

Prayers of the People
at
West Point Grey
United Church

Rev. Dr. Jack Shaver

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Rev. Dr. Jack Shaver
October 31, 1918 – November 21, 2001

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Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	Page iv
<u>Preface</u>	Page v
Scripture References	Page vi
Prayers of the People	Page 1
December 29, 1921	Page 1
1992	Page 2
November 1, 1992	Page 4
April 2, 1995	Page 6
April 30, 1995	Page 8
September 15, 1996	Page 10
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1979	Page 12
1996	Page 13
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1978	Page 14
February 1997	Page 15
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1996	Page 16
April 20, 1997	Page 17
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1995	Page 18
July 6, 1997	Page 19
October 25, 1997	Page 20
December 21, 1997	Page 22
January 25, 1998	Page 24
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1992	Page 26
March 10, 1998	Page 27
From the Jack Word Book	Page 28
March 15, 1998	Page 29
From the Jack Word Book	Page 31
April 19, 1998	Page 32
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1998	Page 34
August 9, 1998	Page 35
October 18, 1998	Page 36
April 4, 1999	Page 38
May 30, 1999	Page 40
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1997	Page 42
July 4, 1999	Page 43
January 25, 2000	Page 44
March 19, 2000	Page 46
June 4, 2000	Page 48
October 1, 2000	Page 50
November 12, 2000	Page 52
January 14, 2001	Page 54

From the Jack Word Book	Page 56
February 25, 2001	Page 57
From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1980	Page 58
March 1, 2001	Page 59
From the Jack Word Book	Page 60
October 7, 2001	Page 61
From the Jack Word Book	Page 62
Memorial Prayers	Page 63
Dwight Williams – September 1990	Page 63
Prayer for Craig Miller Memorial Service June 28, 1999	Page 64
Prayer for Margaret Smith Memorial Service October 29.2001	Page 65
Prayer of Consecration (at Communion)	Page 66
Thanksgiving Prayer	Page 68
Prayer at opening of First Session of Thirtv-second Parliament June 6, 1979	Page 69
From the Jack Word Book	Page 70
Excerpt from a prayer Jack gave at our community Prayer Service in response to the Terrorist Attack on the World Trade Centre	Page 71

Interspersed throughout the prayers are excerpts from Christmas Letters over the years and quotes from The Jack Word Book

First Lines of Prayers of the People

God only knows we need a word <u>from</u> you	Page 1
As we come before you with what is on our hearts	Page 2
How are we to go about these prayers of the people?	Page 4
Engage us.	Page 6
Israel came to its knowledge of you	Page 8
Here we are before you, in your house.	Page 10
No matter how much we pray, we still don't know how!	Page 13
Speak your word to our hearts.	Page 15
How we long for whatever is not on our plate.	Page 17
The universe, and all that is in it, are your creations.	Page 19
We know lots of words about you.	Page 20
a lot of us are all fussed up because we're not going to be ready for Christmas. ...	Page 22
your people Israel sang in their time of how the heavens declared your glory	Page 24
Renew a right spirit within us.	Page 27
We don't know why we spend so much of life for that which doesn't satisfy!	Page 29
Now is the time we all come with our crys.	Page 32
since we are to have words with you, let's not waste them.	Page 35
We've set aside this time to have a word with you.	Page 36
There's a war on that's getting hotter by the day.	Page 38
we find ourselves torn between our OUGHTS and our WANTS	Page 40
we'd all be a lot more use and do a lot less harm	Page 43
to begin with we want to cast our burden on you	Page 44
Now is the time we put our hearts and minds to the task of getting heard.	Page 46
we're worried lest we make poor use of the time.	Page 48
We don't know where to start.	Page 50
Receive our remembering.	Page 52
We are suffering from an information overload	Page 54
there are crys that have not yet found words	Page 57
Renew a right spirit within us.	Page 59
sing the songs of Zion in a strange land.	Page 61

Introduction

Many Canadians were touched by Jack Shaver's presence. As a pastor, counselor, theologian, teacher or neighbour he was someone whose impact you could neither forget nor ignore. He was a man who, in the style of an old-fashioned prophet, challenged you to listen for God and to think about what your response might be, and what it should be.

Those of us in West Point Grey United Church like to think we had a Special relationship with Jack for he spent many years with us before and after his retirement. Of course, prophets never really retire and Jack played a vital part in a wide range of our congregational committees and activities.

For most of us, however, it is the experience of this tall spare man in the dark suit centering our worship in prayer leadership that remains a powerful memory, a powerful call.

We share these prayers with you, in part to celebrate our time with Jack, but also to share his insights and his passion for knowing God. It has been a blessing in our lives and trust it will be for you.

Ken Carty for West Point Grey United Church

Preface

It's a year since Jack Shaver's memorial service, and we're all still thinking about him. It seems this is true of both his family and the wider community of his friends and those to whom he ministered.

Though his ministry was never very far away, it was mostly as a husband and father that we knew him.

He was a nurturer, someone willing to fuss the little things, sweat the small stuff, feeling it was worth doing. He could watch for the moment, helping with a child's learning to walk, support them as they stood, about to take some steps. Then it's not hold nor push, but let go. Of course, considering that learning is a life-long process, that help would be with any 'first step'.

So, where did he get the strength to both help and let go as those whom he loved struggled?

We think he took God seriously.

We can hear that in his prayers. They help us enter into real dialogue, struggle with real issues that have meaning beyond the occasion for which they were written.

We're happy to think that some of his prayers are now being made more generally available through the efforts of the congregation at West Point Grey United Church.

Sincerely
The Shaver Family

Scripture References

Jack was a searching student of Scripture and his prayers are salted with phrases from the Bible. We have identified some of the frequently used references and offer them to you.

‘Principalities and powers’ refers to Romans 8:38

‘Head Cornerstone’ reference is from Ephesians 2:20

‘Spot and Wrinkle’ is found in Ephesians 5:27

‘Salt of the Earth’ comes from Matthew 5:13

‘Perfect love casts out fear’ is found in 1 John 4:18

‘Heart of stone, heart of flesh’ refers to Ezekiel 36:26

‘Yoke is easy, burden is light’ comes from Matthew 11:30

‘Groaning too deep for utterance’ is found in Romans 8:26

A few reflections from the compilers:

We encourage you to read these prayers aloud. They were written to be spoken, and punctuated for oral presentation. We have preserved this style.

Jack’s handwriting and spelling were unique. We have attempted to accurately decipher his writing. We have changed his spelling when understanding was at stake. He consistently spelled ‘cries’ as ‘crys’ and we have preserved this to the dismay of our computer spellchecker.

Thanks:

Preparing this booklet has been a spiritual exercise for which we are most grateful. We give thanks for those who contributed their gifts to this effort, especially Dorothy and the Shaver Family, Eunice Williams, Billie Williamson, Janis Terrien, Ken Carty, Susan Snashall, Cathie Perry, Jan Tennant, Rob Hollins, Ian Housego and Cheryl Black.

Prayers of the People

December 29, 1921

God only knows we need a word from you,
Our life in this world without a word from you is desolation indeed.
And dear God – how we need a word with you.
We need to be heard, if we are never heard, life is desolation indeed
We lift one another's prayers with you.

Lord Hear Our Prayer and let our crys come unto You

Each of us has a bad conscience about a number of things. Some of us are failing in our own eyes. Such punishment and self rejection are no cure at all. Some of us are suffering a great loss. Some of us feel alone in the world – unknown to any other.

Lord Hear Our Prayer and let our crys come unto You

We've got loved ones we care about and worry about.
We're afraid we'll fail them. We're afraid we'll harden our hearts against them.
We're not sure we know how to love them or what loving them requires of us.
We're not sure our love is free of manipulations.

Watch over our loved ones.

Redeem our loving care to your Grace.

Lord Hear Our Prayer and let our crys come unto You

Lord – there's no rest in wanting to be heard unless our crys are accompanied by those of everyone else throughout the world, and the growing together of all creation. We lift up the progress of the whole world. We pray for the delicate balance of our planet earth. We pray for peoples and nations throughout the earth and for all who have responsibilities for others.

We pray for every Mother and every Child.

Hasten your Kingdom.

Lord Hear Our Prayer and let our crys come unto You

All of which we pray in Jesus name.

Amen.

Prayers of the People

1992

God of All

As we come before you with what is on our hearts there is no question but that we'd like to feel good. We're worried and anxious, not pleased with our behaviour, or our fate.

Even as we groan and complain, deep down we know what would put us right is for us to get where we ought to be – for us to get to be about what we ought to be about.

Our profound need is to get out from under our many burdens and under your burdens. To keep our hearts from hardening we need to have our heart's longing and grieving transformed into your longing and grieving.

It's Godly sorrow we need, O God.

God in Your Mercy...Hear our prayer .

God we pray for the World.

During this Lenten season as we seek to enter with our Lord deeper and deeper into the shadows of the world and its sorrow. We lift up the cry of the needy, let their cry come unto you. We lift up their cry to you so that we can hear them. Those people under the burden of impossible debt. The victims of depravation and tyranny everywhere, especially the unknown and forgotten ones.

Attention must be paid to the hidden ones, O God. Attention must be paid to them.

Also give us eyes to discern the social policies by which we live which benefit us at their expense.

We lift up the peace making efforts around the world especially those that appear to be stalled or broken down entirely – Angola, Middle East, Uganda and Yugoslavia.

Open our eyes that we may discern the peace keeping efforts that are serving a vested interest.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

Gracious God – Pray for the Church, Ours and everyone else's.

How great it would be if we were the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

But what with our quarrels and our wondering if you are with us or not – we look more like your enemies. But dear God your gospel has news for us about your relationship with your enemies. May your grace be sufficient even for your Church.

We hold up the priests and members of your Church. We remember today the values of learning where ministry is taught and learned. May it be your ministry that is taught and learned.

We pray also for the priesthood of each believer in this congregation. So open our hearts each to other that we will be seen bearing each other's burdens and become, indeed the means whereby your love is mediated by each to the other.

God in Your mercy...Hear our prayer.

As our Saviour has taught us...

Prayers of the People

November 1, 1992

Almighty God,

How are we to go about these prayers of the people? Each one here wants a word with you! How can one of us speak for all of us? How can we lift each other's prayers to you without knowing what they are? So we'll try being quiet long enough for each of our heart's deep longings to come to consciousness and then to be brought before you.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

God,

One thing we can all use is more work at having our encounters with you be genuine. So much of our God business is about you rather than with you. Maybe the reason we know so little real judgement or forgiveness or any New Creation is that we really don't want to get too close to you.

O Holy Spirit, penetrate our emptiness, guilt, enslavement so that we still our flight and know that you are God – know ourselves known, know ourselves overwhelmed with fullness, forgiveness and freedom.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

God of all

You have it so that we can have fullness, forgiveness and freedom only if all of us on this planet earth have them also.

Hear the cry of your beloved throughout the world. Keep giving us to each other.

Enlarge our hearts. Uphold all your righteous servants, especially the hidden ones. Raise up generations of human liberators. Recreate in us all your love of the world as we behold it in Jesus Christ our Lord.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

God, this week we remember before you – our home and native land. We've had an enormous week of discovery again. We don't know who we are and we fear that in the lostness we might lose something very precious to us and good for the world.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

God, we pray for the Church.

This Sunday we hold up the churches in Austria, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. These seem like OLD churches. What have old churches to say to us? Where is the new church going? Dear God will you keep your hand upon what's going on between the old and the new church! Both in our hearts and in West Point Grey and in the world. Make something of what's going on between the old and new church. Make blessing out of it.

You have called us in the church to be saints.

Complete your work in us so that you can present the whole church before you without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Dear God, if we depended on the faithfulness of the church we would be poor indeed. But you are faithful.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayers of the People

April 2, 1995

Living God,

Engage us. You are the one with whom all life has to do. Have to do with us now. Reveal unto us where we are really placing our ultimate trust. Illumine the places where, for all our professed longing for your presence, we have been avoiding you.

Our vain search, whatever the cause, is hardening our hearts. We are weary of living in a dry and thirsty land. Do something new. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts of flesh.

And shine in our hearts with the light of your true glory.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

Almighty God

Unto whom all hearts be open, search our hearts for the deep longings. Then let our cry come unto you! Hear the prayers of those who have loved ones on their hearts, especially those who feel there is nothing more they can do. May they be found again by a love that empowers and upholds. May they be found by your love.

Hear the cry of those whose loved ones are burdened by illness, by such earth making changes, by loss of security, hear the cry of those who are just plain weary of well-doing, who no longer find much joy in life. May all these discover again what it is to be known and what it is to know one another.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

Gracious God

Hear us name the names of those we are aware of and want to bring to your attention

Muriel McDiarmid and her family and circle of friends

Cindy Gustin – taking special care of herself as birth time approaches.

Glen Huddart as he deals with the consequences of a skiing accident

Touch with your healing power the lives of Laurie Paynter, Margaret Smith, the Spencers.

Hear the other names we name in our hearts.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Living God,

Much of the time we seek to wrestle with you, we don't seem to engage you. Is that

because we are praying for and about ourselves alone?

Let the cry of your beloved everywhere reach us especially from those living in conditions that overwhelm us! That we turn away from!

- The many, many places where things have gotten worse when it looked like they were getting better.
- Where promising movements have had things reversed
- Where long awaited peace negotiations keep getting undermined
- Where mixed peoples who have lived together for generations now split by bloody strife
- Where plows are being beaten into swords and pruning hooks into spears

Dear God, we pray for the world -we pray for all the people in the situations we turn away from and as we turn again to them we sense you near .

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Living God,

we pray for the church. With the World Council of Churches we join in prayer for the church in Uganda and Sudan. Make the heart of the church there big enough for that troubled continent. Pray for the upcoming meeting of our own General Council Executive. Give it a sense of proportion as it faces its own stresses and opportunities. As we remember the need of the world God, we pray indeed for the church, God have mercy upon us, save us from an enlarged notion of who we are, save us from belittling the notion of what we are called to be.

Prayers of the People

April 30, 1995

Almighty God,

Israel came to its knowledge of you as their prophets and people, priests and kings, wrestled with the ups and downs of their creation and preservation.

They met the true God who created and ordered the universe – in their history.

God, Our history is too much for us, as the anniversary time, when we remember the cessation of World War II' s hostilities in Europe and the liberation of the remnant of prisoners in the infamous death camps. We confess we expected we were entering a time there would be no more wars and never again the infamy of organized violence against humans.

We find the recurrence of devastating wars and the recurrence of manslaughter of innocents overwhelming! We find the increasing incidence of religious revival resorting to terrorism terrifying.

All this blinds us to the selfless volunteers who rally to serve in time of disaster and of the numberless brave committed ones who labour tirelessly to make our world right.

Almighty God

In place of our rage and despair and flight, we need to love the world. But our love of the world fades like the dew in the heat of the morning sun. Teach us Your love of world.

We need your remedy for sin. Our own remedy seems to only confound things. Teach us your remedy for sin. You raised up the crucified One. Raise him up in our hearts so that he reigns there without a rival.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Gracious God:

We pray for the church. Along with our sister churches in the World Council of Churches we pray for the Church in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, strengthening our solidarity with our southern neighbours.

Keep fitting the Church for its wounding task of storming the Gates of Hell. Keep saving us from wasting our energy on petty things and vain dreams. Keep finishing the work you have begun in us. Dear God, how well we know that sin abounds. How we pray that grace much more abounds.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Gracious God,

We have a group here with individual concerns that they want to bring before you. Hear the crys that are uttered or only groaned or silently suspended. Defeated ones, anxious

ones, weary ones, rebellious ones, alienated ones.

Those crosswise with the rest of us, those burdened beyond what they can bear.

God, you have given us to each other. We make this morning's supplication unto you.
We lift each others crys.

Here we name a few whose bodies and minds need your healing, upholding touch.

Kathleen Fitzgerald, Hilda Clifton, Hugh Dobson, Laurie Paynter, Fisher family, as their love centres on young Katie. Elvira Jacobs, Fred Dodds, Margaret Smith, Phil Haddock and their faithful care givers.

Here also the names of those named silently throughout the room.

Gracious God, keep close to West Point Grey United Church as this flock walk a new and strange road. Surprise us afresh by how sufficient your grace is for all things.

God, in your mercy...Hear our Prayer.

Prayers of the People

September 15, 1996

Gracious God:

Here we are before you, in your house.

During our stop here, each one of us would like a word with you.

The world is not going the way it would if we had the running of it.

Our place of work, our homes and families, the life in our community are not going the way they would if we had the running of them. There is so much everywhere that needs to be put right. It is probably just as well that we aren't running things.

But we sometimes wonder in despair whether you are running things.

So dear God our cry for a word with you is at the same time a cry for a word from you.

Speak to us again of your love of the world!

During this stop in your house each one of us would like to know again the embrace of your everlasting arms around us and the whole world.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Gracious God, we all have people and concerns on our hearts – we lift lives up to you.

Reach your healing hand among us –

touch those troubled ones –

those in the dark shadow of pain –

those watching by beds of pain and disability.

Grant your peace to anxious hearts.

Grant wisdom and patience to the parenting homes among us.

And prevent us from ever leaving a single soul among us in lonely isolation.

God, hear our sighs too deep for words everywhere.

God in your mercy ...Hear our prayer

Dear God, peace-makers have been called your children, give them special care.

Peace in our world is such a precarious thing –

and where peace is secure, it is often unjust for many.

We add our cries to the cries for peace from allover the world.

Let none of us ever flee from the burden of the hurting world but partaking of your very own embrace of the world may each of us find the courage to hold out a hand to someone different, to listen, and to try to increase the humanness in the world.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God we pray for the church.

With our brothers and sisters in the WCC,

we pray for the Church in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Panama – these dear neighbours still under the grip of outmoded colonialism,

where a once lively hope is getting harder to maintain –

Bring us together for our mutual benefit
and especially for the word their faithfulness may speak to our trivialities.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Dear God:

Our word with you is a lot of asking for changes in our fate and changes in our state.

Needs be we ask one thing more – *for grateful hearts.*

What a transformation that will be

when we receive your gracious gift of life with a grateful heart.

What an enormous mystery the universe is that it should produce and sustain life.

What a wondrous blessing friends and loved ones are –

all these blessings become ours to delight in –

where we receive these with a grateful heart.

May the pulse of our hearts be your praise.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Now as our Saviour has taught us...

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1979

Christmas 1979

“The Christian World’s most winsome festival draws near. Anything that winsome is bound to get used in offensive ways. Something that promising is going to encourage make-believe which is sure to disintegrate into bitterness. Only God’s own coming in the flesh will enable us to keep the feast of God’s coming in the flesh. Not make believe, but made-to-believe
Not won by glitter but by
God’s love of the world.
That’s what’s in store for brother believers as the festival of Christmas draws near.
God bless everyone.”

Prayers of the People

1996

Almighty God

No matter how much we pray, we still don't know how!

The old timers who wrote the psalms made the connection between your ordering of heaven and earth and the kind of behaviour required of us,

But they had only thunder storms and earth quakes and volcanoes to warn them to keep their distance.

We have light years by the million and galaxies expanding at incomprehensible rates. Its hard to see how a cozy conversation can have anything to do with you. At the same time we long for a law of living that revives the soul.

For concepts that rejoice the heart.

Testimonies that make the simple wise and the ordering of affairs that's righteous altogether .

Lord of the Universe

We long for focus ordering of our lives. We long for a better knowledge of you.

Until we know the steep cost of that is that we deny ourselves and take up a cross

That's what frightens us most about gaining a knowledge of you. But no other ordering of affairs is altogether righteous.

Lord we believe.

Help our unbelief.

God in your mercy...Hear our Prayer

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1978

Christmas 1978

“There is a legend on the street that, on
Christmas Day, Skid Road is dead sober.
Have we a sign here that a
Saviour has come?

The Climax of a SEASON –
In which tenderness,
reunion and recollection
are both warm and painful
and are inseparably mixed with
hype, shove, extravagance,
temporary generosity and make-believe

– is a Day on which all illusions fail
to work and we are left with the real world.
What if it is the real world God loves and
that is why He sent His Son?
No wonder that first Christmas Gift was
called unspeakable!
My He be yours!”

Prayers of the People

February 1997

Loving God,

Speak your word to our hearts. It's your love that created us and gave us to each other. Your love calls us by name and calls us yours. It is your word that welcomes us to the life we are called to live.

Living word,

how we need to hear you again – like it was the first time. Accomplish with us what you intend. Dwell in our hearts by faith. Finish the work of reconciling the world unto yourself.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

Almighty God,

Father and Mother of all, we need to be heard as well as spoken to. As we grow faint, trying to be good and grow weary doing our part to make the world a better place. It is good for us to voice our cry and the cry of our neighbours. Uphold your children, the peacemakers throughout our strife torn world. How vulnerable they are, how frail their hard work appears to be. Uphold your servants who have taken up the cause of economic justice and the security of persons. How overwhelmed and how isolated they appear to be. Move the hearts of the mighty, by your requirements that justice be done.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer.

Gracious God,

We pray for the church. What we know of you we learned there. You have called us to be priests to one another, to be the salt of the earth and a light to the world. Have mercy upon us. We are all those things and we are not any of them – at the same time. We've divided into factions, we are cranky, we run where we haven't been sent. We cry peace when there is no peace. We look very much like the People of God in the Bible.

So we pray for the church. Have mercy upon us and lead us to be merciful with one another .

With the World Council of Churches we remember the Philippine Church this morning and hold up that community of faith in that vast troubled set of islands. Our hearts also go out to Margaret Piddington – uphold her in your everlasting arms and us too.

We pray for the whole people of God. We pray to you who is able to present us to yourself without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

We pray for the wholeness of the people of God – until no one is left out – all are received.

God, in your mercy...Hear our Prayer.

This prayer we ask in Jesus's name and now as our Saviour taught us, we pray...

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1996

Christmas 1966

A fragment of Leonard Cohen's
"Lines From My Grandfather's Journal"
wants into the Shavers'
Christmas greeting this year.
It could be the theme of a modern hymn
to the Incarnation.
What is good news to 1966's bad news?
What would Love Incarnate
look like in 1967?
What is it, in our time, to let this mind be
in you which was also in Christ Jesus?
Has the Montreal poet a piece of it
in his fragment...
"Let priests secretly despair of faith:
their compassion will be true"

Prayers of the People

April 20, 1997

Almighty God,

How we long for whatever is not on our plate.

To be rescued from the situation that is before us

To be delivered from the humans who populate our daily lives.

Such is our cry, in the revolting business of our daily lives, that we have been abandoned by you. We are convinced that you are absent from all this.

It will always surprise us to be told that you are the one with whom we have to do in all this.

You became flesh in order to share with us in the simple living and dying. It is in living out our lives in the flesh that we are with you and you in us.

Dear God,

We need to hear that story told again and again. The life you have made the head stone of the corner is indeed one we keep stumbling over and rejecting.

God above, dwell in us

lest we close our hearts to one another,

lest we shirk the life we have to live

lest we abandon the world you love.

Lord, in your love...Hear our prayer

Gracious God,

Open our hearts to one another, especially to those who disappoint us, who give us pain and who aren't like us. Abide in us, so that we embrace those you have given us, those who stand before us in a day's living of our lives, those who break into our circle of awareness.

We lift up to you the crys we hear when you open our hearts. Those in our midst whose lives are hanging by a slender thread, whose loved ones are a worry, on whose lives cruel fate has rained severe blows. So keep in our hearts that there is not a lonely sufferer among us.

God, in your love....Hear our prayer.

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1995

Christmas 1995

“I will remove from your body your heart of stone
and give you a heart of flesh.”

Ezekiel 36: 26b

Now there's a great gift exchange!
How great to be given a heart of flesh! How dreary
and useless life is without one.

But right now,

Who can abide such a gift? All over the place,
efforts at peacemaking and reconciliation are
undone by idiotic behaviour .

An increasing number of people are faced with
personal tragedy.

Steps forward in the human condition are followed
by as many steps backward.

In 1995, who can bear to have a heart of flesh?

UNLESS God has a heart of flesh. “In the
beginning was the Word...and
the Word was God...And the Word became flesh
and dwelt among us...We have beheld
his glory.”

John 1: 1, 14

Prayers of the People

July 6, 1997

Almighty God – The universe, and all that is in it, are your creations.

It is with you that all reality has to do.

How we need our meeting with you to be for real!

Nothing more vital can happen to us than that our meeting be real.

For we mostly try to avoid you.

Your depth is frightening.

Things turn into their opposite when you are real.

Strength becomes weakness and weakness strength; rich becomes poor and poor becomes rich.

Yet we know that to live without a knowledge of you is neither safe nor right.

God – make yourself known

address a word to where we live

address a word to – the events – tasks – and people that are before us

God In Your Love...

Gracious God – restore our loving.

Life is utterly transformed when we love. The whole creation sings with glorious voice when love reigns in our hearts. Even our suffering world can be embraced when love teaches the woeful heart to sing.

God, in your universal might, save us from having closed hearts. Open our hearts to each other and to all the children of the world.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

Gracious God – Father and Mother of All – we don't want to be about praying for ourselves alone. We lift up the cry of your creations. Life of the planet earth, the hungry, the homeless. Those whose lives are never free of fear, constant threat because of cruel strife, tyranny, natural disaster. All victims of human greed.

This Sunday we remember especially the people of Kapuchea, Laos, VietNam and the churches there called to bring the good news of your love.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

We pause now so that in the silence each one present may have his and her word with you.

God, together we lift those prayers. Let our cry come unto you.

Now as our Saviour has taught us we say....

Prayers of the People

October 25, 1997

God of All

We know lots of words about you. We use lots of words about you.

But, these all become vain and trivial unless we hear a word from you.

Your word is loving and active – that’s the word we need.

We’ve been told often enough that nothing can separate us from the love of God. But God, we find that any number of things manage to separate us from you, whether trivial or overwhelming.

Each of us here, whatever we’re going through or whatever we face, needs to hear you say “Nothing can separate you from the love of God.”

Gracious God, Lord of life and death, you tell us that neither death nor life nor anything else in all creations can separate us from your love.

God in Your Mercy ...Hear our Prayer

Gracious God, you have given us to each other in this congregation, along with these come differences of opinion, frustrations, disappointment and a sizeable amount of trivial business. These tend to sour the spirit.

Renew a right spirit among us. Open our hearts to each other so that as we fear burdens, we rediscover what a blessing we are to each other .

God In Your Mercy...Hear our Prayer

Lord of All

As soon as all this praying for ourselves starts to reach you, your loss of the world starts to reach us.

God, we’re tired of the life destroying burdens and dreads that we seem determined to cling to. Empower us to gladly give this up in exchange for your light yoke and easy burdens. Find us, O God under the uplifting burdens of your love of the world.

Hear our prayers for the nations and peoples of the world.

Drive out the vicious cycle of terror and strife.

Drive out the spirit of revenge with the spirit of reconciliation.

Drive out the spirit of greed with the spirit of sharing.

Hear the cry of the homeless, the hungry and the tyrannized.

Dear God, hear especially the cry of the children.

God In Your Mercy...Hear our Prayer

Lord of the Universe

So infinite is the size of the expanses and wonders in its order yet containing our tiny planet with its thin atmosphere sustaining manifold form of life and beauty.

How readily we forget the miracle of creation.

How much of the time we live as though we weren't the receivers of the miraculous gift of life.

Dear God

Our lives are unequivocally different
When our hearts are grateful.

Help us to keep them that way.

God In Your Mercy...Hear our Prayer

And now as our Saviour has taught us...

Prayers of the People

December 21, 1997

Almighty God – a lot of us are all fussed up because we're not going to be ready for Christmas. Some of us are having it very rough right now -and it doesn't go with the season.

There are such penetrating and redeeming insights to this Gospel we celebrate. No wonder its celebrations got mixed up with the festival of lights.
And that's what we really need to be ready for. To hear and see the good news at hand.
Our fussing is about the wrong stuff.
Our divine business gets in the way of our getting ready to hear and meet you.
Prepare our hearts for the surprise of being found in the knowledge that you are with us.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

Gracious God – this light we're looking talking about is the light that lightens everyone.
We aren't fully illuminated until every one is.
We aren't in a thoroughly righteous state until all people and peoples are reconciled.
There isn't peace on earth, until everyone is at peace.

And so we remember, as we must the dispossessed, the alienated, the left out, and, at this time of year, especially the children.

We lift them up to you, we bring their cries unto you. As much as it is possible in us, we make their cries our own.

We lift also the cries of all your faithful servants who offer their lives in the service of justice and peace. Especially the forgotten ones, and we make their cries our own.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

Almighty God – our thoughts go every which way. The world and all that is wrong with it is too much for us. We long to be out of it, but are terrified to leave it.

The enthusiasm of cheap cheer turns our stomachs. But we feel no better about our state of complaining.

We don't feel good about trying to forget what is real.

We need your penetrating word to address us when we care.

We need your word to fit us for what we are going through.

We need to hear that you will not leave us comfortless, but will come to us and receive all of us unto yourself.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

God of All – whenever we have words with you it seems to often that it is as an
afterthought that we get around to being grateful.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

The universe is fearfully and wonderfully made.

The planet earth, our home, with its capacity to support life is a wondrous thing. The life
that our flesh is heir to can know and acceptance and give them. All around are good
people, behaving in selfless ways.

It's all the stuff of wonder love and praise – and we don't do enough of it.

Gracious God – give us grateful hearts.

Everything is different when our hearts are grateful.

And now as our Saviour taught us...

Prayers of the People

January 25, 1998

God of All,
your people Israel sang in their time of how the heavens declared your glory and the firmament showed your hard work.

How would they characterize the Universe that we, in our time keep hearing about?

God of All
it is you we gather to meet. To become aware again that it is with you that all life has to do. We are dealing with your works all the time, but we need to know you and know ourselves known to you.

Now as we gather up our thoughts for a word with you, we find that we are a confusion of wants and needs. Some vital, some trivial and we're not sure which are which.

But we remember that you promised us hearts of flesh for our hearts of stone. If you could manage to get us to receive that gift – there isn't much more we'd need to ask for. If you could keep our hearts of flesh from turning to stone. If you could keep us loving, no matter how we try to get out of it. Everything else would follow.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God
we come to you with a confusion of ourselves. We take flight from the burdens you call us to, and cling to the ones we should be casting on you.

Gracious God,
you have given us to each other in this congregation, in our neighborhood, and in the planet Earth.
Everyone is to receive these gifts, bear each others burdens, receive each others' ministries. If you can get us to be like that ----- everything else will follow.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of Mercy
we take time to remember before you the forgotten ones, as well as the ones who weigh heavy on our hearts.
Poor – Imprisoned – Homeless – Lonely, especially the lonely old –
Employment cut off –
Health and well being cut off –
These aren't abstractions O God, we can name some of them.

God of Justice

we remember those who have charge over us.

Positions of leadership and influence.

Keep us praying for them

Keep us caring for them – that they might never feel used in their difficult decision making.

We pray especially for the Peace Makers.

They are having it tough everywhere.

We remember the principalities and powers that seem to be running off with the world accountable to no one.

Raise up servants O God with the wisdom and perseverance to manifest your victory over the powers of destruction. Give us eyes to see their redemption drawing near, and lives ready to receive it.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1992

Christmas 1980

Must human life sour with age?

What else can happen to it
in our chaotic world where
hope has soured for so many
members of the race?

Hidden in this season's
good tidings of great joy

Is the message:

Something totally liberating
can happen to you –
at any time,
you can be transformed into
lover of the world!

Say it again.

Blessed Christmas

Prayers of The People

March 10, 1998

Gracious God – Renew a right spirit within us. Fit us for living well the life that is before us. Provide in us the kind of courage that is adequate for the times our idealized high minded vision wades into reality in all its brokenness now.

Whether it has to do with our relationship with our loved ones. When the opinionated are many who know just what we should have done while we don't. Whether it has to do with our vocations where the acceleration of economic and social change confounds the fulfilling of it. Whether it has to do with our neighbourliness where the neighborhood we know is vanishing.

Our courage to be fails us. We take refuge in withdrawal and complaint. How will we know the blessed words. Perfect love casts out fear. The courage we seek is your knowledge surpassing love of the world. With that in our hearts we can do anything. We can bear anything. With that love in our hearts people would be glad to have us around.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Almighty God – Father and Mother of All. Hear our prayers for the Church. We remember the Church in Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. We name these because of a World Council of Churches programme to help us remember the Church throughout the world. And we remember the world because You said You created your people not to serve themselves but to bless the world. Our prayers for the church is a prayer for the world.

Holy God – pour out your Holy Spirit on the Church so that it will recognize your Glory in the crucified one, so that it will not use its piety to escape your glory. So that it never ceases to attack the gates of hell. Pour out your Holy Spirit on the church so that it becomes a high and lifted up witness to your love of sinners and lest it so neglect its power of the keys that some are excluded from the kingdom. God. we ask this of us, not them, as though the church was someone else.

God In Your Mercy...Hear our Prayer

Gracious God – we remember one another. May each one here know his and her cry lifted up. May each one here know himself/herself known so that there be not one isolated suffered in our midst. May each one know himself/herself received. Let not our hearts be closed to those with whom we are in contention.

Hear our prayers for the members of our company when we cannot seem to help, because they're so ill or so troubled. For the bearing of one another grant us all hearts of flesh and save us from choosing again to have hearts of stone.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. And now as our Saviour has taught us we pray.

From the Jack Word Book

our Father...

You've got such strange ways of blessing us.
We call you to be with us when
what we need is to acknowledge
that you have already come.

We cry out that we be heard
and what we are led to discover
is that in us is your Spirit.

We despair for the world that you love
and are trying to give us.

Prayers of The People

March 15, 1998

Living God – We don't know why we spend so much of life for that which doesn't satisfy! We cannot number the things in this world that don't satisfy. That is why we keep coming back each Sunday. To get our values straightened out.

Life is a cry for what is of true worth.

We bring that cry for true worth to you, living God.

We need to be found, again and again by a knowledge of you, living and active. You make the Universe. If your name is LOVE that's why we cannot satisfy ourselves by trying to satisfy ourselves.

If your name is LOVE, to know you is to reach out in loving care to others, to the world, to the living creation with its delicate balance of life.

Living God. The hearts of flesh we grow for ourselves quickly turn to stone. You give us a loving heart.

That will make all things NEW.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God – Only in the knowledge of you can we maintain a caring heart for each other and for the world. Only in a state of prayer can we keep our hearts open to the suffering and waywardness of the world.

So we bring each other's cries to you. Those rising now in our midst. Those to be heard in our city and those to be heard round the world.

Only as we bear each other's burdens do our burdens become light.

So instead of finding fault and complaining we bring before you all who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Uphold the peace makers and strengthen the servants of justice who labour faithfully in hidden or prominent places.

God In Your Love...Hear our Prayer

Loving God – we ask your blessing before we leave.

Our cries need blessing.

By the time your good gifts get touched by our hands they are tainted.

By the time our good deeds get done there is something wrong with them.

Our generosity is contaminated by extravagance.

Our conservation is corrupted by miserliness.

Our helping hands hide aggression.

Our letting go masks neglect.

God, bless the gifts you have bestowed, bless our use of them.

God, bless the work of our hands, make it a blessing to others.

God, bless our love, make it a blessing to those we love.

Through Jesus Christ

From the Jack Word Book

“If I do good to you
without a sense
that when I am being most just
I am most a sinner,
I can do a lot of harm.”



“You can’t fit the Biblical God into someone who
rewards the good and punishes the bad. His
intention is to save his people.”

Prayers of the People

April 19, 1998

Almighty God

Ruler of the Universe

Giver of Life

Now is the time we all come with our cry. You know what each one of us wishes to utter out of our troubled hearts. But we don't know it of each other. Deepen our awareness of each other.

Deepen our knowledge of each other...so that we all know ourselves known. So that we make a common supplication unto you.

We're hurting, we're tired, we're frightened, lonely, left behind. We're trying to be good. We'd like to be responsible. We'd like our love to be without dissimulation. We'd like to repair all the harm we have done.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

Lord, we believe, help our unbelief. The life we see is Christ, the crucified one, is enormously winsome. But we're not up to it unless he is your idea. Unless you sent him. Unless he is your person, unless you raised him up.

It is the smoking flax of our faith that we most need to be fanned into a flame. That's why we're here. That is why we pray for the church. The one in this place and everywhere else. That we will be to each other the means to believe in order that we might have life in Christ's name.

God in Your Love...Hear our Prayer

Gracious God

In concert with the congregations of the World Council of Churches, we pray for the Church in Brazil. Quench not its smoking flax but fan its Ministry to a flame, as that country faces the call to stewardship of its rain forests and responsibilities for land reform in the face of murderous opposition.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

Renew and strengthen the commitment to peace in the hearts of the peoples whose lives are engulfed in violence and strife. We've been blessed with a number of hopeful signs lately.

Hear the cry of those engulfed that this frail promise will not fail. Sustain the United Nations Security Council in its watchfulness lest the unrest in Rwanda flare up again.

Speed on the first steps in the dialogue between North and South Korea. Increase the signs of promise for an accord in Cambodia. Affirm the accord wrought by the contesting parties in North Ireland. Breathe life into the peace process in that land so much of the

world thinks of as the Holy Land.

God In Your Love...Hear Our Prayer

Now as our Saviour taught us we pray...

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1998

Christmas 1998

It appears many early followers
of Jesus put great store by
the birth stories that
accumulated about him.

Perhaps they were captivated
by the appropriateness of
Isaiah's picture of God's
promised salvation: –

A LITTLE CHILD
SHALL LEAD THEM (11:6)

THESE nativity stories have captivated
people for centuries.

What if we found their
MESSAGE captivating.

That the saving ways
of almighty God are to be met in
human vulnerability?

Almighty God – since we are to have words with you, let's not waste them. We bring a confusing list of petitions. Our wants and needs are many, but we need to sort out the ones that mostly matter. We quickly tire of our whining and complaining. We'd feel better if our praying words actually expressed the gracious longing of our hearts that would be praying.

Lord, Teach us to Pray

We have loved ones we care about and worry about. Some are in trouble with their health. Some are in trouble with their relationships. Some are having a serious problem over their work and earning power. Some are having deep trouble with their belongings. Keep the loved ones in our hearts and hear our cry on their behalf.

Dear God – We've worried about our own meanings. Some of our lives are gravely threatened with meaninglessness. Perhaps our deepest longing is that we come down where we ought to be. That would be good – that would be very good. Then we'd be in position to hear your loving word. Then we'd be where we could be built up by your Spirit.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of All – we can't be hearing real words with the real you without bringing up the world you love. God hear the cry of the vast numbers of people who suffer from famine – flooding – quakes – fire – pestilence, and we pray for their safety, including those groups who serve in these areas of need. May they not be confounded and don't let us forget them.

Lord Hear our Prayers

God of all – we pray for the life system of our planet. Give eloquence and wisdom to all those who are trying to awaken the most of us to our responsibility for stewardship of the earth and its creatures. We pray for the economy. You taught us to pray for our daily bread. Principalities and powers are imagining vain things that frustrate countless numbers for our receiving daily bread. Give us all, especially the world leaders, the will and the insight to bring the economy to the service of the world's people.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Generous God – we pray for the Church. What a time for it to be running where it hasn't been sent. What a time for it to miss its calling because it is busy with trivialities. God you can present the church to yourself without spot or wrinkles or any such thing. Work some of this now in our midst and in all the churches.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Now as our Saviour taught us we pray...

Prayers of the People

October 18, 1998

God of the Universe:

We've set aside this time to have a word with you.

When the real nature of what we propose here dawns on us, we slow down. We're not sure our cries are appropriate.

But Jesus' word to us is to keep at it. Maybe if we keep going we'll hit upon something we really mean, and really approve of.

Gracious God –

we raise our cries unto you for the very reason they need sorting out.

God, there are things about ourselves that we are not pleased with. Some of our cries are rather more like a whimper .

Some of our love relationships have worn pretty thin, especially where pain is involved. Some of our rages are not about the right things.

So we're back asking to be made new!

And asking for eyes to see where grace abounds to empower us to become new.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Almighty God, father and mother of all, things are happening to each of us that are overwhelming. So we pray for one another, let us leave no one out.

Hear the cries of the lonely and give us ears to hear them.

Give us hearts of flesh that will receive one another, let us leave no one out

Hear the cries of those for whom growing older is bringing changes that deprive, restrict and limit. Support them in these twilight years with a fresh awareness that nothing can separate us from your love.

Watch over the young, with their fears and anxieties, their joys and triumphs. Teach us how to receive each other so that we know membership in your kingdom together.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of the Universe,

We pray for the church, our West Point Grey United Church, the Church throughout Canada and the World.

This Sunday of the year we remember Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire.

Dear God, Africa must be very much on your heart. You must have a role for the church there as well as here.

Give us all ears to hear what you want your people at. Save us from running where we haven't been sent.

So place on our hearts where you want us at that we pursue the call with the persistence of the widow in Jesus' parable.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God of all:

We remember the world, the life of your planet earth and the living beings on it. Here is another matter where we need the widow's persistence. In the midst of all the confused conflict about the environment, it is easy for us to give up our responsibility for its stewardship.

And our hearts quickly harden against the enormity of human need.

Keep us praying for the needy of the world, the homeless, the hungry, the impoverished, the tyrannized.

Keep us praying for peace in the world.

God watch over the little baby steps to peace in Palestine. Let not that effort flag or fail.

And also in Yugoslavia, we join our cry to the cry of the people there.

May peace come before the current horror stories of suffering reinforce the centuries old hate and vile beliefs of these people.

Don't give up on these people as you don't let us give up.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Prayers of the People

April 4, 1999

O Lord of Hosts

There's a war on that's getting hotter by the day.
All together we don't know what we are doing.
There's a confusion of voices telling us what's right.
The trouble is, it's costing a lot of lives.
At a time this solemn, we don't know how to pray.
Our groanings are too deep for utterance.
Save the people, O God, Save the people.
May all who are making decisions be saved from folly.

We remember also the countless peoples of the world who suffer deprivation because local and world economies are out of joint.
We lift into the light of your countenance the strange faith that all this will be put right by letting the marketplace run free of interference.
We cry out to you as we behold world opinions, more and more approving the drive of self-interest, in place of public good.
But, Dear God, Let not our loud lamentations blind us to the public servants who continue to labour in hidden places for the public good. Lead us to afford them recognition and support.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God:

As we lift up the progress of the people,
We ask that each individual prayer be heard.
We ask that each person will know himself/herself heard.
Dear God, everyone here needs to be heard.
If that's to happen each one of us needs to hear others.

Hear the children.

Give us ears to hear and receive the little ones. Bless our relationships with them.
How serious a matter it is if we should fail or hurt any of them.

Hear the aging.

As capacities diminish, questions of meaning and worth become sharper and the world grows less familiar .

Hear the young,

who are inheriting a world of growing demands and complexity.

Hear the parents

of the young – who long for wisdom,

that in life's rush they will do well by their loved ones.
of youth – who face all the anxiety of letting go
as they worry whether they have done enough and done right and who fear
lest they interfere with their loved ones becoming themselves.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of all:

On this Easter morning,

we acknowledge you alone can be the author of the resurrection faith.

It is your doing and wondrous in our eyes.

Pour upon us the Gift of the Holy Spirit

so that we recognize your witness to the risen Crucified One.

When that witness confronts us,

We may be stumbling over and rejecting

what you have set as the cornerstone of life.

Dear God, give us eyes to see what has to die so we can be raised up.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Now as our Saviour has taught us we say...

Prayers of the People

May 30, 1999

God of all, as we are about to have a word with you we find ourselves torn between our OUGHTS and our WANTS: to start with, we don't mean either.

If the real US is to really come before you we'll have to shed our pretensions, especially our pious pretensions. If we come mouthing our wants they seem unworthy. What a parade, all of us lining up with our wants.

We have this deep longing. We'd like to really mean our crys unto you and quit worrying whether they are worthy or not. At the same time we'd rather our crys were not shameful.

God, what we can mean, in the power of your spirit, is a cry for you to redeem our loving.

LOVING. It is the best thing we do. It is the best part of our lives. It is something to ask for that doesn't take away from anyone else. It doesn't bless just us.

REDEEM our loving so that it is not selective; so that it doesn't manipulate, isn't self-serving, so that it doesn't blow hot and cold, doesn't fade like the morning dew before pain and rejection. If you could redeem our loving, that would do a world of good!

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Merciful God, we raise the crys of those near and far who are genuinely suffering, whose lives ache for their loved ones and any at a loss for any way to help any who live with constant pain and disability. Whose lives are haunted with anxiety.

We pray especially for the people suffering war conditions and the threat of war. Dear God let no decision-makers around these conditions escape for one minute the solemn responsibility that is theirs and ours.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Loving God, give us ears to hear the genuine and hidden suffering of the people on this planet. Our hearts grow hard and flabby. Keep them tender. Open our ears to the genuine suffering of those nearby and lonely who wonder if anyone hears their crys.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of all, we can have no word with you except it include acknowledgment of the mystery of creation. The more our wise ones study it, the more wondrous becomes the mystery of life on this planet. Such vast and minute systems have to work together for life to be sustained. All of it groans. Redeem our acknowledgment of the mystery of life

– and God – lead us into the proper care of it.

Most of all God, we thank you for your work of reconciliation. Only the ministry of reconciliation is yours. And God, our blessings can destroy us. Show us where we are called to a ministry of reconciliation.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1997

Christmas 1997

“May all your hearts be open to receiving
the twin mysteries of the glad tidings
this season reminds us of:

1. When our hope is in God, it comes to us in spite of the conditions of our existence rather than because of them;
2. This liberating and reconciling Word of God addresses the real conditions of our existence, not the ones we wish we were in.

God rest you merry !

Prayers of the People

July 4, 1999

God of All, we'd all be a lot more use and do a lot less harm, if we had rest in our souls. Some of us are indeed overworked and heavy burdened. Some of us have reason for being distressed, some of us are just at loose ends, out of sorts, hard to please.

But with no rest for our souls, or our souls lulled to sleep in a false rest, we don't make very good neighbours, or very good citizens either of our community or of the world, nor do we make very good stewards of creation, as we succumb to impossible consumption like everyone else.

Dear God, how we need to learn of you, so that we find rest for our souls, and if it means we have to get going on the meek and lowly bit, so be it. Isn't it strange Lord, that when we pray from our deepest needs, we say, COME Lord, while all along, you're the one that says, COME.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God, there are many individual cries being made to you at this time. We lift up each other's prayers. There are the bereaved, those having an anxious time with their health, their families, their work and their loving. As you teach us to bear each other's burdens, use the community such bearing creates as a vessel whereby your healing and reconciling powers reach everyone in need.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of Hosts, we pray for the world. What a relief to be able to pray on one important front for those waging peace. We may not be very good at it, we may be stupid and child-like about it, like children quarreling at play, but better to be waging peace, for all its challenge and difficulty, than waging war.

Dear God, hear our prayer for those working at peace making all over the world. Move with your reconciling power on all those fronts where peace initiatives are underway – in the Balkans, Northern Ireland, Israel and Syria, Israel and the Palestinians, Columbian civil war, Sierra Leone, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

And hear our prayers for the lives of the people on those fronts where warfare has been resumed – India and Pakistan, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Somaliland, Angola. Oh, Lord of Hosts, bring peace to these fronts.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of All, we close our word with you with a prayer for the forgotten sufferers everywhere, near and far. If we could just get under that burden, we might find out how light your burden is and how easy your yoke.

Prayers of the People

January 25, 2000

Almighty God, Lord of all, to begin with we want to cast our burden on you...at least, have you lift them from us.

Some of that burden is guilt, some we can name and some is nameless.

Some of that burden is dread – disaster hangs over us – imagined or real.

Some of that burden covers responsibility, we don't want – more than we're up to and can't do anything about.

God, the longer this conversation continues the more we discover that our deepest prayer or thought is that we be found under the right burden – where you are and that we accept your gift of courage to be there.

Not that we are under no burden but that we will be under yours again.

Our deepest prayer is not that we feel good but is that we be good. That would be better than any cheap comfort Restore us to our true calling

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

We take time now to remember one another

How easily we forget, how terrible should anyone of us feel left out – forgotten.

Support with your loving spirit those whose bodies are failing them.

Renew with courage and commitment to life those who find they have to start again.

Fill those who hunger and thirst after righteousness where they live and work especially when conditions appear to be thankless

O God, bless the little ones and those who have the care of them. Continue to teach us how to receive them. Prevent us from ever causing anyone of them to stumble

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of all,

We remember the world you love. We pray for the people suffering in the world's troubled spots. Especially on our hearts are those torn by the strife between Christians and Muslims in Indonesia.

Dear God, what possesses your children to destroy each other in your name?

Lord of all, Let us not slack in our praying for peace

We remember Syria and Israel and Palestine

How long, O Lord, must this land called Holy by so many of your children, be the centre of strife.

Keep the peace workers at their tasks

Let nothing put them off whenever any attempt is made at bringing peace Kosovo, Timor, Sudan, Algeria and where peacemaking has been abandoned.

Raise up visionaries who will start the peace process again.

We pray for all those who are excluded from the benefits of the vast and powerful economic forces of our time. Especially the children

Dear God, we hold up to you our greedy, consuming, exploiting world.

Sustain those countless brave souls who find themselves called to address this world's folly and to heal the wounds.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Prayers of the People

March 19, 2000

Almighty God of All,

Now is the time we put our hearts and minds to the task of getting heard. We keep repeating – “Hear our Prayer”. God, we have a deep need to be heard – to know ourselves known. But that prospect also frightens us. We hide stuff, even from ourselves. Gracious God, as we come to know ourselves known by you, we can afford to find out who we really are. Dear God, our cry to be heard is a cry for courage to face the depth of who we are!

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God, we confess that among the cries we make to you is that we are God-forsaken. As soon as we mention it, we are ashamed – in the light of the gross suffering of so many of our fellow humans, again, our cry is for depth. How are we to know how present you are in God-forsakenness unless we enter that deep place with our saviour? How can we receive your dauntless courage, freely given, unless we take up the role and in the place you have called us to?

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God of all

We pray for one another – within this fellowship of Faith and within the network we are part of in this place and this community, in the network where we love and work. Especially we pray for the people and situations that irritate us. Again we pray for depth lest we have to discern that those that irritate us are the ones you have placed on our hearts.

We pray for our loved ones – Especially the young and the old who need our care and not forgetting the others that need our letting go. There are so many ways that we can fail them. And our active efforts to help them will be helpful only if they are forgiven.

We pray for all those who suffer anywhere. Dear God, so many contemporary victims of savage war and of wars fought in your name. Have mercy on us all!

And uphold with your steadfast spirit all those reaching out to serve and heal- and work for peace and reconciliation.

Restore those weary of well-doing as they face one frustration after another.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of All

For this to be the Prayers of the People we need to be quiet together -so that individual and secret cries, groanings that cannot be uttered may rise up to you in the silence.

Together we lift up these secret prayers.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Now as our saviour taught us...

Prayers of the People

June 4, 2000

God of all,

Now that it's time for a word with you, we're worried lest we make poor use of the time. What a waste and a travesty if we have only trivial things to say. But if in trying hard to make proper prayer we utter petitions we don't mean – it's equally a waste and a travesty – put us in touch with our deepest meanings, and shift our hearts to reliance on your mercy alone!

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Gracious God,

We pray for the Church and here we also have a problem.

75 years ago, in Canada here, something unique got going that our forebearers believed in mightily. But that was not our beginning as a church.

Restore us to our roots, as well as our special calling, so that we are not cut off from the cloud of witnesses that reach back nearly 2000 years. But rather be found again and again by this throng of subdued sinners and strengthened weaklings as they point to your vanquishing and restoring grace.

Dear God, do not abandon us to a tired or trivial vision of our peculiar calling. Save us from a righteousness that is aimed at judging the world instead of reconciling. Save us from a false openness that is open only to those who agree with us. Keep us where we will continue to know your living active and piercing word to the division of soul and spirit.

We pray for the whole church, that no part of it be cut off from the rest of it in a righteousness of its own, lest it be cut off from your abounding grace.

We also pray for all who seek to know you or rather to be known by you. Both individual persons and historic groups.

What paths they have chosen! May they all be saved from enslavement by beings that are not God. Continue your long-suffering patience with all our broken searching for you while you have reconciled us all.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Almighty God – we also pray for the world. We hold up the victims of strife and tyranny, the victims of natural disaster, those living in nervous hope or no hope at all. We lift up the cry from around the world.

While famine rages in the Horn of Africa & Eritrea. Everlasting civil war in Ireland, Kosovo, East Timor, Fiji.

Hope and uncertainty accompanying Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon.
Gracious God, turn the hearts of the world's peoples to the honour and goodness of peace-making and value of the murky role of peacekeeping. Renew the commitment of weary peacekeepers everywhere. Let not the cynics scorn gain credence with us.

Have mercy on all our attempts to do right.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Dear God, this week we remember all those major and minor officials charged with the watchfulness that keeps our food and water safe to consume.

We are thankful that they are at their posts. We are newly aware of how heavy their responsibilities are and without let up.

Also we are newly aware of our own role in keeping the earth safe and clean. Uphold us all in our resolve to be responsible stewards of your planet earth.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Before we go we need some silent time when each and everyone of us can give utterance to deep secret longings at a time when they can be lifted by all of us.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Now as our Saviour taught us, we say...

Prayers of the People

October 1,2000

Almighty God, it's time for a word with you. We don't know where to start. We're either speechless or we have so much to say our speech is a crowded jumble.

One psalmist of old began his prayers with "Out of the depths I cry unto you O Lord. Lord hear my voice."

If we weren't so in flight from our depths, we'd know where to start. When we face our depths, we're in place to have a true meeting with you – and our first word with you is to ask for the word FROM you. We need to be addressed. We need our depths addressed by a living word. We need our weariness addressed, our pettiness addressed, our withdrawal from the world's pain and suffering. Speak your living word –

the word that penetrates,
that puts things right,
that reconciles,
and give us ears to hear.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Gracious God, we turn our thoughts to the hurting world. The forgotten warfare and mortal conflicts that victimize countless people. Especially the old, old ones with bottomless historic roots. Dear God, even as we name them we demonstrate our forgetfulness by leaving them out.

Zambia

East Timor

India and Pakistan

The place, in terrible irony, we call the Holy Land

Kosovo

Ireland

Mongolia

Yugoslavia

We pray, O God, for the forgotten labourers in your kingdom in all corners of the world, who labour on where the glare of world attention has gone out, where faithfulness is called for even while all available solutions are problematical..

We pray for all those struggling with the crucial issues of our time.

The third world debt load

The arms race that keeps finding justification

The residential school question

Canada's fisheries' policy regarding aboriginal peoples.

Our human stewardship of the earth's resources

Ways of holding a global economy accountable for human well being

Raise up, O God, servants with the courage to suffer these questions, to labour ceaselessly under the right burden even when there is no blameless decision to make.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Loving God, we turn our thoughts to the Church.

We give you thanks for what your living word has already wrought in our midst. The blessed community of GRUB DAY as we joined the work of our hands to freshen the appearance of your house. We give thanks for the word that came to us as we shared with one another the vision we each have for where you are calling us. We thank you for the ministry you move individuals to have with each other as dark and stressful events invade their lives. Dear God, have mercy upon us when we fail each other, and where sin abounds, may grace much more abound. You who have begun a good work in us, depart not from us until we are without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Now Lord, we take time, and make space for the individual cry of the people here present to be received and lifted up to you.

Hear these crys

Hear the names named

Remind us of the names we have forgotten.

May this house be filled with a great surge of caring that reaches up to you and to each one here.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Prayers of the People

November 12, 2000

God of all,

Receive our remembering. On this Sunday, we offer to you our remembering that it may be used by you to further your purposes.

We remember that our way of life, whatever its ease, comfort and well-being has cost a great price, paid for by others.

Ever more troublesome, we remember that there has hardly ever been a nation state in all the earth that has not been borne and sustained by bloody conflict, conquest and subjection.

Dear God, we cannot accept our membership in the human race without remembering how much of our life is lived in greed and the violation of others. What is there about humankind that you are mindful of us?

God, so redeem our remembering that a deep awareness of our potential for doing harm will move us toward more responsible stewardship of life on this planet and membership of one another.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

And God, as we remember, leave us not to pray only for our character development, for there are still countless victims of violence and greed. Even now trashing and killing of victims abound due to the human capacity for hatred and commitment to vengeance.

Hear their cries, especially the children. Open more and more human ears to their cries.

Sustain all those at the front line of peace-making. Lead us all more and more in the way of peace... Your peace, not the peace the world gives.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God of hosts,

We pray for Canada at this time of election 2000. Watch over our nation from sea to sea, all its people and would-be leaders. What a broken offering this campaign 2000 is! Nevertheless we offer it to you. Make redemptive use of its mixture of commitment, partisanship and knavish tricks, its honour and dishonour, its ill repute and good repute.

We give thanks that we live in a nation where we are free to decide who will govern us. Grant that this exercise in decision-making will result in the building of a worthy nation.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God

As we seek to lift the prayers of all of us leave us not to the neglect of the prayers of each of us.

Some of us are burdened with decisions that impact on others, some of us find ourselves deciding less and less that matters to anyone.

Some of us have the care of the young (of whatever age), the size of the responsibility vastly overwhelms the wisdom we have for it.

Some are in constant pain, some experience the growing failure of our bodies.

Some experience increasing loneliness as the world changes and peers die.

Hear these crys

Hear too the crys we failed to name....

Grant each one the courage that does not fail and that does not move them in destructive ways.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Prayers of the People

January 14, 2001

God of All

We are suffering from an information overload – right here, at prayer time, it takes the form of a CONCERN overload. There is such an endless list to pray for that we're speechless. To offer a general prayer for everything is a fruitless undertaking. Rather, it witnesses to NO CONCERN. God, save us from being overwhelmed by a myriad of concerns and empower us to keep sensitive to the specific cries of our neighbours both near and far .

And when we look at the world, the ravaging that has us groaning without utterance is the strife in the Middle East. That's where it all began. These are all landmarks in the history of salvation – and there is no peace there, and it seems there is no way to have peace as each side has the horror stories it lives by multiplied.

Right here we sound like the history of Christianity is the history of the world. God, there are victims of internecine warfare all over the place. We lift these cries also. May there be no forgotten war fronts.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God, when, like Elijah of Old, we get to thinking we are the only ones who care, keep us mindful of the countless peace-makers, helpers and care-givers that have chosen the life of service in hurting spots round the world. Support these servants, especially those labouring on forgotten fronts, lest their helping hands falter. And bless their endeavours lest their helping hands do harm.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God of Hosts

We pray for all involved in the political process of nations, especially our own. Reign over all the dynamics that fuel the political process – the media, especially their self-righteous elements, the lobbying of special interests.

Keep the hearts of our leaders through all this, that their ministries be responsible, and that they provide government that serves your purposes.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God of Creation

We pray for the life of the earth. Continue to awaken the whole human race to its stewardship of all living things.

Dear God, on this one, we aren't feeling that we are the only ones who care. We are only too aware of our complicity in the widespread spoiling of our biosphere, and the neglect

of called-for remedies. God, have mercy upon us – turn us around.

Gracious God

In this time of prayer, we are also very aware of each other. Deepen that awareness as we pray for each other. That's one of the reasons we are here, in your house so that we can take time to pray for each other and be prayed for by each other.

We don't get around to it much otherwise. We pray for the hearts that ache, the lives that are burdened, the unkindly done by, the feeling burdened, the rejected –

And God

We also pray for ourselves.

Give us hearts of flesh for our hearts of stone, Ears to hear each other's cry,
Presence to bear another's burdens, another's being, another's freedom.

Dear God

If none of this ever happened between us – we'd know you and your gift of eternal life.

From the Jack Word Book

“When we run from where the hurt is
When we run from where the evil is
We’re hiding from where the good news is.”



“There’s a deep and powerful mix of creation
and fall. To get to be created at all Means
going wrong.”

Prayers of the People

February 25, 2001

God of All –

We take time now for the prayers of all the people gathered here to rise up to you. We take time for these cries to be heard by you and by all of us – so that each one knows that he/she is being prayed for.

Dear God – there are cries that have not yet found words...where life's misery runs so deep it's beyond reach. There are longings for a word from you to address our confusion. To show us the way to go. There is longing for a courage to see us through situations that seem to have no solutions. There is a longing for the gifts of courage that can reach the depths of our deepest anguish.

God, we are in your house. We are encompassed about by the witness of the people of Israel and the apostles of Jesus Christ. Let not this time be wasted in trivial matters.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

God – this might not be an opportune time for it, but each of us would like a personal word with you. It may be difficult to get intimate with every one else listening in, but it would help keep our word honest and real.

God – we cry for a word of knowledge of you, more correctly, a real knowledge of your knowledge of us.

Comfort our wandering off and our doubts. Reach into our depths

Deeper than our needs and anxieties

Deeper than our flights and our postponement

Deeper than our parched emptiness

Dear God

What if we don't recognize our reassurance when we receive it because it is experienced as a full caring heart at work.

What if we found a caring heart to be better than no assurance ?

God in Your mercy ...Hear our prayer

From the Shavers' Christmas Letter 1980

Christmas 1980

“Every experience of the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver exposes flesh to flesh. It’s a very physical place. As the Feast of the Incarnation draws near, the city’s core becomes even more physical. There are more bodies around because in order for everybody’s generosity to be justly distributed, the needy must get in line.

Such experiences are not unique to us – they are typical of our time – that the most blessed season of the year is also the most bruising.

Yet,

If we are to come upon the Word made flesh,
It will take place where flesh meets flesh;
If we are to be truly blessed,
It will be when we are found
In him who was bruised

Prayers of the People

March 1, 2001

Gracious God,

Renew a right spirit within us. Fit us for living well the life that is before us. Provide in us the kind of courage that is adequate for the times our idealized high minded vision evokes the reality in all this brokenness – whether it has to do with our relationships with our loved ones. Where the opinionated are many who know just what we should have done while we don't – whether it has to do with our vocation where the accelerating social change confounds the fulfilling of it. Whether it has to do with our neighbourliness where the neighbourhood we know is vanishing.

Our courage to be fails us. We take refuge in withdrawal and complaint.

How well we know the blessed words – “Perfect love casts out fear”

The courage we seek is your knowledge – surpassing love of the world. With that in our hearts we can do anything. We can know anything. With that love in our hearts people would be glad to have us around.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Almighty God – Father and Mother of all hear our prayers for the church. We remember the church in Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. We name those because of a World Council of Churches programme to help us remember the church throughout the world. And we remember the world because you said you created your people not to cause trouble but to bless the world. Our prayer for the church is a proper one. Holy God, pour out your Holy Spirit on the

Church so that it will recognize your glory in the Crucified One so that it will not use its piety to escape your plan so that it never ceases to attack the gates of Hell. Pour your Holy Spirit on the church so that it becomes a high and lifted-up witness to your love of sinners. And lest it so neglect its power of the keys, that some are excluded from the kingdom.

God, we ask this of us not them – as though the church was someone else.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer

Gracious God – We remember one another. May each one here know his and her cares lifted up. May each one here know herself/himself forgiven so that there be not one isolated sufferer in this midst. May each one know herself/himself received. Let not our hearts be closed to those with whom we are in contention. Hear our prayer for the members of our company for we cannot seem to help, because they are so ill or so troubled. For the bearing of one another grant us all hearts of flesh and save us from ever choosing again to have hearts of stone.

God, in your mercy...Hear our prayer

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. And now as our Saviour has taught us we pray...

From the Jack Word Book

“Just because we mess up there is no need for us to abandon wonder and delight.”



“What more can there be than that God stands before me with all that he is and I stand before God with all that I am.”

Prayers of the People

October 7, 2001

God of All

sing the songs of Zion in a strange land. The world around us has changed. Or maybe we have just found out what it has always been like. All the things we used to think kept us safe no longer work. In some ways we have been singing the wrong songs in Zion. What we trusted as power and might suddenly became vulnerable. We don't know what new song to sing.

God of all

can we learn how to be powerful in the world? We keep praying for our leaders, that they will be given wisdom in these most demanding times. But it will take all of us to learn how to be powerful in the world. God we are in a strange land. The powerful are not safe. In our new-found fear we forget the powerless who are the victims of everyone else's aggression.

How can the powerful learn to live in the world? How can we all learn to be powerful in the world? Dear God draw us and all people near to your heart.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

God of Israel, Your people taught us so much. They saw images of you in the thunder, earthquake and rainbows in the sky. They heard messages from you in the still small voice. They met you in their turbulent history. We thank you for their witness, and the strange way it speaks to us.

God, as the old prayers says, "It's good to give thanks." Teach our hearts to freely receive the gift of life with its color, sound and scent. The gift of other lives. The wondrous gift of the newborn. The gift of the many lives of noble service and quiet courage that surround us. For it is as we freely receive that we learn to freely give.

God in your mercy...Hear our prayer

Dear God, before we go, let's take time for you to hear the cry of all those present. The cry that don't get uttered by anyone offering the prayers of the people. The cry that only each individual heart can utter, with or without words. In the Communion of the Holy Spirit may each of us know our cry lifted unto you.

From the Jack Word Book

“We don’t have clean choices.
If you want clean choices
then you don’t choose for this world.”



“You’d be surprised at how many
things that are wrong with the world
come on as remedies.”



“Helping can be a helluva putdown.”

Memorial Prayers

Dwight Williams – September 1990

The original was written by lack for the memorial service of Dwight Williams

Almighty God, receive this our offering of this our memorial.

Receive our confusion of sorrow and relief.

Let them flow forth unto you
until our sorrow is touched with Godly sorrow,
and our relief rests on trust in your goodness.

Lord, hear our prayer

...and let our cry come unto you...

Receive our thanks and praise !

especially our gratitude for Dwight.
Let our grateful memory flow out to you
until our gratitude swells
from a reckoning of our blessings against our complaints
into our embracing the gift of life
whatever it contains.

Lord, hear our prayer

...and let our cry come unto you...

Receive our faith.

Let it flow out to you – right into the shadow of death,
right through that great fear that shakes us
when we are on the verge of trusting in your LOVE alone.

Lord, hear our prayer

...and let our cry come unto you...

Receive the broken offering

of our care of one another –
and through the miracle of the Word made flesh
transform that care and return it unto us
as the bread of eternal life.

Lord, hear our prayer ,

...and let our cry come unto you...

Now as our Saviour has taught us we pray...

Prayer for Craig Miller Memorial Service June 28, 1999

God of All

No simple word with you will do at a time like this. When we are into the matter of death and dying, we are in too deep for words.

But we still need to have our crys come unto you, confusing as they are.

There is a fearsome cry, for death is such a final unknowable matter, and each time we face it in a friend, we are reminded that it will be ours some day.

There is anger; anger that such a gentle, thoughtful person like Craig should have to fight a long battle for life with pain and capacity-loss hounding every year. There is our cry of regret; things we wish we had said and done and not left unsaid and undone.

But most of all, hear our cry of loss! Our friend and loved one has been taken from us. Our grieving flows like a mighty river as our remembering tumbles from one event to another .

Dear God

How well we understand that the liturgy composed down the centuries for use at the time of death was called a "Requiem"; how deep, at a time of death is the cry for rest.

God, shallow rest is no help at all. We need the deep rest that will embrace our fear and anger, our regrets and grief. We need nothing less than your rest. Because we don't want all the confusion that is going on in our hearts to shut off our gratitude for Craig's life, but rather have all that is going on in our hearts swell them with gratitude for Craig's life.

Hear our cry for the rest that is in you!

With these crys receive the offering of our act of worship, for we greatly wish ours to be a fit memorial.

God, have we sounded like we are praying only for us? While we do wish to lift each other's prayers unto you, Craig is also very much on our hearts. We give thanks that, for him, the fever of life is past. We lift our cry to you that you will receive Craig into you rest. And we pray that you will keep us in living communion.

All this we ask in the name of Jesus, whose life and death reveal to us that your hold on us is greater than our hold on you.

Amen.

And now, as our Saviour has taught us, we say...

Prayer for Margaret Smith Memorial Service October 29.2001

God of all,

It's a solemn time for us when we come face to face with life and death. It's more than we can take in. That breath can enter dust and living being be formed. That something that vulnerable is sustained as a tiny part of an enormous universe. That something as precious to us as a life of a loved one is so vulnerable. That something as certain as death hovers over what is so precious to us. What we absolutely cannot take in is what it is like not to be.

Dear God, as we face the mystery of life and death we pray for a Word that is sound and true. Address our state in all seriousness. Don't cheer us with wishful thinking. Speak to us of eternal things.

What brought us to face the mystery of life and death was the death of Margaret Smith. It is the life and death of Margaret Smith that we are about. We have gathered to mark her passing and we pray that ours will be a fit memorial. It's not fair what she had to put up with these last long years. But we have been greatly moved by her courage in the face of adversity all that time.

Let not these last years diminish the years of full and giving life. We remember before you those who will miss her most. Liberate in them such rich remembering that their mourning will be comforted. Sustain Don through the shock of emptiness at the sudden cutting off of his years of care-giving.

While you are speaking to us of eternal things address the sense of being diminished that assails all of us as we age.

Hear our cry.

Receive Margaret into your rest and all of us into a lively communion of saints through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer of Consecration (at Communion)

Congregation Almighty God, we thank you for creation.

One Big Bang or whatever, once there was nothing, then there was something. This is your doing and wondrous in our eyes.

Congregation Holy God, we thank you for life.

One Who can comprehend how a small planet got to be the right distance from the sun, got to be the right temperature, got to have the right amount of water so that life could emerge and flourish with such profusion.

Congregation Praise be to God.

Children God, you are so big and we are so small, we don't know how you can think of us at all.

Congregation Gracious God, we thank you for the people of Israel.

One Out of the turmoil of nations and empires, down the centuries, this stubborn stiff necked people were found by you and came to a knowledge of you that blessed all the people of the earth.

Congregation Praise be to God.
Loving God, we thank you for Jesus Christ.

One He is the stone of stumbling that you made the head corner stone. He kept company with outcasts. He saved others that could not save himself. We behold the Glory of God in his face. He is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

Congregation Praise be to God.

One We do this in remembrance of Jesus, who on the night of his final feast with his disciples who abandoned him before morning, took bread, and after he had given thanks he broke it and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me". In the same way he took the cup after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for the remission of the sins of the many, all of you drink of it".

All Almighty God, grace this memorial feast with your real presence so that we indeed feed on the body and blood of Christ, are nourished unto eternal life and empowered by your love of the world. Amen

Lord's Prayer

Host elevated – The body of our Lord Jesus Christ broken for us.

Wine poured – The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ poured out for us.

THE PEACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST BE WITH YOU ALL.

Thanksgiving Prayer

Almighty God

Bless you, whose glory we behold in the cross of Jesus Christ
No other glory can reach us in the darkness of our souls.
No other glory has the power to give us to each other and restore us to a love of the world.

Bless you for the host of witnesses through whom knowledge of you broke into our history .

Bless you for using such earthly human means for pursuing us with your truth and confronting us with your salvation.

Bless you for the brave ones of the world, whom to know is to be made glad that we belong to the human race.

Bless you for the gift of loved ones. They can be a trial to us and we to them, but how precious they are to us. The gift of love is the chief wonder of life and we bless you for it.

And now as our Savior has taught us, we pray.

Prayer at opening of First Session of Thirtv-second Parliament June 6, 1979

British Columbia Legislative Buildings
Victoria, BC

Rev M. John V. Shaver, President, BC Conference, United Church of Canada

Father and Mother of all, we presume to open this thirty-second Parliament of the British Columbia Legislature with prayer unto you.

By this we acknowledge that the governing of people by some is under constraint and has limits beyond which is neither prudent nor safe for it to transgress.

By this we acknowledge that the institutions whereby those who govern are held responsible to those they govern are not of our own making, but are rather gifts given to us by the commitment and sacrifice of those who have gone before.

By this we acknowledge that our structures and the operation of them do not yet afford justice to all.

By this we acknowledge that Justice has a way of being its own thing and is not the possession of anyone person or group with a righteousness of its own.

By this we acknowledge that British Columbia is not the whole world or even its center , but that we are fellow citizens of the world and members one of another .

At this time we lift the people of the province and the members of this Legislature, Government and Opposition, for your blessing.

God bless the Queen and her Lieutenant Governor.

Grant the Members to this house

Ears to hear the crys of the people,

Eyes to recognize the faults in the foundations of the State,

Minds to know the difference between treason and loyal opposition, and

Hearts to face the enormous responsibilities of this hour.

Amen

From the Jack Word Book

“Self-justification is a bust – try it.
Zeal to be blameless is a bust.
You’ll mess up everybody else’s life for miles
around.”



“The meetings are what makes life meaningful;
the partings are where you find out how much it
meant.”

Excerpt from a prayer Jack gave at our community Prayer Service in response to the Terrorist Attack on the World Trade Centre

God of Host, who'd have thought that our tall towers could be obliterated in minutes? Who'd have thought that the greatest and most sophisticated might, would not be sufficient to keep us safe? And what will keep us from trusting alone that safety will be gained by the expenditure of greater and more sophisticated power?

Dear God, that fear that was the lot of the have-nots of the earth is now the lot of the haves. Save us from the fear-driven rage that will magnify the fearsome state of our predicament.

Dear God, your Word once spoke that perfect love casts out fear. We try everything else. Your Word made flesh demonstrated that in the army of love only the wounded can serve.

Is that why we try everything else ? Have mercy upon us. Don't give up on us.

God In Your Mercy...Hear Our Prayer