

POEMS, HYMNS AND A MEDITATION IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

The purpose of this collection is to

- °provide pastors a resource to enable worship by congregations
- °guide the prayers of Christians in the home
- °serve as a focus of personal prayer and meditation

POEMS

Eucharistic anticipation

How sweet it will be,
when gathered, are we,
at the table, once again!
To sup with the Lord,
Him, only, adored,
and we receive all the same!

The blessing ensued,
communion renewed,
and God's people make the claim:
"All things shall be well,
and all shall be well"
for Christ among us remains!

(Jon Stouffer)

For the grieving

God, whose love revives the soul,
make my grief-torn spirit whole.
Take away the gloom of night,
turn my darkness into light.

Teach me ever the new way
love's enrichment to display,
Transform sadness into joy
through the gift of love's employ,

Anguish transform into peace
through the hope of love's increase.
In the midst of grief and pain
let me sing a love refrain.

Love in life and death God's will;
Christ the pattern for the skill
love to practice and to learn
ever with its fire to burn.

(from S T Kimbrough, Jr., *Of Death and Grief: Poems for Healing and Renewal*. Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2018.
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If suffering

O God,
If suffering is for me
If suffering is on my side
Then what is there to fear?

If love is more than effervescence
If love is
Longing
Confusion
Disappointment
Pain
Hurt
Distance
Mistakes
Forgiveness
Surprise
Infinite
Depth
Then what is there to fear?

O God,
If I am joined to love
If no thing under heaven or on earth can separate me
Then what is there to fear?

If neither famine
Nor tides
Nor distance
Nor grief
Nor dispossession
Nor powers
Nor principalities
Nor suffering
Nor death
Can undo love
Then what is there to fear?

O God,
If suffering is for me
If suffering is on my side
Then what is there to fear?
(Maggie Gann)

HYMNS

How sweet it will be when gath-ered, are we, at the
 The bles-sing en - sued, com - mun - ion re - newed, and God's

Piano

ta - ble once a - gain! To sup with the Lord, him,
 peo - ple make the claim: All things shall be well, and

Pno.

on - ly, a - dored, and we re - ceive all the same!
 all shall be well for Christ a - mong us re - mains!

Pno.

Text: Jon Stouffer (c) 2020; Tune: Don Saliers (c) 2020. Free for use during the 2020 pandemic.

Not in glorious organ peal

Not in glorious organ peal, not in brassy wonder,
not by timpani revealed in majestic thunder,
speaks the Christ into each room with sonic enchantments;
echoes in an empty tomb, rather, speak his presence.

Not in lilies, white and green, not in golden candles,
not in dresses bright and clean, bonnets, ties, or sandals,
proof of him we hope to meet cannot be discerned there;
a discarded burial sheet conquers hopeless despair.

Not in church lots full of cars, nor large congregations,
not in deafening applause from huge celebrations;
Mary was alone that morn, at Life's affirmation.
Though apart we feel forlorn, Christ bursts isolation.

Not in chocolate, dark and sweet, not in sugar icing,
nor in honeyed, spiraled meat, nor in feasts enticing,
do we find the nourishment that our souls are craving;
but in bread of covenant, loaf of gracious saving.

We may celebrate this feast with abundant treasure,
but our joy is not increased by this fleeting pleasure.
In Christ's rising we locate our awestruck elation;
at the tomb we celebrate our unearned salvation.

(Heather Josselyn-Cranson)

Phoebe Rowe's Hymn

I leave it all with Jesus,
For he knows
Every trial,
Self-denial,
All these blows;
Jesus knows,
Yes, he knows.

I leave it all with Jesus,
For he knows
My contrition
And submission,
All my woes;
Jesus knows,
Yes, he knows.

I leave it all with Jesus,
For he knows,
Making duty
Bright with beauty
Like the rose;
Jesus knows,
Yes, he knows.

I leave it all with Jesus,
For he knows
What to make me,
When to take me
At life's close;
Jesus knows,
Yes, he knows.

I leave it all with Jesus,
For he knows,
There I'll leave me,
He'll receive me,
For he knows;
Jesus knows,
Yes, he knows.

(Phoebe Rowe, d. 1901, Eurasian Methodist evangelist in India.
Submitted by Dana Robert)

Wesley hymns for times of distress

God of all, your help we need,
As we lift our hearts in prayer,
We your deep compassion plead,
We implore your pitying care,
For our loved ones so distressed:
Can you not our grief remove,
Calm the tumult in our breast,
Manifest your saving love?

Human tears may freely flow
Authorized by tears divine,
'Til your will we fully know,
Understand your whole design:
Jesus wept! And so may we:
He joins with us in our lament,
He yearns for all to be set free;
He knows what all these lives have meant.

Parent of our loving Lord,

Strengthen us with him to grieve,
Patiently receive your word,
Your compassion to receive:
Though we would the cup decline,
Governed by your will alone
Ours we struggle to resign:
Yours, and only yours be done.

Life and death are in your hand:
In your hand our sick we view
Waiting your benign command,
Less beloved by us than you:
Need we then their lives request?
Jesus understands our fears,
Reads a mother's panting breast,
Knows the meaning of her tears.

Jesus blends them with his own,
Mindful of his suffering days:
Father, hear your pleading Son,
Son of man for us he prays:
What for us he asks, bestow:
Ours he makes his own request:
Send us life or death; we know,
Life, or death from you is best.

(Charles Wesley, *Hymns for the Use of Families*, Hymn 73,
adapted by Paul Wesley Chilcote)

My present help in trouble,
My soul's eternal lover,
Beneath thy shade
I hide my head
Till all the storm is over.
O bring me by thy mercy
Through this severe temptation,
And all day long
My joyful song
Shall publish thy salvation.

(John and Charles Wesley,
Hymns for Times of Trouble, Hymn 1.1)

O Saviour of all / Who trust in thy love,
And faithfully call / For help from above,
To our supplication / In mercy attend,
And send us salvation, / And victory send.

To thee with our heart / And spirit we cleave,
Who takest the part / Of all that believe:
Our Lord we confess thee, / Whoever oppose,
And joyfully bless thee / In sight of thy foes.

Whatever thy will / And wisdom ordain,
Our safety is still / With thee to remain:
Our lives are all hidden, / Our souls are above,
And rest in the Eden / Of ransoming love.

In thee we have hope, / In thee we have peace,
And calmly go up / To final success:
Thy fear is our treasure, / Thy service our gain,
And we in thy pleasure / Eternally reign.

(John and Charles Wesley,
Hymns for Times of Trouble, Hymn 6.1-2, 4-5)

MEDITATION

An act of centering our hearts as one

Gather a small stone and a candle for each person present

Holy Living God,
Heartbeat of Creation,
help us to take this time to center on you,
for you made us,
you gave us life,
and you continue to be with us every moment . . .

[wait a couple of seconds while breathing slowly]
every breath . . . *[wait a couple of seconds]*
every step.

Hear this assurance from God:

[say this together or sing it to the tune of Amazing Grace]

**Be still, O heart, you're not alone,
your beat is shared with me.
Come now, and calm, and center here,
you're mine, secure and free.**

Take another deep breath, making sure the shoulders
and any tension in our bodies is letting go with the breath. *[pause to do so]*
Take another deep breath. *[Pause to do so]*

Pick up a stone, sometimes called a “worry stone.”
Let the touch of its surface remind us that God’s touch is

within us, between us, and around us.
As close and real as this object is in our hands right now,
is how close Love is to us always.
Imagine letting go of our worries for now into God's heart of love.

Offer a prayer song of letting go:
[say this together or sing it to the tune of Amazing Grace]

**Into your care, we offer now,
our worries, fears and strife.
We turn to you and know you're near-
Your light, our love and life.**

[Light the candle/candles you have on your table and put your stone(s) around the base of it/them]

(Marcia McFee, adapted from "Heart of the Matter" worship series
from Worship Design Studio)