

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday February 12, 2006

Both Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin were born on this day in the year 1809. Each man struggled with religious belief, in part due to a cold and callous caricature that posed as biblical faith. But neither man took his struggle lightly.

Let us pray.

Lord: Thank You for bringing us here through the snowstorm outside and strife within.

With whatever confusion we contend, with whatever doubts we're distracted, with whatever answers we've not yet found nor more fully embraced of what You've shown us, we've nevertheless come here to church this morning. May we be here to be with You – together. And notwithstanding our confusion, our distractions, our failures and even our prideful resistance to more fully embrace what we do understand, give us grace to reach out for even the hem of Your garment. Bless us. Bless our absent brethren. Assure them of Your Presence.

Lord, we've sung a hymn this morning. May we have done so to sing to You, of You. We've confessed our sin this morning. May we have done so in honest repentance and not by hurried rote. We've been assured of Your forgiveness this morning. May we have responded in gratitude geared to changing what we need to change. We've heard the Scriptures read this morning. May we have done so to hear Your word that we might act on it in trust and obedience. And now we're at prayer. Tune our hearts and quiet our minds in this most sacred moment of sanctuary. And then, Lord, when it's time to give of our material resources, may we give, not grudgingly, but with joy and to Your glory, not ours. And when we listen to the sermon our minister has prepared for us, may we listen not simply to agree with this point or disagree with that point, but for strength in times of weakness and challenge for times of complacency, that our Christian walk might be advanced beyond the point where we've arrived thus far, and we might go forth refreshed and renewed, to serve You much more seriously in serving one another which is our Christian calling. May we learn to align our wills with Your will, and our love for one another, with Your love for each one – that we might be all together, one in You.

We pray all this in Jesus' name and add these words he told us to pray to You,

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.