

Devotion, Week of May 3, 2026 – Fifth Week of Eastertide

Rev. Jeanne Simpson

The recent Presbyterian Outlook magazine focuses on prayer. I try to pray every night at bedtime, thanking God for the day's blessings and praying for family and friends who are ill or grieving, including me. Sometimes I forget, and I'll wake up in the middle of the night and remember. We pray alone, we pray communally in church, and sometimes we can't find words to pray. Anne Lamott says that when you can't find words, just say either "Thank you, Thank you, Thank you," or "Help me, Help me, Help me," or BOTH! And I often spend time in prayer while driving, hoping I make it to my destination in one piece!

We have been taught to pray all our lives – the prayer of confession, intercessory prayers for those who are in need, and the Lord's Prayer. We need to pray together as a church family because it gives us structure and communal strength to face our lives outside the church doors. But we also need to pray alone, when we need time to talk to God with our deepest longings. Sometimes we just need to be silent and ask God to be present with us. The Rev. Dr. Winterbourne Harrison Jones says that "For me, prayer clarifies vision. It reveals injustice I might otherwise ignore. It exposes my complicity in broken systems. It reminds me of the cost of discipleship. Prayer sends me back into the world not only comforted but commissioned."

He adds that "Prayer that never leaves the sanctuary has not yet reached its fullness. Prayer that never enters the streets has not yet taken flesh. Prayer that never transforms the one who prays has not yet done its work....May we never mistake kneeling for completion when it is only the beginning." May your prayers give you strength and courage to face every day.

Jeanne