

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday September 3, 2006

On this day in 1776, John Newton wrote in a letter: “The love I bear Christ is but a faint and feeble spark, but it is an emanation from himself: He kindled it and he keeps it alive; and because it is his work, I trust many waters shall not quench it.”

Let us pray.

Savior Christ:

We praise You for the unquenchable flame of faith that Your Spirit has kindled in our spirits. We thank You for Your keeping this flame alive in us, even while all the spirits of this world throw cold water and worse on every witness to that faith in You. O Light of the world, may we tend Your flame burning brightly in our hearts that we might live out our calling to be light for the world. O Suffering Servant of God, may we tend Your flame burning brightly in our hearts that we might serve You through serving others in the obedience with which You served. O Eternal Son of God, may we tend Your flame in our hearts that our short sojourns in this world might count for eternal values. Thank You, Faithful Friend, that these prayers for a flaming faith are Your own Heartfelt prayers for us, prayed through us, with the assurance that You will bring it all to pass.

We thank You for the ministry of our brother, John. May what he said of himself, in praise to You, be said of us: “once an infidel and libertine [yet] by [Your] rich mercy ... preserved, restored, pardoned and appointed” for the service of the Gospel. We thank You for his well-worn hymn of Your “Amazing Grace.” It has meant so very much to so many people through the years because it reminds us of Your mercy and peace – for which, “amazing” is the only adjective that suits. May we never fail to be amazed that we – in our indifference and wretchedness in which we are wont to wander – are sought and found by Your relentless Love. May we never be so stupid as to take Your amazing grace for granted or have any doubts at all as to the fact that, indeed, all is of grace!

And so we wrap our petitions – public and private – in the assurance of Your grace and we rest in the promise of Your peace through Calvary love.

And thank You, now, for words You taught us to pray to Your Father and ours, 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.