

*Open unto me—light for my darkness.
Open unto me—courage for my fear.
Open unto me—hope for my despair.
Open unto me—peace for my turmoil.
Open unto me—joy for my sorrow.
Open unto me—strength for my weakness.
Open unto me—wisdom for my confusion.
Open unto me—forgiveness for my sins.
Open unto me—tenderness for my toughness.
Open unto me—love for my hates.
Open unto me—Thy Self for myself.
Lord, Lord, open unto me!*
—from “Meditations of the Heart” by Howard Thurman

Beloved Neighbors in Christ family and friends,

We continue in the season of Lent in which we look into ourselves for the things we have done wrong and repent of them, we recognize God’s unconditional love for us, and we seek the unending forgiveness that is granted us as beloved children. Over these last few weeks, these themes have been brought to the forefront in our Sunday worship services, as well in the recorded mid-week Lenten services I have posted up on our neighborsinchristmn.org website and social media platforms.

But today, I want to highlight this prayer I came across and invite you to share in the same place I have been thinking about. This prayer reminds me of the Psalms. Psalms are prayers and songs written by and to ancient Israel seeking God’s love, forgiveness, and good graces too. The psalms are a great way to enter into prayer during this Lenten season; they offer us a glimpse of what it means to ask (or plead) God for something in our lives and then recognize the response given by our Heavenly Creator. Like the psalms, this prayer also has an ‘ask’ to our loving deity and we await the reply for what God gives to us.

Whatever discipline or fast you choose during this season of the church calendar, I encourage you to be mindful of staying with it and even completing it over the forty day Lenten time period. This offers you not only a sense of accomplishment as you go through it, but also allows you to take time in your often busy schedules and be in relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ultimately, this relationship helps us grow in our faith, our lives, and other relationships that we have in this earthly place we call life.

Rev. Erik Karlson

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