

apart because of drought or famine. O healing river, pour down Your waters, and heal Your people.

We pray for those who are thirsty for justice, who long for an equal sharing of resources among peoples and nations; those who put their lives at risk to protect streams and rivers and oceans; those who are working to find clean water, and make it available to those who need it. O healing river, pour down Your waters, and heal Your people.

God, we ask that you would open our hearts to the needs of all who thirst. Give us courage to work together for justice, to stand alongside those who are thirsty, so that all people, everywhere, may live without want or fear, and may discover the abundant life You promise to each one. In the name of Jesus Christ—the source of living water—we pray. Amen.”

Rev. Kathleen Ordiway, First Baptist Church, Niagara Falls, NY

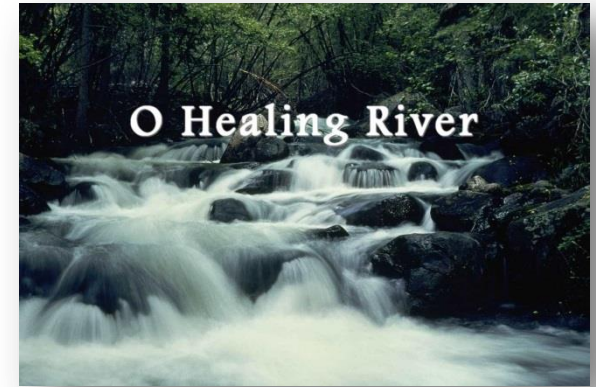
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## O Healing River

By: Rev. Kathleen Ordiway

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Today's reflection comes from the worship service for April 19, 2020 provided online by Rev. Kathleen Ordiway at First Baptist Church. It includes her introduction to the pastoral prayer, and the prayer itself.



Earth Day is just two days away (April 22, 2020) so it might be a good idea to spare it a thought and a prayer.

“Before we pray, I would like to read something my cousin’s husband found and then shared on Facebook – author unknown:

*I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be. Or vice versa.*

*For some, quarantine is optimal. A moment of reflection, of re-connection, easy in flip flops, with a cocktail or coffee. For others, this is a desperate financial & family crisis. For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness. While for others it is peace, rest & time with their mother, father, sons & daughters.*

*With the \$600 weekly increase in unemployment some are bringing*

*in more money to their households than they were working. Others are working more hours for less money due to pay cuts or loss in sales*

*.Some families of 4 just received \$3400 from the stimulus while other families of 4 saw \$0.*

*Some were concerned about getting a certain candy for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend.*

*Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money. Others want to kill those who break the quarantine.*

*Some are home spending 2-3 hours/day helping their child with online schooling while others are spending 2-3 hours/day to educate their children on top of a 10-12 hour workday.*

*Some have experienced the near death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it. Others don't believe this is a big deal.*

*Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this 2020. Others say the worst is yet to come.*

*So, friends, we are not in the same boat. We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different.*

*Each of us will emerge, in our own way, from this storm. It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance. Not just looking, actually seeing.*

On top of everything that's going on in our world today, it's also Earth Day. We should remember the words of Genesis 1:31:

God looked at everything He had made, and He found it very good.

We pause and remember that God, who created us and who sustains us, is never far from us. In God we live and move and have our being.

Thinking of Thomas and his need for proof of his risen Savior, let us pray:

How do we find the faith to believe the story of Easter, Jesus? How do we grasp its truth?

We can only accept it; refusing to reduce it to scientific debate or historical literalism, kneeling with humility and awe beside the blood-stained cross and the empty grave. For then, *we* are your witnesses.

How do we understand the mystery of your death and life, Jesus? How do we explain it?

We can only live it; allowing it to permeate every grain of this sand that forms us, every thought, every priority, every act and every interaction. For then *we* are your witnesses—and you deserve nothing less from us.

Holy God, whose Spirit moved over the waters at the dawn of creation, hear our prayers for all who thirst today.

We pray for those who are spiritually thirsty, who long to know Your presence, but don't know where to find You.

We pray for those who are alone and without hope, those who long to feel needed and loved, those who are searching for meaning and purpose. O healing river, pour down Your waters, and heal Your people.

We pray for all who are physically thirsty, who don't have enough water to drink, or to feed their animals; whose fields are parched, whose crops have withered; those who have to walk long distances to find enough water to survive, or who have to be content with water that is unclean. We pray for those whose homes and villages are torn

**“O healing river, pour down Your waters, and heal Your people.”**