

ST. MARGARET OF SCOTLAND ANGLICAN CHURCH

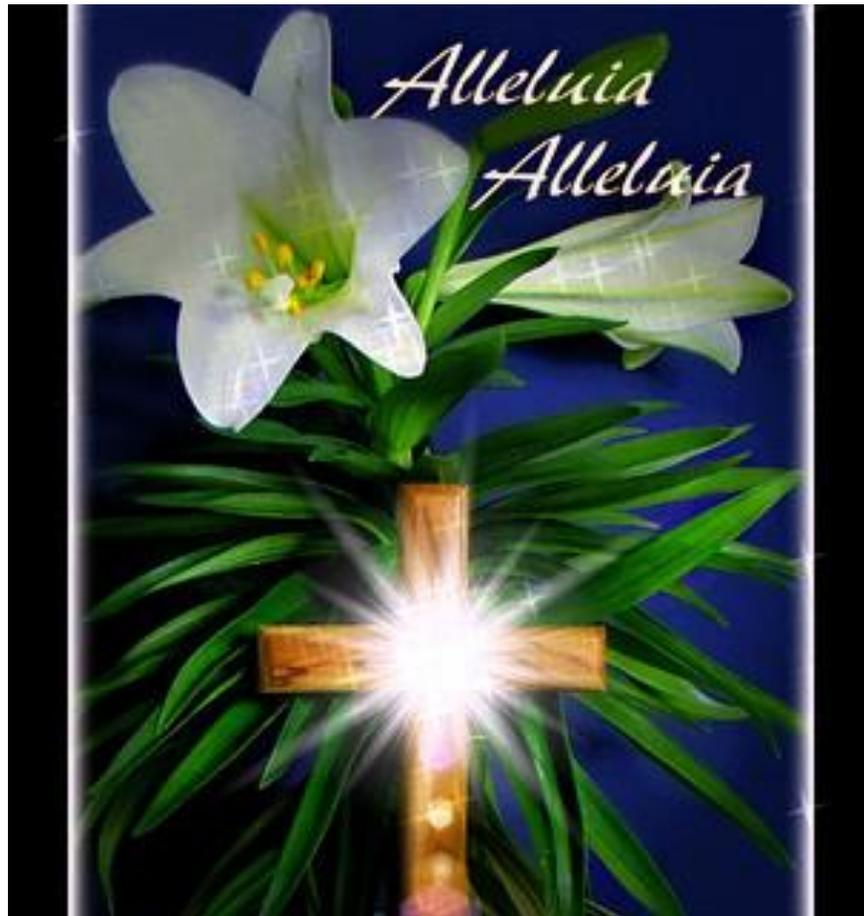
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Third Sunday of Easter

May 1, 2022

THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Acts 9:1-20

A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

Meanwhile Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any who belonged to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked, "Who are you, Lord?" The reply came, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

But get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do." The men who were traveling with him stood speechless because they heard the voice but saw no one. Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing; so, they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight."

But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name."

So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength. For several days he was with the disciples in Damascus, and immediately he began to proclaim Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God."

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

PSALM: 30

Reader: I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up,
People: and did not let my foes rejoice over me.

Reader: O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
People: and you have healed me.

Reader: O LORD, you brought up my soul from Sheol,
People: **restored me to life from among those gone down to the Pit.**

Reader: Sing praises to the LORD, O you his faithful ones,
People: **and give thanks to his holy name.**

Reader: For his anger is but for a moment; his favor is for a lifetime.
People: **Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.**

Reader: As for me, I said in my prosperity,
People: **"I shall never be moved."**

Reader: By your favor, O LORD, you had established me as a strong mountain;
People: **you hid your face; I was dismayed.**

Reader: To you, O LORD, I cried,
People: **and to the LORD I made supplication:**

Reader: "What profit is there in my death, if I go down to the Pit?
People: **Will the dust praise you? Will it tell of your faithfulness?**

Reader: Hear, O LORD, and be gracious to me!
People: **O LORD, be my helper!"**

Reader: You have turned my mourning into dancing; you have taken off my sackcloth and clothed me with joy, so that my soul may praise you and not be silent.
People: **O LORD my God, I will give thanks to you forever.**

SECOND READING: Revelation 5:11-14

A READING FROM THE REVELATION TO JOHN

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!"

Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, "To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!" And the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the elders fell down and worshiped.

The Word of the Lord.

All: **Thanks be to God**

The Gradual: *Alleluia*

#715 HB

THE HOLY GOSPEL: John 21:1-19

THE HOLY GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ACCORDING TO JOHN

People: Glory to You Lord Jesus Christ

After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples.

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So, they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So, Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. This, was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." A second time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."

He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Very truly, I tell you, when you were younger, you used to fasten your own belt and to go wherever you wished. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will fasten a belt around you and take you where you do not wish to go." (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which he would glorify God.) After this he said to him, "Follow me."

The Gospel of Christ

People: Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ

Gradual: *Alleluia*

Sermon: Rev. Canon Simon Bell

The Surprise of Faith – The Conversion of Paul
Acts 9:1-20; Psalm 30; Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19

The story of Paul's conversion is a story of transformation. We first encounter Paul in the Book of Acts in the story of the stoning of Stephen. Stephen, the first martyr of the church, is a young Greek convert who is appointed as one of the first deacons to the church in Jerusalem. He is a young man with great enthusiasm for his faith and he is stoned soon after being tried by a religious court, the Sanhedrin, for uttering blasphemy.

We are told in Acts 7 that the crowd dragged Stephen "out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile the witnesses laid their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (vs. 58) and that "Saul was there, giving approval to his death" (7:1). What we do know about Saul is that he was a young Pharisee or teacher of the religious Law in Jerusalem. He then comes to prominence during this first persecution of the Church where he functions as somebody who went around arresting the early Christians on behalf of the religious authorities in Jerusalem. Thus, Josephus, the Jewish-Roman historian, tells us that the religious authorities of Paul's day used this legal provision granted to them by Caesar to exercise a form of judicial control over the Jewish population. It is clear from the Biblical texts that Saul became the "prosecutor" in this system of law under the Romans that allowed the religious authorities to arrest, try and execute people for non-compliance with the religious Law. In fact, he became an enthusiastic servant of the system.

We are then told in Acts 9 that Saul secured a letter of authority from the High Priest at the Temple in Jerusalem that gave him the authority to find, arrest and deport those "of the Way" in synagogues of Damascus to Jerusalem for trial. Damascus was an important city some 135 miles north-east of Jerusalem that was a trading hub and commercial centre between Egypt and Mesopotamia that had a considerable Jewish population. And while it was part of the Roman province of Syria, its Jewish population still fell under the religious authority of the Temple in Jerusalem. My sense is that those followers of Jesus, the followers of "the Way", in Damascus would have been petrified of the prospect of Saul arriving on their door.

The man of the moment - Ananias

We are told in Acts 8 that following the stoning of Stephen in Jerusalem the early believers fled into the area of Judea and Samaria. As the new believers were scattered "Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off men and women and put them in prison" (8:3). News of his intention must have spread very rapidly as those followers of Jesus who served in the Temple, like Nichodemus, got the word out as to what was happening.

In Acts 9 we are told that there was a disciple or follower of Jesus in Damascus called Ananias. We have no idea how he came to faith, but it is clear that by then the message of who Jesus was had spread way beyond Judea and Samaria following the day of Pentecost and that these believers had a form of faith that was profoundly personal and experiential.

So, Ananias had a vision where Jesus calls him and gives him clear instruction, "Go to the house of Judas (another Jew) on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to receive his sight." Now it is clear that Ananias is not thrown off by the reference to a man from Tarsus, rather than Jerusalem, and realizes it is the same man who has come to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus at the local

synagogues. He is more than aware of the great damage this man has done to the church in Jerusalem and more than aware of the possibility of what he might achieve in Damascus.

But God is a little more insistent. Ananias gets an emphatic “Go!” (vs.15) and very clear instructions of God’s intention, “This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel.” There could be no doubt in Ananias mind now of the significance of this encounter and its importance for the future of the church. That while he was a rather obscure follower of Jesus in some far-flung corner of the Roman Empire, God was going to use him to touch the life of a man who would be foundational to the future of the Church throughout the world. That he, Ananias, by obeying God’s simple command would set in motion the most prolific theological writer of the New Testament and the not active apostolic figure for the expansion of the faith throughout the Roman Empire. Who could refuse an offer like this?

There is, of course, a little appetizer to make the mission more pleasing for a vengeful soul, “I will show him how much he must suffer for my name” (vs16). Something Paul knew all too well.

What we need to see here is the same form of unlikely encounter that we will experience with Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. In that story Peter goes to share the faith with a Roman officer and, in the process, to be challenged about his own safety and religious notions of sharing hospitality with a man and his family who Peter would have considered “unclean”. In this account, yet again, it is the relatively powerless Ananias who is to encounter the full religious authority of a man named Saul.

Ananias heads for Straight Street, now named Darb el-Mostakim, and the house of Judas. There he encounters Saul in faith and, in referring him as “brother”, confirms his conversion by ensuring he is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and baptized. But importantly, he cements Paul’s vocation as well as the one who will take the Good News of Jesus to the Gentiles and the people of Israel.

Encountering our assumptions and fears

It would have been so easy, even after the vision, for Ananias to have acted out of his assumption and fears. It would have even been excusable for him not to put himself in danger and to have acted “reasonably” based upon what he knew of Saul. In fact, it could have been possible for Ananias to step back from it all and done a Jonah with Saul from Tarsus and run in the opposite direction.

In contrast Ananias confronts his assumptions and fears, as well founded as they were, and acts in faith believing that this God of redemption is able to redeem all things, even the conversation of the one who hates him to the point of putting his followers to death. But just as importantly, that this God of redemption can find it in his capacity to offer grace to the one who most refused it, to offer forgiveness to the one least likely to accept it, to offer freedom to the one most wed to his religious bondage, to offer a new vision to the one so obsessed with the rightness of the vision he held. That must have flawed poor Ananias on every level.

Conclusion

Who or what is beyond God’s grasp?

I am sure that those early followers of Jesus struggled to imagine that one of the first recorded persecutors of the church, Saul, would ever cease from his tyranny. Even less so could they possibly imagine that he might become one of them? And, even more remotely, that he should become one of the greatest apostles of the faith. We know that because following Saul’s conversion his biggest opposition came from the church, he has so faithfully persecuted. While Ananias was all too willing to be God’s instrument of grace in Saul’s life, others were all too ready to question the legitimacy of his conversation and to oppose him at every turn.

It is always worth asking what it is that we fear or have assumptions about. What is the reality that we see as unchangeable? What circumstances of life are so beyond God's resolve or act of redemption in our own lives? At the same time, what situation would God call us to be an Ananias in? What is the context that God might call us to tell of who Jesus is and what redemptive act might result in the telling?

People: **Amen.**

(Time allowed for Silent Reflection.)

THE APOSTLE'S CREED

Pg. 189

Celebrant: Let us confess the faith of our baptism, as we say,

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE (#15)

(In joy and hope let us pray to the source of all life, saying, "Hear us, Lord of Glory!")

Leader: That our risen Saviour may fill us with the joy of his holy and life-giving resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That isolated and persecuted churches may find fresh strength in the Easter gospel, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That he may grant us humility to be subject to one another in Christian love, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That he may provide for those who lack food, work, or shelter, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That by his power wars and famine may cease through all the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That he may reveal the light of his presence to the sick, the weak, and the dying, that they may be comforted and strengthened; let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

Leader: That he may send the fire of the Holy Spirit upon his people, that we may bear faithful witness to his resurrection, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Hear us, Lord of glory!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pg. 191

Celebrant: Dear friends in Christ, God is steadfast in love and infinite in mercy; he welcomes sinners and invites them to his table. Let us confess our sins, confident in God's forgiveness.

(Silence is kept.)

Celebrant: Most merciful God,

People: we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us, that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

THE PEACE:

Celebrant: The peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Hymn: *Yours Be the Glory, Risen, Conquering Son*

#210 HB

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

All: Creator of all, you wash away our sins in water, you give us new birth by the Spirit, and redeem us in the blood of Christ. As we celebrate the resurrection, renew your gift of life within us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ the risen Lord. **Amen.**

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER #3:

Pg. 198

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Celebrant: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Celebrant: Blessed are you, gracious God, creator of heaven and earth; we give you thanks and praise for the glorious resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; for he is the true paschal lamb who has taken away the sin of the world. By his death he destroyed death, and by his rising to life again he has won for us eternal life. Therefore, joining our voices with the whole company of heaven, we sing our joyful hymn of praise to proclaim the glory of your name.

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Celebrant: We give thanks to you, Lord our God, for the goodness and love you have made known to us in creation; in calling Israel to be your people; in your Word spoken through the prophets; and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus your Son. For in these last days you sent him to be incarnate from the Virgin Mary, to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. In him, you have delivered us from evil, and made us worthy to stand before you. In him, you have brought us out of error into truth, out of sin into righteousness, out of death into life.

On the night he was handed over to suffering and death, a death he freely accepted, our Lord Jesus Christ took bread; and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup on wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore, Father according to his command,

**All: we remember his death,
we proclaim his resurrection,
we await his coming in glory;**

Celebrant: and we offer our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to you, Lord of all; presenting to you, from your creation, this bread and this wine.

We pray you, gracious God, to send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts, that they may be the sacrament of the body of Christ and his blood of the new covenant. Unite us to your Son in his sacrifice, that we, made acceptable in him, may be sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In the fullness of time, reconcile all things in Christ, and made them new, and bring us to that city of light where you dwell with all your sons and daughters; through Jesus Christ

our Lord, the firstborn of all creation, the head of the Church, and the author of our salvation;

By whom, and with whom and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Celebrant: As now, as our Saviour Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

BREAKING OF BREAD #8:

Celebrant: Lord, we died with you on the cross.

All: Now we are raised to new life.

Celebrant: We were buried in your tomb.

All: Now we share in your resurrection.

Celebrant: Live in us, that we may live in you.

Celebrant: The gifts of God for the People of God.

People: Thanks be to God.

LAMB OF GOD:

**All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

THE COMMUNION

Communion Hymns:

*As the Deer
Glorify Thy Name*

**#40 SB
#19 SB**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

All: Author of life divine, in the breaking of bread we know the risen Lord. Feed us always in these mysteries, that we may show your glory to all the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE DOXOLOGY

All: Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE BLESSING:

Officiant: The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord make his face shine on us and be gracious to us. The Lord look upon us with favour and grant us peace.
People: Amen.

REMINDEERS: Birthdays/Anniversaries/Announcements

Recessional: Lord of the Dance #41 SB

THE DISMISSAL:

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God. Alleluia.

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Assisting Fr. Simon today:

- Celebrant/Preacher: The Rev. Canon Simon Bell
- Bread: The Rev. Canon Simon Bell
- First Reading: Doug Court
- Second Reading: Jim Blogg
- Prayers: Margaret Paradis
- Gospel: Peter Beckett
- Psalm: Norm Savill
- Servers: Beth Steffler
- Music: Gayle Haley
- Audio/Visual: David Paradis
- Chancel Ministry: Margaret Paradis, Michelle Sinclair
- Sidespersons: Grant Robinson, Douglas Goodyer

This morning in our worship we remember in our prayers those of our family and friends who have immediate needs and concerns:

Gail Jones; Brenda & Family; John & Family; Bruno, sons & all the family; Elizabeth Cresswell; Parents & Family of EV; Carl Dicks & Family; Anita & Family; Matthew Canning; Bill Canning; Quinn, Cass & Cory; Donna, Ray, Nancy & Chris Wilson; Ida; Cecilia Mowat & Family; Lorraine Whitwell; Celeste & parents; Stephanie; Alvin Maynard; Nova; Colleen; Irene; John; Kayla; Dorothy McIlravey & husband Chuck; Kim Middaugh; Wilma; Sally; Steve & Jade; Jim & Barb Tomkins; Ron and Karen; Braedy; Karyn; Rev. Janet Mitchell; Sharron Snider; Peter Hubbard; Sally Smith; Marilyn Lloyd.

The names below are people in need of ongoing prayers for various reasons so we ask you to please continue to pray for them and their continuing need of God's healing touch and grace:

Martin Bertelsen; Stephen Bertelsen; Theresa & Pete; Valerie; Darlene Jessem; Doreen; Derek; Jaxon Croft; Sean; Rose McIntyre; Vayda; Daniel Leibovich; Barb Semsch; Rose Court; Mark Ralston; Jackson; Phil & Kathy C.; Bob Anderson; Nancy Perault; Marco Romita & Rose; Sharon Z; Adesh; Lisa Marie; Joyce Antony; Bill & Cathy Gray; Dave Lawrence; Livia & Neil Purcell; Sheila Green; Carrie Snow; Sheri Scott; Carl; Mark & Erin; Wally Raymond; Christine; Audrey Moody; Lynda Raye; Garn Mennell; Lee & Jeannie Martin; Michelle Sinclair and mom; Jane & Ron Lewis; Marilyn Foley; Bill Snow; Deborah Hall; Jen Galicinski; Arlene; Joan Gough; Eunice Merrett; Jean Wallace; Nancy Dodds; Wendy Goodyer; Do Saunders; Jefferson Jr.; June Osolin; Tanya Wade-Vargas.

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

The Episcopal Church in the Philippines

In the Toronto Diocesan Cycle of Prayer we pray for:

New Curates of the Diocese of Toronto