

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday March 4, 2007

On this day in 1966, John Lennon boasted that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus and predicted that Christianity would soon vanish. Tonight, a dumb TV dustup debunks Jesus' resurrection. For that to be right, we'd never have heard of Jesus. And though Christianity is the world's most populous faith, it's not everyone's. But we worship Christ Jesus and, in God's grace, we'll continue to worship him, by faith.

Then one day, gathered on Another Shore, we'll worship him face to face, singing songs of Zion with saints from all the ages. And every tongue will confess: "Jesus is Lord!" to the glory of God the Father. There'll be no more partings, no more tears.

For now, and for one last time here, we'll keep our custom by recalling that it was also on this day, exactly 100 years before Lennon's silly boast, that the Appalachian revivalist, Alexander Campbell, met Jesus face to face. He'd often said of his own little flock: "We're not the only Christians, but we are Christians only." Let us pray.

Savior Christ: We, too, are not the only Christians, but make us Christians only. In You, we've died. In You we're raised to life. So on this commencement morning, impress upon us again that it's in You that we know the Father's amazing grace. Thank You, O Victor over sin and death, O Vindicator in spite of our guilt, O Vision for pilgrimage to what no eye has seen nor mind conceived of all You've prepared for those who love You.

Thank You for this wayfarer's chapel. Continue to bless the message of grace that's been preached from this pulpit, that Your Gospel might still register in minds, resound in hearts and renew for lives of true and faithful discipleship – thus fulfilling the sacred purpose for which we assembled: "so to present Jesus Christ in the Power of the Spirit that men and women may put their trust in Him as Savior and receive Him as their Lord".

Thank You for all who've made this ministry so meaningful to so many. Each received the gifts You gave to him or her. And each has served us all. We're especially thankful for Your gift of our minister, raised up for such a time as this has been. Thank You for the spirit and truth of his preaching for our good and for Your glory. May he and all of us continue to joy in You and be blessed by all You have done for, in and through us.

And most of all, O Holy Triune God, we praise You for Yourself. You alone are worthy of all worship – here and hereafter. So, in gratitude, this branch of Your Church prays together, once more, these precious words that our Savior taught us to pray, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.