accessibility and inclusivity as broad terms without really understanding their depth and importance. May we realise that we can only put these processes into action once we make our minds more welcoming and develop the ability to look beyond appearance or circumstance. Help us to not lead with what separates and divides us but with what binds and unifies us. May we acknowledge and celebrate what makes us unique. Guide us to do our small bits in making our places of education, work and stay safe havens for those who need it most by extending our hands to offer support in different ways. May we uplift and pacify, encourage and uphold each person we come across so that we are able to build a community, an environment and a world where none of your children are left behind.

***C: To be sung***

**Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

**L:** We pray for schools and other institutions that work on bringing a difference to the lives of children with different abilities. Thank you for the Mar Thoma Opportunity School of our Church, Asha Bhavan, Mar Thoma Center for Rehabilitation and Development (MCRD) Navajyothi School and the other organisations like Nidhi Foundation, Cheshire Home, Spastics society, APDA Association for Persons with Disability, Snehadeep Foundation for the blind that help in bringing about a change in this world. We submit under your care these institutions and are grateful for the dedication and passion with which they approach, strive to help and provide aid. May all these institutions continue to be harbours of peace and solace for everyone that comes under their wing. Dear God, we pray for the teachers and staff who work patiently in enriching the lives of these special students. Guide them as they mould, shape and inspire. Bless all those who work in the background and direct them in the right way as they fulfil their responsibility in touching lives through your love.

May we all, irrespective of who we are and where we come from, realise and act upon our responsibility of making this world one of peace and of harmony.

***C: To be sung***

**Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.**

**Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned**

**In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.**

### **Gospel Reading**

**P:** †Peace be with you all.

**C:** May the Lord make us all worthy to listen to His Word.

**P:** The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, which proclaims life and salvation to the world as recorded by **Luke 14: 12-14**

**C:** Blessed is He that has come and will come again. Praise to the Father who sent him for our Salvation. May His blessings be ever upon us.

**P:** In the days of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, the Word of life, God incarnate of the blessed Virgin Mary, it happened in this way.

**C:** So, we believe and affirm.

(After reading the Gospel, the priest says, †'**Peace be with you all**')

**C:** We thank you, Lord, that you have given us your gospel which is indeed the light of the world, that we may be drawn closer to you through the living words from your gospel which we have now heard.

### **The Nicene Creed**

**P:** We believe in the one true God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

**C:** We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all world; Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was made man. He was crucified † also for us in the days of Pontius Pilate; suffered and died and was buried. The third day He rose again, by His Father's holy will, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. He will come again, with glory, to judge both the living and the dead and of His kingdom there will be no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets and the apostles. We believe in one Holy Catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the new life of the world to come. Amen.

### **Birthday, Wedding Anniversary & Thanksgiving**

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.*

When darkness veils His lovely face,  
I rest on His unchanging grace;  
In every high and stormy gale,  
My anchor holds within the veil.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,  
Oh, may I then in Him be found;  
In Him, my righteousness, alone,  
Faultless to stand before the throne.

Lyrics: Edward Mote, Music: William Bradbury

## **Announcements**

### **Offertory**

When He cometh, when He cometh  
To make up His jewels,  
All His jewels, precious jewels,  
His loved and His own:

*Like the stars of the morning,  
His bright crown adorning,  
They shall shine in their beauty,  
Bright gems for His crown.*

He will gather, He will gather  
The gems for His kingdom;  
All the pure ones, all the bright ones,  
His loved and His own.

Little children, little children,  
Who love their Redeemer,  
Are the jewels, precious jewels,  
His loved and His own.

William Cushing

## **Message**

### **Closing Prayer**

P: As God's creations, we are fashioned uniquely,  
Each endowed with individuality of body, mind, and spirit to worship freely the  
One who has given us life.

C: Each of us has abilities; each seeks fulfilment and wholeness.  
Each of us has disabilities; each knows isolation and incompleteness.  
Seeking shelter from the vulnerability we all share,  
Claiming our promised place in God's Household of Faith,  
Let us be transformed by God's invitation, affirmation, and love. Amen.

P: May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace so that you may abound in  
hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

