

April 25, 2020 ~Praying For Continued Refuge and God's Unfailing Love~

"How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings." Psalms 36:7

Loving God, you knew we'd still be praying 38 days ago when we began our journey as a sheltered church family praying together as the Body of Christ. In omnipresent power, you came to us in our own homes those first two weeks when our church was closed to protect us. You knew we wouldn't use the palms or the palm crosses already ordered, but you were with each of us when we worshipped "together" in our homes Palm Sunday. You knew a resurrection service would be in our sanctuary with empty pews, but still your glory filled that room and our hearts in our homes. Omniscient God, you knew, but we did not. Each day of each week these past 38 days, you knew how much we'd be needing you and your unfailing love. We've felt your presence, and we've known it was you, Lord God, offering us safe refuge in the shadow of your wings.

Holy Spirit, you knew how our hearts were aching. You've given us courage when our minds were filled with confusion, fear, and anxious thoughts. You've been in the darkness of night with us when our eyes wouldn't close, and sleep wouldn't come. It was your strength that carried us through the day when every part of us was weary. You've prompted us to go to that quiet place to be still, pray, listen, and receive what you knew we needed for another sheltered day. When we didn't have words to pray, you planted them in our thinking. You reminded us to stay in touch with people we love and those who are alone. You've given our pastor and his helpers wisdom and ways to draw us together with technology and directions we could understand. Holy Spirit, you haven't left us for a moment. When we've struggled and that unexpected thought or blessing prompted us to do the work you have for us, we've known it was you, our unfailing and ever present Spirit.

God of All Provisions, you knew who was prepared to be your hands caring for people suffering and dying from a virus that crept silently around the world. You'd already prepared the minds of brilliant, dedicated, and compassionate doctors and nurses. You'd staffed the hospitals and long term care facilities with people who would work tirelessly to do every task needing doing. Your people were not as prepared as you were, but you made numbers of available medical and personal protective equipment multiply again and again with the hands, the minds, and the hearts of your people; inspired by you to make the impossible, possible. You used all your people who grow, process and package our food, the warehouse workers, the truck drivers, railroad worker, delivery drivers, the grocery and pharmacy workers, along with cooks in kitchens of closed restaurants. Like you provided manna in the desert to the Israelites, our food and medical needs have been provided each day. Like your people long ago in the desert, we've slowly learned to take no more than we need each day and to share what we have in abundance. Your first responders, law enforcement officers, and military personnel were trained and prepared to help protect, transport and provide treatment beds for your suffering people. You were prepared to provide all your people needed when we were unprepared. You've performed miracles when opposing, elected leaders found enough unity to provide help for unemployed workers. Almighty and All Knowing God, you didn't turn your back on your unprepared people when we cried out to you. We recognized you in our presence, and we thank you for the love we feel in the shadow of your wings.

Heavenly Father, we are your children, now and forever. We've claimed the promise of your forgiveness and salvation through our faith in your Son Jesus. For these 38 days, we've humbled ourselves and crawled down from our lofty places of self importance. The world wasn't prepared to protect us, and quickly we understood we couldn't protect ourselves from all the unknowns of a novel virus. Not one of us was immune to its infection when these prayers began. We sheltered in our homes, and quickly realized you were waiting for us; our ever present refuge from something of this world that was turned loose on us for reasons we may never understand.

Because you are our Sovereign God, we know only you are more powerful than the virus that's taken life on this earth from over 200,000 people around the world. In the shadow of your wings, we will continue many more days to seek refuge in your unfailing love for us.

Gracious God, it is good for us to gather in each of our homes tomorrow as a church family along with all join our live stream worship. We are so thankful for every pastor, preacher, priest, worship leader, and rabbi you chose and prepared to lead your people in worship and remind us who you always will be and what you want to do for us now as our refuge and strength.

Our church remains closed tomorrow, but We Are The Church. We will gather together by the power of the Holy Spirit in us to pray, sing hymns, read scripture, and be taught and encouraged by our pastor. We ask in the name of Jesus, whose Spirit is our ever present companion in this world, that you would bless us in worship and continue to draw us closer under the shadow of your wings., Father God. Amen.