

2021
WEEK OF PRAYER

I AM



EXODUS 3:14

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'"

REFLECT

Because Jesus is THE I AM, revealed to Moses in the burning bush. (Exodus 3:14) I AM THAT I AM! This "I AM" LORD OF LORDS, KING OF KINGS surpasses all the powers of this world and whom reason cannot understand. Jesus repeats these same words in John 8:58 in response to the religious leaders who accused him of having a demon: Truly, I assure you, before Abraham came into existence, I AM!

In this pandemic, there is much uncertainty about the future and many changes in how the Church does business. The knowledge that we have that God—and through his only and true Son—is I AM, allows us to ask ourselves the question: what does it imply to believe in the one who is above all? I read in John 3, verses 15 to 36, thinking about what it means to believe. We know so much about the verse John 3:16 that we read it (I read it) too often superficially. In the French Louis Segond version: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him (I AM) should not perish but have eternal life.*

In the French version of the Semeur: *Yes, God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever trusts in him (I AM) should not perish but have eternal life.*

Believing can seem very cerebral or intellectual. But I find that placing his trust challenges me on a practical level daily.

When we place our trust in something, we act accordingly. I can believe that my car works, but when I decided to drive around the United States, for example, I put my trust in the mechanics of the car and especially in the protection of the Lord (I AM) all along the road.

In so few verses, the Lord repeats four times to put our trust in Him.

- to see eternal life (15)
- to escape perdition (16)
- so as not to be condemned (18)
- to possess eternal life (36)

I tell myself if the Lord repeats it so much, it must be important.

CONSIDER

What and who do I trust primarily in my life?

Remember how your trust in I AM has been confirmed so many times in the past.

What does it mean to trust primarily in the Lord (I AM) in this present and post-pandemic time?

PRAY

1. That you may put your hand in the hand of the great I AM.
2. That your trust in Jesus would be noticed by children and youth around you.
3. The MB churches in Quebec and the Maritimes may be strengthened and guided in their quite different situations.
4. For your pastors and for those of all churches who are tired and doubting.
5. That more authorities will turn to listen to the Lord in the confusion of our times.

SUBMITTED BY
AEFMQ + ATLANTIC CANADA MB CHURCHES



JOHN 6: 33, 48-50

“For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world...I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”

REFLECT

The words of Jesus in John 6

At first blush, these words from Jesus appear confusing. “Excuse me Jesus, but what do you really mean? You are the bread of life?” Digging into the context we discover that his words appear immediately after two miraculous events: the feeding of the 5,000 and his walking on water. While the crowd was still digesting what they had tasted and seen, Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. I am the manna from heaven, God’s provision for humankind – living bread.” The people responded with questions, concerns and doubt. “Who can accept these words?” (6:60). It was a pivotal moment. Many turned back and stopped following Jesus (6:66). Their reaction prompted Jesus to probe deeper with the twelve, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” Peter, courageous Peter, declared “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” (6:69).

As we enter 2021, filled with uncertainty, fear and apprehension, we are reminded that Jesus is the bread of life. He has been sent by His Father to give us life. Like the folks who were discovering Jesus for the first time we have a choice. Each day we can choose to lean towards Jesus. To receive the bread of life. To follow and emulate our master who sacrificed everything that we might have life. That we might have life everlasting.

CONSIDER

When you think of Jesus as the Bread of Life, do you incline towards doubt and limited faith or towards courage and hope emulated by Peter?

We find ourselves in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic. How does the truth that Jesus is the bread of life speak to this moment? How does it offer hope?

How might you be able to share the Bread of Life with someone today?

PRAY

1. That your faith in Jesus, the bread of life, would grow in deep and personal ways.
2. That your church community will passionately and creatively offer the bread of life to your community in the midst of the pandemic.
3. That our vision to reach Canada with the life of Jesus would grow this year.
4. For the plans underway in Ontario for their 90th anniversary convention which will be held virtually February 19 & 20. Boards and staff as they develop and implement new structures and systems

SUBMITTED BY ONMB



JOHN 10: 13-16 (CEB)

“I am the good shepherd. I know my own sheep and they know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. I give up my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that don’t belong to this sheep pen. I must lead them too. They will listen to my voice and there will be one flock, with one shepherd.”

REFLECT

“There will be one flock.” As I read these few verses from John’s Gospel, this phrase hits me with some force. “There will be one flock.” How often has the church looked like one flock? Denominations all over the place. One could argue that denominationalism is just the many facets of that one flock. Ok, maybe. What about our conference of churches? How often do we struggle to be one flock?

I suppose it shouldn’t be a surprise that we find it difficult to be one flock. It’s tough enough to keep our families in a state of togetherness! And we’ve tried right? We say things like “unity isn’t uniformity,” we get together to work on our distinctives and we put on a brave face. We work hard to become one flock.

Here’s the thing. We know our mistake. It’s right there. “They will listen to my voice.” The Good Shepherd didn’t say to become one flock, he said “They will listen to my voice.” It’s not lost on us that the answer is right in front of us. And yet we find so many distracting differences to avoid the one thing that will lead us to becoming one flock.

The author of Hebrews once wrote that we should “look(ing) unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.” Jesus, our Good Shepherd is the One who makes us one flock. (Hebrews 12:2, NKJV)

CONSIDER

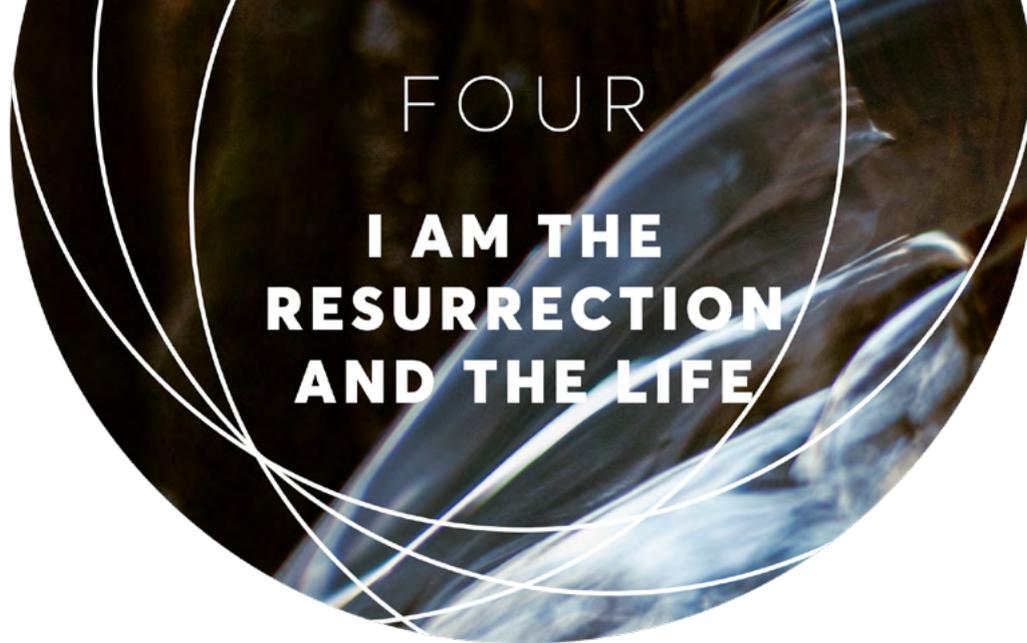
What gets in the way of listening to the voice of your Good Shepherd? How might one remove or mitigate those barriers?

What do you long to hear from our Good Shepherd?

PRAY

1. Is the Spirit stirring anything in you? Repentance? Longing? Hope?
2. That we would be followers of Jesus who hear the voice of our shepherd.
3. For a renewed sense of togetherness under the watchful eyes of Jesus.
4. Sustainability and resilience of MBCM leaders.
5. For our younger churches in Manitoba, that they would experience health and growth.

SUBMITTED BY MBCM



JOHN 1:4 (NLT)

The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.

JOHN 11:25-26 (NTE)

'I am the resurrection and the life,' replied Jesus. 'Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die. And anyone who lives and believes in me will never, ever die. Do you believe this?'

REFLECT

For me, cleaning up after Christmas always brings a bit of a letdown as things get back to normal, whatever normal means in a time of upheaval. But then, Jesus and his folks would be in the midst of upheaval as well - a nighttime journey from Bethlehem - making their way with a little one to Egypt, fleeing a ruler who wanted to execute the child - and then resettlement back to Galilee within a couple of years. They were refugees needing encouragement, shelter and care.

In our upheaval, a global pandemic, we are reminded of how little control we have. In John 11, Mary and Martha face a situation they could not control but thought Jesus could and would control it. They are devastated when Jesus seems to have let them down. Yet Jesus knew the whole time that Lazarus would rise again. But that didn't stop him from weeping with those who weep, identifying with those who bore the sting of death.

Our society seeks to control its own destiny and has even applied that to the time and manner of our dying. "Medical assistance in dying" is an attempt to regain control in a situation of extreme suffering. As followers of Jesus, we should seek to remedy the triggers to this response by promoting and supporting quality palliative care, which should be available to all. There aren't enough hospices or hospice-without-walls programs in our country to meet the needs of all who are suffering. We can do something practical in our community by ensuring access to palliative care. At the very least, we can offer those dying and in distress the encouragement, shelter and care that Jesus and his family needed in their time of upheaval.

CONSIDER

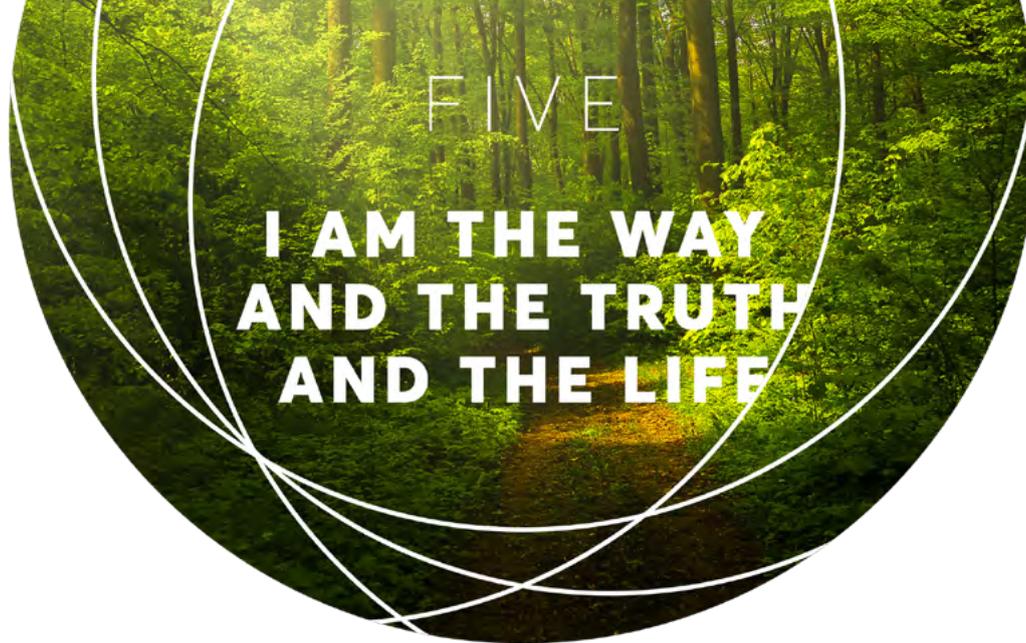
What could my church do to promote and support access to palliative care in my community?

How might I respond with encouragement, shelter and care to those in my circle who have a terminal diagnosis or are grieving?

PRAY

1. For the grace, personally and corporately, to believe that the resurrected Jesus has things under control and that we can trust him with our futures.
2. For hope in those you know who are grieving or walking with someone given a terminal diagnosis.
3. For the church's witness in our communities and our society, promoting life and wellbeing (spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional), sharing encouragement, shelter and care with those around us.
4. For the courage to share the gospel with someone who is dying without hope for a life beyond this one.
5. Pray that all of us would experience God's care amid the upheaval of our day.

SUBMITTED BY SKMB



JOHN 14: 6

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through me.*

OPEN YOUR EYES

REFLECT

I remember the first time I saw Star Wars as a kid and was introduced to an amazing new universe. Not only were the individual characters fascinating, but they were also part of something so much bigger than what I could imagine!

In many ways, we experience the same sense of amazement when we read the Gospel of John. There is so much more to Jesus than what we see with our physical eyes only. Thomas's apparent frustration hinted at this in John 14 when he said, "We know there is more, Jesus, but we don't know what's going on. So how can we follow you?"

As the story marches toward the arrest and crucifixion of Jesus, we see that Jesus wanted to open the eyes of the disciples, to show them more, to reveal to them who he really is, and to connect their ministry to a relationship with him and his Father.

The reality that Jesus reveals is that he and the Father are one, and that Jesus is everything. There is no way without Jesus, there is no truth without Jesus, and there is no life without Jesus.

CONSIDER

In what way do you long to have your eyes opened to see more about Jesus than you see now?

In what way do you need to know the Father in a fresh way?

PRAY

Thank Jesus that he made a Way; ask the Spirit to show you the Truth in a situation of need; invite the Father to infuse his Life into your own. Specifically, pray:

1. That the Spirit will open your eyes to see more than you see now.
2. For a fresh revelation of the unity between Father and Son.
3. For courage to proclaim the uniqueness and exclusivity of Jesus.
4. For confident trust in your eternal destiny, in the midst of an uncertain world.

SUBMITTED BY ABMB + MB SEMINARY



JOHN 18:37

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

REFLECT

It is human nature to think in terms of hierarchies. All of us instinctively assess the people we meet, and we make decisions about their relative importance to us without even being aware of what we are doing. Pilate’s questions seek to discover if Jesus is a threat to Roman authority and power. Jesus is a threat to all human power and authority but not in the way that people assume.

He comes to bring truth and break the power of lies that Satan uses to deceive us and draw us away from the covenant love that God has for each one of us.

Jesus kingship will be expressed in 2021 through the hope-filled lives of His people, the church. His kingship over the nations is a “work in progress” that will be fully revealed upon his return in glory.

We are living in days of much social upheaval where the power and authority of government over our day to day lives is growing significantly. It is increasingly important in such times for us to discern and live under the kingship of Jesus. This means, among other things, treating others according to His kingdom and practicing generosity and justice according to his kingdom.

CONSIDER

Where could *I and my family* reflect the Kingship of Jesus in our relationship?

Where could *I and my family* reflect the Kingship of Jesus in our world?

PRAY

1. Invite Jesus to reveal himself as King in your life.
2. Take time to express to him in writing and prayer what it means to you to know that he is King both now and in the future.
3. Pray for our BC Churches that we would have courage and clarity to express the kingdom of Jesus in a time when the government is restricting our ability to meet.
4. Pray for MB church plant initiatives in Vancouver (Midtown), Penticton (Winepress) and Kelowna (Praxis)
5. Pray for wisdom for those in government and medicine who struggle to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
6. Pray for families who are struggling with grief and loss during this time. Pray that they experience a deep awareness of Jesus’ Kingship in their lives.

SUBMITTED BY BCMB



REVELATION 21:3-5

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.'" He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

REFLECT

We anticipate the fulfillment of this prophetic promise that one day everything will be made new! No more tears, death, mourning, crying or pain. This is good news, especially after a year in which we've all been touched by death and mourning at new levels.

The promise begins with a call: "Look! God's dwelling is now among the people."

It was to shepherds in Bethlehem that an angel announced, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). God's dwelling among his people began at Bethlehem and continues to this day. This new beginning occurs when anyone receives Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and becomes born again into God's family. We see this miracle of new birth occurring all over the world today as people experience salvation. While we still live in a world where the "old order" of sin and death are present, our faith in Jesus allows us to become the "first fruits" of God's recreation (James 1:18), or as Paul puts it: "having believed, [we] were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13).

We anticipate a day when "the Lord will wipe away every tear," even while we live through a season when we are unable to comfort those in critical care or mourn together in person. This is good news around the world where exploitation, abuse and poverty have caused so much pain. It was into this world of pain that Jesus came with a promise that he was making all things new.

Our invitation is to be witnesses of the new life we have found in Jesus, witnesses of his hope in the midst of despair, witnesses of his comfort and presence in the midst of isolation and loneliness, witnesses that there is a Savior who is returning as King to make all things new.

CONSIDER

What disappointments, loss or pain is Jesus inviting us to offer to him?

Where have we seen salvation give new hope to someone?

Who are we invited to witness to our new life in Christ?

PRAY

1. Offer to Jesus your pain, disappointments and loss. Ask him to fill you with his Spirit, comfort, and hope.
2. Pray for Jesus to renew your local church with his presence and new life.
3. Pray for Multiply missionaries and global workers who you know are witnesses of the good news of Jesus in challenging places.
4. Pray for Canada to find hope in Jesus, not just a vaccine.

SUBMITTED BY MULTIPLY