

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;
go into his courts with praise.

Psalms 100:4 NLT

Enter the Gates

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
and into his courts with praise: Be
thankful unto him and bless his name. For
the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting;
And his truth endureth to all generations.

Devotionals: 12 - 18 November 2023

You call me to wait on You, Lord, but I get tired of waiting for

Your answers to my prayers: Your call for me to serve You, standing on the promise of Your coming Kingdom. Blessings and answers all seem to take so long.

You tell me to watch for Your coming, Lord, but I'm not sure how to prepare for... a thief in the night, an undisclosed time, and Your disconcerting habit of secrecy and mystery.

Yet, something inside whispers that You're not all that hard to find; that You're always coming to me, and that both the waiting and the watching are more about being open to You now, than about trying not to be surprised in the future.

And so, I will keep waiting, and I'll try to stay alert, so that I can catch the glimpses of Your glory that fill my day, every day. Amen.

Wait. Are we talking about gratitude or about joy? Yes! We are staking a claim that gratitude and joy are intertwined. In some ways, they are indistinguishable. Certainly, from the outside, joy looks like gratitude and gratitude looks like joy. We could get into a chicken and egg kind of conversation here if we wanted to. Does a life of gratitude lead to joy? Or does a joyful outlook make us more grateful? Again, we can only say ... Yes! It would be hard to differentiate between the two. So, let's not even try. Our hymns of grateful praise are joyous songs to sing.

Let's begin with a familiar song:

Psalms 100

All Lands Summoned to Praise God

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

¹ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.

² Serve the LORD with gladness;
come into his presence with singing.

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his;
we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴ Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise.
Give thanks to him; bless his name.

⁵ For the LORD is good;
his steadfast love endures forever
and his faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100 is an interesting psalm that straddles categories and defies being put into a simple box. It follows a series of enthronement psalms and has some similarities with them, though it is not usually considered one. It follows a familiar pattern of a praise psalm, but tosses in a verse that stands apart, in a way. The superscription seems straightforward, but it also presents a puzzle. This psalm is all over the place, which might be a perfect way to describe a life of joyful gratitude. It's all over the place.

The superscription simply says, “a psalm of thanksgiving.” What could there be to argue there? Not argue, per se, but point out that the word here could mean being thankful in a general sense, or it could mean making a sacrifice on the altar in worship. We could suggest that both are useful for us in understanding the life of gratitude that we're called to.

On the one hand, there is the idea that thankfulness covers all of life; it is our way of approaching the world and the attitudes with which we choose to live.

On the other hand, there is a clear indication that we are making a commitment to God in our choice to live a grateful life. A sacrifice means that there is some cost, some effort on our part. We surrender our inclinations to think the world revolves around us. We bow down in service, looking to the needs of others before our own needs.

We enter the gates with thanksgiving. But what does that mean? Do we come to church with grateful hearts? Well, of course, we do. But more than that, we pass through every door with gratitude in our minds and hearts. We enter our own homes, grateful for the family of which we are a part. We go out into the world grateful for the abundance we take for granted way too often. We encounter others and give thanks for the gift of life that they are, even the ones we sometimes struggle to get along with.

This lifestyle is our joyful noise. This isn't about singing songs. Or maybe it is, but our songs may be spoken as well as sung. We are using our presence to bring joy into the world around us. And it only takes a quick look around to see how countercultural such an idea really is.

We are called to worship the Lord with gladness. But the word translated as worship does not mean a worship service; it means a worship-centered life. Yes, what we do in the hour we gather with the body in the sanctuary of the church matters, and we ought to do it with as much gratitude and joy as we can muster. But to “worship the Lord with gladness” is what we do in our homes and places of work, in our neighborhoods, and on our playgrounds. We live out the worship of God by giving thanks anywhere and everywhere we can. As noisily as possible.

There are imperatives throughout this short psalm. Worship! Enter! Give thanks! Make a joyful noise! But there is one in the middle that looks different. Know. There are lots of things that we can do and need to do. But we are also commanded by the psalmist to know. There is something driving all that doing; there is something behind this joyful gratitude. We know that the Lord is God.

Look at how the verse describes that knowing: “It is he that made us, and we are his.” The pronouns for God surround the pronouns for us and then are repeated: “We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” It is this boundedness of our lives in God that brings forth the gratitude we are invited to express with joy.

We have been gathered up; we belong; we are a part of something that is infinitely bigger than we can see. Of course, gratitude is the only proper response. Especially when the psalm concludes with a description of this God who has gathered us. The Lord is good; God's steadfast love endures forever, and God's faithfulness to all generations. Amen and amen.

PRAYING TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER –
YOU'RE NOT ALONE, LET US PRAY WITH YOU & FOR YOU
PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED

- **Ms. Mary Rogge** will have Rotator cuff surgery on 10 November 2020. She has suffered quietly for several weeks with shoulder/arm pain that was diagnosed as a Rotator cuff injury. “Dear Heavenly Father, we bring Ms. Mary and her shoulder injury to your attention. You know exactly what is going on in her body. You know the pain and inconvenience this has caused, not only physically but in schedules and attitude. Merciful Lord, Ms. Mary is trying to stay positive and focus on the good things, but the pain is so distracting. We are asking that you send healing to that shoulder in a very complete way. While you are healing her body, please help Ms. Mary to maintain an attitude that is positive and uplifting as the mind is effective at helping the body heal properly and promptly. She is making a choice to do the best in her ability to be a partner in her healing and recovery. Thank you, Lord for your healing and restorative amazing grace! This shoulder will be a testimony of how miracles are real, and they can happen for everyday people in their everyday situations. We give you thanks Loving God for Mr. Roger and the Family, who will provide support and care during this season of rehabilitation and healing. In Jesus’ name, amen. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge, 4436 Magna Vista Drive, Jackson, WI 53037.**
- **Ms. Sandy Wamser** is still admitted in the hospital after brain surgery on 26 October 2023. She asks for your continued prayers of healing, restoration, and strength. She is very grateful for your love, prayers, and support. Consistent prayers for Mr. Pat and the Family as they care for Ms. Sandy. Cards and notes can be sent to: **Mr. Pat and Mrs. Sandy Wamser, 3742 Pleasant Valley Road, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Bro. Bob Krell** is rooted in our hearts and prayers as we shower him and the Family with our love, care, and support. It was a marvelous blessing to have Bro. Bob with us in worship last Sunday; “I’m doing well and slowly getting my strength back”. We continue to pray for Bro. Bob’s healing, restoration, and strength. Thank you, God, for hearing and answering our prayer. Cards and notes of love and encouragement can be mailed to: **Bro. Bob and Mrs. Jean Krell, 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Michael Cahoon**, son of Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, has been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. Mr. Mike has completed his second round of chemotherapy. As Believers, we know prayer is the most powerful action you can take for loved ones facing health challenges. Don’t hold back; let us pray without ceasing: “Let your love be close to Mr. Mike today. Let your presence fill him with faith and hope, knowing that your miraculous power and amazing grace is greater than any cancer or health issue; God is with Mr. Mike as he continues to fight the good fight. The odds are overwhelming; but loving God gives me hope. The opponent (cancer) was powerful; God gave me strength. I felt alone in the struggle; God gave me a team. I felt like a stranger; God sent cheering supporters. I felt confused; God showed me the game plan. I felt defeated; God’s Words inspired me. I was defeated; God picked me up and put me back into the fight. I feared time was running out; God gave me a new beginning. The cancer cannot win against God’s love; against the team of scientists, physicians, and nurses; against the support of my family and friends. You are the guide, you are the motivator, you are the healer, you are the Great I Am. Thank you for leading me to the win. May I now be a champion for others who feel what I felt, who need to know the Power behind every victory is you Gracious God. Amen. Cards and notes filled with prayers and hopes for miraculous healing can be sent to: **Mr. Michael Cahoon, C/O: Mr. Jim and Mrs. Sandy Cahoon, 1615 Beverly Lane, WI 53090.**
- **Mr. Robert (Bob) Kuhaupt** is still in the healing hands of our Great Physician. Healing God, be near Mr. Bob in his time of weakness and pain; sustain him by your grace, that Mr. Bob’s strength and courage may not fail; heal him according to your will; and help him always to believe that what happens to him here is of little account if You hold him in eternal life, loving Lord and caring God. Amen. Please send your prayers of healing and support to: **Mr. Robert (Bob) and Ms. Joy Kuhaupt, Sussex Mills Apartments, W240 N6345 Maple Ave. #116, Sussex, WI 53089.**
- **Ms. Nancy Whitson** has returned home and is grateful for all your prayers and cards of encouragement and support. Please send cards and notes of encouragement to: **Mrs. Nancy Whitson, 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Tom Damp** has been comfortable and safe in his home for years. This has been possible primarily due to home healthcare services. However, with significant changes in coverage from health insurance, availability of in-home health care personnel, and other life circumstances, Mr. Tom is having to make unexpected decisions; stay in his home or transition to assisted living. He asks for your prayers and care as God reveals, God’s plan for his new season. Caring Father, we thank you for the opportunity we have as a church family to pray and care for Mr. Tom

Damp. We ask that you bless him with the resources to keep safe from harm. Please surround this whole process with your wisdom and mercy, Lord. We pray for Mr. Tom's health and care in this whole process. In the name of Jesus I pray, amen. Card and noted can be mailed to: **Mr. Tom Damp, 1707 Sunset Ridge Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**

- No one enters this life a follower of Christ. If we are God's children, it is because we were born spiritually sometime after we were born physically. God uses our prayers as one of the means of drawing people, including our grandchildren, to God. We lift up prayers of healing and strength for **Mr. Ben Barth**, fiancé of Ms. Heather Wolf, granddaughter of Mr. Roger and Mrs. Mary Rogge. Mr. Ben has been given a new heart and new lungs but is experiencing kidney concerns. Cards of prayers for healing and restoration can be mailed to: **Mr. Ben Barth, 969 Tuscola Lane, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- We remain in prayer and support for **Mrs. Ann Cording**. Great Physician, you can heal us in a heartbeat. We pray for God's miraculous healing today. Take our pain away, according to Your will, in Your time. We're not promised a painless life on this earth, but You do want us to live a happy one. Send Your Spirit to help us see past our circumstances and onto Your calling on our lives. Sickness and injury can't stop God-placed dreams. Fill our hearts with hope as we wait on You to move in our lives and flow out from our hearts. In Jesus' Name, Amen. Cards and notes of love and care can be mailed to: **Mrs. Ann Cording, 1416 S. Silverbrook Drive, West Bend WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Don Walters** is still experiencing several medical challenges. We're keeping Ms. Joyce in our thoughts and prayers as well. Letters and notes of encouragement and love can be mailed to: **Mr. Don and Mrs. Joyce Walters, 5368 Woodlawn Summit, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mr. Chuck Rogge** is still on a journey of healing. He is grateful for the cards and notes of support. Please continue to flood the mailbox with love and support to: **Mr. Chuck and Mrs. Sue Rogge, 5011 Hwy. P, West Bend, WI 53095.**
- **Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf**, appreciates your continued prayers for healing and strength as she continues to struggle with illness. You can send emails of prayers and support to: alankempf33@gmail.com; or cards and notes to **Mr. Allan and Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.**

We continue to celebrate our 175th year of service, commitment and Methodism in West Bend, Wisconsin.

“Honoring Our Past, Celebrating Our Present, Anticipating Our Future”

Prayer: “Oh God, when I have food, help me to remember the hungry.

When I have work, help me remember the jobless.

When I have a warm home, help me remember the homeless.

When I am without pain, help me remember those who suffer.

And remembering, help me to destroy my complacency and increase my compassion.

Make me concerned enough to help by word and by deed, those who cry out for what we take for granted.”

May I love as Christ loved so that in myself, I become nothing, in order that Christ may be seen in me, and I can show forth His love in my life, to Your praise and glory.

Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin