

Watch this week's service on YouTube by clicking: [April 18 Worship Service Video](#)

- Join the **HeBrews eCafé on Zoom** this Sunday at 10am.
<https://zoom.us/j/4639675160?pwd=V090UmV0VFpMVGJLTWhueGpSekkwZz09>
 - Meeting ID: 463 967 5160
 - Passcode: 4F7iE2
 - Phone: 204 272 7920
- **Update on Easter Offering** – Subsequent to our first report we have now raised **\$8,500** for capital improvements at *Just A Warm Sleep*, the overnight homeless shelter at Augustine in Osborne Village. Thank you for this tremendous (highest Easter Offering ever) response.
- **Offering Information for Charleswood United Church:** www.charleswoodunited.org/donate Thank you for your generous support.

Dear Friends

Welcome to worship for Sunday, April 18, 2021.

I am always honoured and humbled when someone asks me to pray with/for them. I don't feel like I have a particular gift for prayer though I know my comfort praying aloud and extemporaneously has grown over the years. I am sure that God is not particularly interested in my prayers any more than those of anyone else. In fact, I know in my heart that my prayers are not going to alter the love and grace that is always of God.

Prayer doesn't bring my concerns to God. Rather, prayer brings God into my concern.

As I tell in the greeting to the worship service, I was invited by Lilita and Anita McDowell to join them in prayer this week for the people of St. Vincent who are suffering the wrath of the eruption of the Mt. Soufriere volcano this week. Ash and acid were raining down on that small Caribbean island country, the original home of the McDowells and a place where many of their family and friends still live. They told me that after a few days of worry and difficulty connecting it appears everyone they know is alive and well. We thank God for that.

One of the things I think about intercessory prayer is that it is an acknowledgement that the world is often not the place we wish it was. You pray because things are not perfect. You pray because things go wrong. You pray because illness comes and we want it gone. I am well aware that there are many people who scoff and are cynical if not insulting about being prayed for. Whatever. We certainly do not turn to God in prayer in order to please someone else.

But we do turn to God in prayer because we want to be part of the transformation that God is bringing into the world. We pray for people to be made well, to find purpose, to be fed, to know peace, to experience care. And then we discover that prayer itself empowers us to be agents of the realm of which we speak, to seek justice, and love kindness, and walk humbly as the prophet Micah would say.

There is a tremendous place for prayer in the midst of a pandemic. This is not what we want and it is not what God wants. Our prayers are answered in measures each of us take and the abilities of those who continue to serve. Above all, by bringing God into our concern, our heavy and justified concern, we enable ourselves to persevere, to be blessed with patience, and to grow in understanding. Prayer is the route by which a pandemic is transformed from a crisis into a path of renewal.

Prayer is power when you feel powerless. Prayer is help when you feel helpless. Prayer is presence when you feel alone.

Let us pray.

Grace and peace

Michael

- Please enjoy our online worship and feel free to share with others. The link for sharing is: <https://youtu.be/0uGJtwvO830>
- For news and events please have a look at **Life & Work**: <https://charleswoodunited.org/media/life-work/>
- Read the scripture lesson for today by clicking here: [Acts 10:34-43](#)