

The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday June 18, 2006

Elizabeth Clephane was born on this day in 1830. She wrote many hymns, including “Just as I am” and “Beneath the Cross of Jesus.”

Let us pray.

Our Father:

Again this morning, we’re so glad to call You – The Almighty God, Creator of all that is – “our Father.” Your Son, our Savior, told us to call You that: “our Father” – his and ours, together. We can’t take it all in. But we trust him to have told us the truth. And Your Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are, indeed, Your dearly beloved children. We thank You for Your lavishing Fatherly care upon us – day in and day out, and through every long night of our lives. And, our dear Father, we take comfort, too, in the fact that, even though we so often fail to behave as loving brothers and sisters should, Your longsuffering love nevertheless enfolds us as You encourage us to love one another as You, through Christ, love each one of us. Reprove us and restrain us when we act so defensively as one another’s judge instead of, affectionately, as on another’s sibling in a gracious Savior and Lord. Help us, who have been forgiven so much, to forgive others. Help us grow up. Help us learn the lessons of life that we need to learn. Help us to be more faithful to our calling, taking up our crosses as we join together, “beneath the cross of Jesus,” who died there for us.

We thank You today for the gift of our sister Elizabeth and for her reminding us in her hymns that it is, indeed, “beneath the cross of Jesus” where each of us comes to You just as he or she is. And coming just “as we are” – with all the messes we tend to make of our lives – we may, nevertheless, by Your grace, continue to come to You, and over time and through many troubles, continue to be conformed to the image of our Elder Brother.

May those who are fathers learn to be even better fathers by taking note of our heavenly Father. And may those who are not, themselves, fathers in the usual sense, nonetheless be “fathers” to the fatherless, for we are called to pass on our Father’s love to all.

We praise You for this opportunity to worship You. May we do so in the Spirit and the Truth who is Your Son, in who’s name we pray the words he 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.