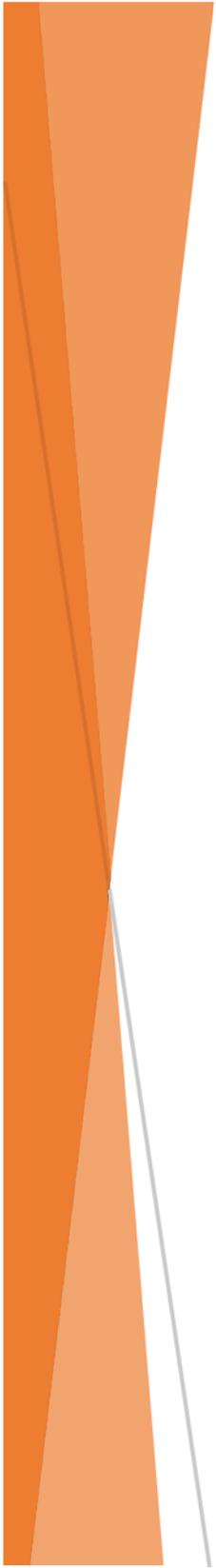




WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



January 14 – 30
Daily Devotions



MORNING

As I rise, O God,
I give you thanks for safety in the night,
for rest from my labors,
for another day in this creation.

Turn my eyes toward what is noble.

Teach me to see hope where it is veiled.

Give me the wisdom to desire the good.

Help me to love not only those
I encounter but myself as well,
for with you,
I know my many frailties and failings.

Let peace reign. Amen.

Tuesday, January 14—Travel Day

Are you embarking on a journey that will fulfill your own spiritual needs or on a mission – to serve others and to glorify God?

As we begin this journey, consider the following question: Are you embarking on a mission or a pilgrimage? A pilgrimage may be defined as a journey that one undertake as a quest for some religious purpose, whereas a mission is the work or calling of a team to fulfill some purpose on behalf of or with another group of people. The key feature of a pilgrimage is that it is focused on personal spiritual growth while a mission is focused on the fulfillment of a calling on behalf of others. There is a time and place for pilgrimage – this is not to say that it is wrong to seek your one’s own spiritual growth – however, this trip must be about mission lest you hinder the work that God is doing in the lives of the Kenyans you will encounter. Are you embarking on a journey that will fulfill your own spiritual needs or on a mission – to serve others and to glorify God?

Wednesday, January 15—End of Travel

Here we are. You have finally made it—after a flurry of prayer, patience, and a long plane journey. You are probably in a strange place, seen various people from different cultures, your eyes already reminding you that you are a sojourner. Maybe you are wondering how to begin to sort through many emotions that are flowing through you.

It is OK to have many questions, even many doubts or fears that go right alongside excitement and expectation. Even if you do not answer all the questions you have during this trip, it will be deeper and more meaningful if you try to work through some of the things you will feel and experience individually and as a group. Risk being open with each other. Try to search out and question things together. But where and how do we start?

The perfect place to start is to look to the man who was the perfect volunteer: The man who lived and worked on the margins; to suffer, to cry and to experience joy with the people; who ultimately amazingly, died for them/world/you... Jesus.

We do not have all the answers, but Christ can bring healing, change, and renewal to transform us and the people around you in a powerful way to address the questions. He will use you in perhaps surprising ways if you submit/surrender to God. Let us make that our goal each day.

Food for thought:

1. What is your first impressions of this country?
2. How does poverty fit into God’s sovereignty? Why does God allow some people to be ‘poor’ and some to be ‘rich’?

“My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.”
2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Thursday, January 16—Day 1 in Kenya—tours

It is important to start on the right foot.

Have you ever witnessed a child when they start putting on their button-down shirt without paying much attention and halfway through they realized something is off? Rather than continuing to button-up the shirt, they have to undo all the work they have done and start all over again. They learn to pay attention to the first button and how to put them together.

It is the same with our trip. We will have a first view of the land that we have been praying for months in a daylight. Rather than choosing to see it and comprehend it in our ways, let us ask God to open our eyes, ears, and hearts to witness what God has prepared for us; to look through the lens of God's love.

Food for thought:

1. Is Kenya more or less than what you imagined?
2. To what or whom is God drawing your attention?



Friday, January 17—Church workday #1

The Scripture on the right gives us a clear picture of the mission of Christ on this earth and to what Jesus has called his disciples in his absence and preparation for his return. You are probably familiar with this passage; it often serves as the inspiration for modern feet washing ceremonies done symbolically in churches today. Understanding the historical and cultural contexts of this strange event and command of Jesus can further illuminate the kind of lives we are meant to lead every day and on the mission field. It is, first and foremost, a call to service and humility.

The actions Jesus models for us in washing His disciples' feet are far more radical than we might initially estimate. Foot washing was the business of servants. It was the dirty work of the lowly as they cleaned the dusty, and no doubt gnarly, feet of others who had trekked miles in shoes that weren't quite as well-made or protective as shoes are today. Think of a fairly nasty job you would deign to do. That is essentially what Jesus was doing. But it wasn't just about foot washing, it was about humbling himself before others, about denying himself and disregarding the majesty and glory due to him and putting others first. Jesus adopted a lowly posture before others to demonstrate his love for them, and to give us an example of how we are to treat other people.

Food for thought:

How can I emulate Jesus' humility and servant heart to the people whom I meet today?

Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you."

John 13:5,12-15

Saturday, January 18—Church Workday #2

Ephesians 4:1-3

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Bible tells us that we are created in God's image: *Imago Dei*. As we are on the frontline of God's work, how does it deepen your understanding of being God's ambassador? Consider the following questions:

- In honest self-evaluation, how much have you typically been willing to serve in the past, and how does that compare with the example of Christ?
- What are some obstacles (spiritual, emotional, physical and mental) that might keep you from denying self and giving to others?

This is just a brief look at what the model of service Jesus and Paul gives to us. Take some time to look elsewhere throughout Scripture to see how else Jesus demonstrated this. In understanding his nature and character, it becomes easier for us to understand how we are to be conformed into his image.

Food for thought:

Our children not only take an image of who we are, but also our character, values, and faith. How are we honoring our Father in Heaven? How can we honor our (spiritual) children with our words & deeds? How can we honor God's children (all others) before ourselves?

Sunday, January 19—Church dedication

All creation belongs to the creator. Our Master Planner and Ultimate lover sent Jesus, God's only begotten son, to restore all unto Godself. It was not a work of man, but in Jesus – who is both Son of God and Son of Man. All of nature proclaims who God is and God's invisible attributes are made known to all in what surrounds us. This is a God who surely deserves all the glory.

Our goal is to give God all the praise and glory. Jesus exemplified this when he depended on God and his willingness to serve God's will in all circumstances. (John 5:30)

“I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of God who sent me.”

If this was the driving force behind Jesus' ministry, it should be our goal to do the same: our primary focus is to bring glory to God in the work being done in Kenya. It is about giving the praise to the one who enables you to do this ministry, who is the very reason for this ministry, who brings redemption, salvation, and healing to the world. Paul echoes the same in his letter to Colossians (3:17).

“Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

Food for thought:

1. As we dedicate the church on the Lord's day, what are we thankful for?
2. In what word and/or deed, could we give glory to the Lord today?

Monday, January 20—Comet House Boys Home Day 1

One of the well-known missional Scripture is Matthew 9:37-38.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”

We are on our mission trip on the premise that the seed has already been planted in the mission field. However, to raise a good crop, it needs to be nurtured by fervently tilling the soil prior to seeding, fertilizing the sprouts and spraying for weeds. We are joining God’s work that is already taking place, and we are called to be the additional laborers as the harvest is truly plenty.

Did you know farmers always have a small window of time to harvest their crops due to weather impediments and ground conditions? (Need to check with Harold with this one!) As God calls on the anointed co-worker (that is us), we are arriving at God’s appointed time to do God’s work on the field, may it be tilling, fertilizing, weeding, and/or harvesting. But it is God who makes them grow.

“What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. **The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose**, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. **For we are God’s servants, working together; you are God’s field, God’s building.**” 1 Corinthians 3:5-9

Food for thought:

What is God calling you to do during this mission trip? What is our common purpose as a team?

Tuesday, January 21—Comet House Boys Home Day 2

“As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” Mark 10:17-21

The rich young man did not get it. He could fall on his knees before Jesus and he could call him “good,” but he just didn’t get it. Doubtlessly, the young man thought that his life was fine –had he not been faithful in keeping the commandments? So why would the Master ask more of him? Why, on top of everything else, would Jesus ask him to give up his money? Well, he would not do it. He just could not give it up. Jesus knew where his heart was, and the young man’s “good” life, of course, was just not enough. Yet Jesus is not angry; He does not act disappointed. Verse 21 is so telling. “Jesus looked at him and loved him.” Can you imagine that kind of response? Here is a guy clearly off the mark and Jesus has nothing but love for him. Yes, Jesus requires sacrifice, but first Jesus wants the heart to make the sacrifice for the right reasons. Amazingly, He still loves us when we fall short. There are so many examples of Jesus’ love. He is a friend of sinners; He is moved by agony and need. Love overflowed from Jesus at the death of His dear friend Lazarus. Love turned the weary Jesus to yet another crowd who so desperately reached for His healing touch. Love made Jesus, although in agonizing and excruciating pain, look down from the cross to ensure that His mother was cared for. Love put Jesus on that cross in the first place. Voluntarily.

This is the cornerstone of all change that happens: in hearts, in communities, in relationships. Not only are you called to bring that love to all people, you are called to be that love to them. That is a tall order, but it is right there in the summary of the law: loving your neighbor as yourself is second only to loving God with everything that you have and are.

Wednesday, January 22—Old People’s Home

Can you imagine actually hearing the voice of Jesus? What would that sound like?

Well, it would be something out-of-the-ordinary, that is for sure. Think about it. What if some man walked up to you and told you to follow him? Just like that. Out of the blue. What kind of voice could command that kind of abandon and obedience?

Yet that is about all the disciples had to go on. A voice. He basically said stop what you are doing. Drop your livelihood. Leave your family. Come, follow me. I will give you something new and completely foreign to do. Would you be so easily convinced to leave your life behind for a stranger? What was it about Jesus’ voice that compelled those fishermen? Was it deep and compelling? Full of authority? Whether conscious or not, the disciples must have known on some level that it was the voice of God, don’t you think?

Well, of course we do not yet know what Jesus’ voice sounds like. Yet we *do* know Jesus’ words and the way in which he used them. The first recorded words of Jesus in Matthew command John to baptize him and to “let it be so now.” That authority is also clear in his teaching. The Pharisees acknowledged it, even though they would not submit to it.

Perhaps the most incredible thing about the words of Jesus is that they are always what the listeners need to hear. His voice of comfort says, “come to me, all you who are weary and burdened.” Jesus’ silences, incredibly, are powerful too. Think of how he does not immediately answer those who would stone the prostitute. Or, after telling Pilate that he is the King of the Jews, Jesus refuses to answer to anymore of the charges against Him. Yet Pilate is convinced that Jesus is innocent.

Sometimes we are called to fill the silences with words of comfort. Sometimes we need words that silence those who would damage our testimony. And yet at other times, too, our voice is most powerful in its silence. We need to listen to those around us. So, perhaps in a certain way, we *have* heard the voice of Jesus. What is more, we are called to be the voice of Jesus to those who desperately need to hear it. Looking to Jesus as a perfect example, we can prayerfully learn to discern what kind of voice we actually do have in the matter.

Thursday, January 23—Canaan School Workday #1

The Key to Missionary Devotion “... they went forth for His name’s sake...” 3 John 7

Our Lord told us how our love for Him is to exhibit itself when He asked, “Do you love Me?” ([John 21:17](#)). And then He said, “Feed My sheep.” In effect, He said, “Identify *yourself* with My interests in other people,” not, “Identify *Me* with *your* interests in other people.” [1 Corinthians 13:4-8](#) shows us the characteristics of this love— it is actually the love *of God* expressing itself. The true test of my love for Jesus is a very practical one, and all the rest is sentimental talk.

Faithfulness to Jesus Christ is the supernatural work of redemption that has been performed in me by the Holy Spirit— “the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit...” ([Romans 5:5](#)). And it is that love in me that effectively works through me and comes in contact with everyone I meet. I remain faithful to His name, even though the commonsense view of my life may seemingly deny that, and may appear to be declaring that He has no more power than the morning mist.

The key to the missionary’s devotion is that he is attached to nothing and to no one except our Lord Himself. It does not mean simply being detached from the external things surrounding us. Our Lord was amazingly in touch with the ordinary things of life, but He had an inner detachment except toward God. External detachment is often an actual indication of a secret, growing, inner attachment to the things we stay away from externally.

The duty of a faithful missionary is to concentrate on keeping his soul completely and continually open to the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. The men and women our Lord sends out on His endeavors are ordinary human people, but people who are controlled by their devotion to Him, which has been brought about through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Food for thought:

How has God been faithful to you during this mission trip? How do you feel connected with God?

Friday, January 24—Canaan School Workday #2

“Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.” And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.” Matthew 19:13-15

How does this kind of “hands on” work relate to the volunteer assignment of Jesus on earth? Yes, he was a carpenter’s son, and probably grew up using his hands. But there is more. Jesus’ hands, during his ministry, were incredible communicators of what Jesus was really about. Think about the parents in Matthew 19 who risked the disciples’ wrath just for an opportunity to have Jesus’ hands on their children. What importance they must have placed on that gesture! Jesus’ hands communicated blessing: He had the authority and power to bless, but also the love to initiate blessing. And what a blessing! Jesus tells them that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to these children!

Jesus’ hands communicate blessing, healing and reconciliation. They create community. At the end of his life, Jesus committed his spirit into the hands of God. In so doing, he effected the most powerful reconciliation of all: the healing of people’s relationship with their Maker. He enfolded us into God’s family. That is a lot to live up to. Yet, as you take that hammer in your hands and pound a nail, or as you are painting a door, you are using your hands to form community. Your touch communicates the love of Christ to those around you.

How “hands on” was your work today?

Food for thought:

How about praying/blessing for the children that will use the classroom as we work on the building today? Let us leave our spiritual fingerprints on these walls.

Saturday, January 25—Canaan School Workday #3

“If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:1-11

You are a child of God. You were made in the image of God. Your neighbor, too, is a child of God and made in God’s image. At the most basic and important level, this is what defines your identity. You were made to bring glory to God. You were created to take care of the world and be productive in the world. The same is true for your neighbor. That is the vocation to which we are all called.

Notice that both identity and vocation are about relationships. Your identity is about a vertical relationship: you and your Creator. For those who do not know the beauty of their true identity, this relationship becomes triangular: your relationship with your neighbor can help point the way to Christ. In a similar way, vocation is about a triangular relationship: none of us can be productive on our own. We need to work together, to live on this earth in a way that will ultimately point to Christ in our lives!

You may wonder what you can do in such a short time here. Well, not much, if the emphasis is on you. It is all about the Holy Spirit. Praise God that Jesus is still here among us in the person of the Holy Spirit! Through God’s incomparable power, relationships are created and strengthened and deepened and made beautiful.

Food for thought:

How well did you get to know your mission teammates throughout this trip? How are you thankful for them?

Sunday, January 26—Safari: Fig Tree Day 1

All of creation points to the Creator.

“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world...

The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the LORD are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the LORD is clear, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.” Psalm 19:1-4, 7-9

Creation is not the only thing God uses to show us God’s power, grace, and love. God gave us God’s Word to tell us who God is, who we are, and how much God loves us. No matter how many times we read the Bible, it never changes and always has something valuable for us. God’s Word is perfect, refreshing to the soul, and gives us wisdom and joy (v.7-9). God’s Word will always be true and is confirmed by God’s creation. They work together to give us a bigger, more beautiful and holistic perspective of who God is.

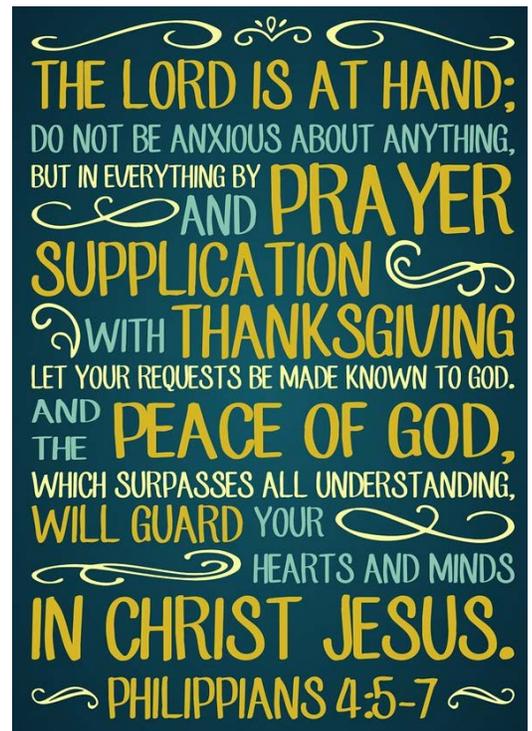
God is gracious to give us both creation and God’s Word as different lenses to see the same truths about God. How often does God give us a beautiful sunset, or paint a rainbow in the sky at just the right time – when we need a reminder of God’s power, love, and promises? How often does God lead us to exactly the Scripture we need that day? Taking in the awesome beauty of creation and reading the Bible this day to connect with our Creator and Savior.

Monday, January 27—Safari: Fig Tree Day 2

“I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, maker of heaven and earth. ” Psalm 121:1-2

Peace with God is only found at the foot of the cross whereas peace within is achieved through obedience to the word of God. True peace is a calm assurance coupled with a quiet joy that God has your life under control and that God is continuously yet mysteriously working to accomplish God’s purpose. God knows your unfulfilled desires, your broken dreams, your disappointments, and your defeats. God can bring about peace in your life in the midst of these challenges and God longs to do that for you today.

Simply pray for God to grant you the perspective you need on your circumstances and ask for God’s help to maintain your reliance on God and dependence on God’s power despite the difficulty you are facing. Studying God’s word and allowing it to transform you will enable you to find that peace God longs to give you.



Tuesday, January 28—Safari: Fig Tree Day 3

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” — John 14:27

Our world needs peace. There is so much conflict going on between people groups, nations, political parties, religious groups, churches, and even individual Christians. There’s internal conflict in the form of anxiety and stress. Where can we find peace?

Jesus gives us the answer. He said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.” Lasting peace comes from Jesus. His peace is deep and soul satisfying. His peace brings wholeness. It’s like solving a puzzle. Jesus’ peace takes the scattered pieces and puts them in order. The result is peace in a variety of ways.

First of all, we have peace with God through the covering of our sins. That leads to peace within as we know we have a Father who loves us. Then, finally, there’s peace with others as we learn to serve and be gracious and forgiving.

Jesus’ peace is unique, much different from the world’s kind of peace. The world seeks peace, but it only touches the surface of our lives. It may lead to a temporary end of conflict, but it cannot cure the source of that conflict—sinful human hearts.

Jesus is the great peacemaker. Do you know the peace Jesus brings? Do you want it? Trust in him today.

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives.”

Wednesday, January 29—Rescue Center & Karai Orphanage

“Yet you do not even know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” James 4:14



Nothing takes God by surprise. Everything is moving according to a plan, and God wants you in that plan. The devil also has a plan for the world. God has a plan and the devil has a plan, and you will have to decide which plan you are going to fit into. Many of us reach 80 years and some beyond. The first 15 are spent in childhood and early adolescence. Twenty years are spent in bed, and in the last five, physical limitations start to curtail our activities. That gives us about 30 years in which to live as adults. We take time out for eating, and for figuring our taxes, and we are down to perhaps 15 years. Now suppose we spend seven of those years watching television. That cuts us down to seven or eight years. Our time is short! The time we can invest for God, in creative things, in reaching our fellowmen for Christ, is short!

Food for thought:

Our time in Kenya is about to run out. As we wrap up our mission of sharing God’s love, how are we going to spend rest of our time here, and when we get back home?

Thursday, January 30—Home

O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, those he redeemed from trouble

and gathered in from the lands,

from the east and from the west,

from the north and from the south.^[a]

Some wandered in desert wastes,

finding no way to an inhabited town;

hungry and thirsty,

their soul fainted within them.

Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,

and he delivered them from their distress;

he led them by a straight way,

until they reached an inhabited town.

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,

for his wonderful works to humankind.

For he satisfies the thirsty,

and the hungry he fills with good things.

Give thanks to the Lord, our God and King,
For He is good, He is above all things,
With a mighty hand and outstretched arm,
For the life that's been reborn,
From rising to the setting sun,
And by the grace of God we will carry on,
His love endures forever.
Forever God is faithful, strong, with us.
Forever.



EVENING

As I end this day, Holy One,
I give you thanks
for the richness of my hours:

For my family and friends,

For people with whom I work and play,

For my neighbors,

For those who fill this world
with music and art.

For those whose needs
remind me of my blessings and
whose skills make me
grateful for differences.

**Guard us all, O God,
and keep us in your embrace
until the daylight comes. Amen.**

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