

We come to this place today, to gather in reflection and silence.

We gather seeking stillness, that the centre of our hearts may be refreshed and made new.

We gather seeking peace, stilling our minds in the chaos that surrounds us. We gather to embrace and be embraced, folded into the depth and warmth of compassion as we curl our arms to shelter another as we walk the same journey.

We gather seeking strength, that in our caring for one another we may be untiring.

We gather to encounter within ourselves and each other that which we call sacred – to open ourselves to the healing, hope-filled words found in the rich and welcoming presence of community.

On this, as so many Sundays, we gather with hearts filled with concern for those of and known to our community who struggle with illness, grief, worry, or fear.

May we give ourselves completely to this time, and in so doing, imprint a great hope on our hearts and on the hearts of those we hold with us today. Let us turn to the back of our bulletins to remember them:

Our hearts and minds are also filled with concern for all the people who have contracted the coronavirus, for those living with uncertainty, for those quarantined. We pray they may be restored to health soon. We pray for wisdom and grace for those tasked with finding a cure and solutions at this time.

May we not become paralyzed with fear but instead may we be filled with compassion for all who are suffering.

Let us each do our part to help create a system of solidarity and a system of respect and a system of patience, not one of stigma and fear.

As we heard in the Gospel reading for today, the way of Jesus led them through the territory of the Samaritans.

May we, also, be willing to walk through strange, foreign places willing to meet people different from ourselves, willing extend hospitality to those who would be Samaritans to us –and willing to receive it.

Following the way of Jesus means reaching out and touching places that we would rather not touch.

May we be willing to be love, even if love can be messy.

May we live love in the dark places as well as pleasant places, in good situations and in bad situations.

May we, too, offer that living water of divine love, the water of refreshment, the water of healing, the water of cleansing, the water of life.

May we always remember that we are all part of the same humanity.

We all need food, clothing and shelter, we all need companionship, love.

We all drink from the same well.

Today we gather around a table to remember and celebrate the interconnectedness that is our life.

Within the smallest unit of matter lies the truth of that connection for all life tumbles out from that same single, simple beginning.

May our nations be led in truth that we may live in justice and peace together, showing care and compassion throughout the world.

We remember how this was beautifully demonstrated this week when China donated medical supplies and equipment, and sent a team of medical experts to Italy during this difficult time. In addition, tens of thousands of masks were also donated. As their country had received living water of love and support from others, they responded by showing solidarity between countries, putting a label on the boxes with a beautiful thought,

“We are waves of the same sea, leaves of the same tree, flowers of the same garden”.

We pray as those who, as water brings the earth’s depths to our lips, may know the beauty of our own selves and the beauty of each other.