

St Philip's Prayer Circle

Prayers for God's gift of Water



Thursday, November 18, 2021

Welcome to this circle of prayer. We begin by acknowledging the traditional territory upon which we gather this morning. For many thousands of years, the Wendake, Mississauga, and Haudonosaunee peoples, have sought to walk gently on this land we now call Prince Edward County. They offered assistance to the first European travelers to this territory and shared their knowledge for survival, in what was at times a harsh climate. We seek a new relationship with the Original Peoples of this land, one based in honour and deep respect.

Next to air, water is our most essential necessity. Here in Canada, most of us are blessed to have abundant, clean water to drink and use for cooking, growing food, washing clothes, and flushing toilets. We seldom worry that the water we drink could make us sick — or even kill us. Around the world, hundreds of millions of people don't share this blessing. 785 million people lack access to clean water. That's one in 10 people on the planet. Every day, more than 800 children under 5 die from diarrhea caused by contaminated water, poor sanitation, and unsafe hygiene practices. Our world is in the middle of a water crisis.

God tells us in 2 Chronicles Chapter 7, verse 14 *"if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

So today we pray. We humbly uphold to God, asking for forgiveness, for all the ways we damage, destroy and spoil His most precious gift of water. We pray for water in all its forms: rain, river, sea, ice, snow, hail, and vapour. We pray that all of God's people will turn from our wicked ways, so we can be forgiven, and our water healed.

Just as many rivers merge together into the sea, we have come together to pray to God, the fountain of living water. As we pray to God in spirit and in truth, let our hearts overflow with praise, let us be cleansed by the waters of God's grace and forgiveness. Let us be refreshed and restored by Jesus Christ who promises us the waters of life through his resurrection.

ALL: AMEN

READER: Psalm 23

The LORD is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
he refreshes my soul.**

He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

**Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,**

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;

**your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.**

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.

**You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,

**and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.**

ALL: Glory to you, Jesus Christ, our good shepherd. In the waters of baptism you give us new birth, at your table you nourish us with heavenly food, and in your goodness and mercy, you guide us beyond the terrors of evil and death to your Father's home to dwell in eternal light. Glory to you forever. AMEN

READER: Our Gospel for today is the Gospel of John, Chapter 4, verses 1 - 15:

All: Glory to you Lord Jesus Christ

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John" —although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— he left Judea and started back to Galilee. But he had to go through Samaria. 5 So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them

a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.”

This is the Gospel of Christ,

All: Praise be to you Lord Jesus Christ

READER: We pray for Forgiveness, for what we have done, and what we have left undone

God, the very source of life, whose spirit hovered over waters at the time of creation;

God in Jesus Christ, who came as living waters to quench our thirst;

God the Holy Spirit, who waters and brings forth the fruit;

we come into your presence, confessing our attitudes of greed, dominance and insensitivity towards your wonderful creation, and particularly towards water.

READER: We confess that we have been irresponsible in our use of water, wasting it to satisfy our comfortable lives.

In many places we have commodified and privatised water, a natural resource, denying people access to it. In the name of development projects, water sources have been drained or polluted with industrial waste, causing risk to flora and fauna.

READER: We acknowledge the lack of cooperation between different authorities and organisations to manage water resources fairly.

We confess our failure, as faith communities, to address water justice and seek forgiveness for not speaking out for the thirsty and the dying in situations of drought.

READER: We confess to being silent spectators as many vulnerable communities walk miles every day in search of water for their families.

We regret our involvement in the commodification of water, which has resulted in contamination and reduction of water supplies.

We come to your presence ashamed of our apathy and insincerity towards the abuse of water and other natural resources, asking you to inspire us to be challenged to conserve, preserve and use water prudently.

READER: God who brought water out of the rock,
God who quenched the thirst of those dying in the wilderness,
God who in Jesus gave the living waters
so that those who taste them would never thirst,

READER: God who in Jesus died on the Cross thirsty,
for there was none to quench his thirst,
listen to all those who truly confess
and grant us forgiveness so that we act responsibly in our use of water,
become sensitive to the desperate needs of those without water,
and gain wisdom in conserving and preserving water so that rivers roll out in justice among all nations and all peoples¹.

ALL: AMEN

¹ <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/prayers-related-to-sdg6-water-and-sanitation>

READER: A prayer Safe Drinking Water for Canada's First Nations

Our world is in the middle of a water crisis. But we don't have to look far away to see the effects of this crisis - in 2015, there were 126 drinking water advisories in our First Nations communities. The Federal government committed to resolving the advisories by March 2021, but did not provide the appropriate funding required to meet that deadline. We currently have 43 water advisories remaining in 31 First Nation communities.

In order for First Nations to achieve equity in water access, quality and quantity, the current model of dependency must be challenged and changed. Full autonomy, decision-making and control over their internationally recognized right to water is the only way forward. If we really want to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities on safe drinking water, we need to look across the entire spectrum — from First Nations that rely on bottled water to those with individual wells and communities with reliable tap water. We must address the real magnitude of this crisis.

READER: God of justice, we pray for all those who are resisting those who plunder and pillage our natural resources and threaten the livelihood and lives of our Indigenous communities. We pray for the communities with boil water advisory in Manitoba: Tataskweyak (Tat-ask-wey-ak) Cree Nation, Shamattawa (Sham-at-tawa) First Nation, and the Mathias Colomb Cree Nation.

We pray for the communities with boil water advisories in Saskatchewan: Little Pine First Nation, Okanese (Ok-an-es-e) First Nation, Peepeekisis (Peep-eeek-is-is) Cree Nation Number 81, Star Blanket Cree Nation, Ministikwan (Min-is-tik-wan) Lake Cree Nation.

READER: We are ashamed to pray that the majority of boil water advisories are in our home province of Ontario. We pray for the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, Anishnaabeg (An-ish-naa-beg) of Naongashiing (Na-on-gash-ing), Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, Wabaseemoong (Wa-ba-see-mo-ong) Independent Nations, Northwest Angle No.33 First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, Eabametoong (E-bam-e-toong) First Nation, Martin Falls First Nation, Gull Bay First Nation, Mishkeegogamang (Mish-kee-gog-am-ang) First Nation, North Caribou Lake First Nation, Bearskin Lake First Nation, Sandy Lake First Nation, Muskrat Dam Lake First Nation, Sachigo Lake First Nation, Wawakapewin (Wawa-kap-e-win) First Nation, Deer Lake First Nation, North Spirit Lake First Nation, Neskantaga (Nesk-an-taga) First Nation, Nibinamik (Nib-in-am-ik) First Nation, Ojibway Nation of Saugeen. And in our own community, we pray for the Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte.

READER: We pray for all Indigenous people and those engaged in preservation and sharing of water, your gift of life. Strengthen these resisting communities, guide them and sustain them in their endeavors.

Dear Lord, we ask for your blessings on children, mothers, fathers, and communities who are thirsty. Purify, protect, and multiply their water sources. Strengthen their resolve so they may fully enjoy the benefits of clean water — essentials like education, gardens of fresh produce, and good health. In Jesus' name we pray,

ALL: AMEN

READER: We pray for the impact of changing Weather

We have all prayed for a change in the weather. We pray for good weather when we begin a trip, whether by land, air or sea. We pray for good weather when we are planning a picnic, taking a hike, or going to the beach. In this rural area, we pray for rain or sun, as the crops need them. And we have thanked God when he has

answered these prayers. The Bible tells of many times when a change in the weather came when people prayed. Today, we pray for forgiveness, as the changing weather is due to un-natural causes.

Compassionate God, source of all comfort, we pray for the people whose lives have been devastated by torrential, continuous rain and severe flooding. Today we pray for the people of Merritt British Columbia, and those in the Nicola Valley community. We pray for the people of Vancouver Island, Southern and Central British Columbia. We are grateful for the safe recovery of those caught in the mud slides from the highway in Haig. We know there is much more effect from this “weather anomaly”, that we fear is no longer an anomaly. Through out this year we have heard of drought, floods, heat domes, atmospheric rivers, locust swarms, described as of Biblical proportion. We know these tragic changes in climate is caused by the climate crisis we are in.

Bring them comfort, we pray. Protect the vulnerable.

Strengthen the weak. Keep at bay the spread of disease.

Have mercy on all those working to rescue the stranded and to feed the hungry.

And may our response to their suffering be generous and bring you praise.

For we ask all this in Jesus’ name,

ALL: AMEN

READER: We pray for the impact of the Melting Ice Cap and shrinking Ice Shelves

As an ice shelf collapses, it changes the boundary conditions for the glaciers that flow into the ice shelf. This can occur over just a few weeks, following progressive thinning by warm ocean waters below, and from excessive melting during extreme heat of summers and warm winters. Rising seas endanger coastal cities and small island nations by exacerbating coastal flooding and storm surge, making dangerous weather events even more so. We live on an earth this is knitted together and interdependent. The melting ice cap and shrinking ice shelves effect temperatures, coastal communities, food sources, shipping, wildlife, the permafrost, and weather events and conditions.

Loving Heavenly Father, grant us the wisdom to care for the waters of the earth. Help us to act now for the good of future generations, your waters, and all your creatures in the waters and oceans. Help us to become instruments of a new creation, founded on the covenant of your love. And may we all drink the living water, who Himself came down from heaven to be our Saviour and Lord. We ask this in the name of our precious Saviour, Jesus Christ our Lord,

ALL: AMEN

READER: We pray for the impact of Rising Waters

Dear God, please bless those who are suffering and are moving because of sea levels rising and dangerous disasters happening in their lives and livelihoods. Please bless them and watch over them as they have to move away from their homes and communities due to climate weather change. Please Lord, we ask you to take care and watch over them.

ALL: AMEN

Dear Lord, please look upon the people who are moving due to natural disasters, lands that are sinking into the sea. Please look after people who are suffering from extreme weather events. Help those families who are

finding life hard. Our prayer is for all people to be and feel safe, every day, just like the life we are living now. We ask you Father, to save people from the rising waters disaster.

ALL: AMEN

READER: And we pray for the Changing Watersheds

The Arctic Ocean, the Pacific Ocean, Hudson Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Atlantic Ocean: these are North America's watersheds; these are the lands and the waters that feed and sustain us all. They are connected to each other; they connect us. And through the oceans they are connected to watersheds throughout the world. Through these waters, we are connected to our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Watersheds unite our ecological communities, and they facilitate the cycling of water that sustains life. Human activity on land and in waterways affects our watersheds. Climate change has negatively impacted Canadian watersheds: more variability in rain patterns may compromise fresh water availability and increase risks of water-borne disease. Shrinking glaciers in the Canadian Rockies are leaving less meltwater for aquatic and human ecosystems. Bodies of freshwater are expected to shrink, and droughts may become more frequent in the Prairies. Aquatic ecosystems in Canada's North are particularly at risk due to water temperature fluctuations.

We are grateful to you, Lord, for being our Source of living water — the One who satisfies our soul's deepest desire with the joy of salvation. Show us that faith doesn't come from answered prayers, but rather from the "confidence in what we hope for" (this is from Hebrews 11, verse 1). Lord, open your people's eyes to recognize you as the only Source of living water for our parched souls. Let us be refreshed in your love when we enjoy clean water to drink.

ALL: AMEN

READER: We pray for the loss of Permafrost

Permafrost is any ground that remains completely frozen—32°F (0°C) or colder—for at least two years straight. These permanently frozen grounds are most common in regions with high mountains and in Earth's higher latitudes—near the North and South Poles. Without permafrost, water would soak in or run off the land, and the region would become very dry. Frozen ground also affects the way that carbon cycles through an ecosystem. Soil normally releases carbon into the atmosphere. This carbon comes from decaying plant and animal material in the soil. As permafrost thaws, microbes begin decomposing this material. This process releases greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane to the atmosphere. When permafrost thaws, so do ancient bacteria and viruses in the ice and soil. These newly-unfrozen microbes could make humans and animals very ill.

Dear Lord, we are aware the earth is a very fragile place, and yet it is our home, our only home. In the past century in particular, humanities actions on the earth have been severe, making excessive demands, and now the earth along with its life and ecosystems, is struggling to cope. Please forgive us for not understanding how much we depend on a healthy earth, clean water, and stable oceans, all in order to survive. We know the first to suffer are always the poor and most vulnerable, and so we pray the world takes stock, reduce our demands, and live more simply, or as Jesus asked of his followers, more lightly on the earth.

ALL: AMEN

READER: We pray during this time of Ongoing Pandemic

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens, your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: AMEN

God of compassion, be close to those who are afraid or in isolation. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light. We ask this through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: AMEN

Lord, these days of pandemic are so challenging, in very many ways. Yet even so, we are mindful of the blessings we enjoy. We pray for the people of this world who this day do not have clean water, food, primary healthcare, heat as the weather turns colder, or a safe place to lay their head. We pray for all who are unable to distance; for all unable to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. And even as our fears and isolation wanes, we can only imagine their fear and isolation. Please hear their cries. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

ALL: AMEN

READER: Final Exhortation – Revelation 22: 1 - 5

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

ALL: AMEN

READER: Our God, father and mother,
from, through, and to whom all lives flow,
Your name is holy for you water every creature with life.

READER: May the 'waters rolling in justice' come down among us
and dwell as in your presence.
Give us water sufficient for our living,
and help us to share water and other resources with those who are dying of thirst.

READER: Forgive us our insincerity, insensitivity and irresponsibility
in saving and preserving water, and for our abuse of creation.
And teach us to forgive one another.

