

ISAIAH 40:21-31 with added petitions of thanksgiving (A) and supplication (B) using PNG and Central States Synod specifics

vv. 21-22: Have you not known? Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
It is God who sits above the circle of the earth,
and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers;
who stretches out the heavens like a curtain
and spread them like a tent to live in;

A: Lord God, creator of the universe, we thank you that you have created us—blonde Scandinavians, black Bukas, serious Germans, muscular Highlanders, bright-eyed Latinos, slim Coastals—each unique but loved by you.

B: Teach us to live celebrating diversity, not using difference as a reason to divide.

vv. 23-24: God brings princes to naught,
and makes the rulers of the earth as nothing.
Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown,
scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth,
when he blows upon them, and they wither,
and the tempest carries them off like stubble.

A: Great ruler of all, thank you for good leaders who care for their constituents, for good governments that give us choices and representation, and for constitutions and courts which protect our rights.

B: Give us the wisdom to elect to Congress and Parliament representatives whose all-encompassing goal is to do your will.

v. 25: To whom then will you compare me,
or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

A: We thank you, Lord, for the gifts with which you empower us: for fields of wheat and ground shimmering with valuable minerals, for kina and dollars, for advanced technology and bush survival skills, for the stories of our people and libraries of knowledge.

B: Keep us from setting up these gifts as idols. Show us how to use them so that they will bring glory only to you.

v. 26: Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these?
He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name;
Because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing.

A: We do open our eyes and see all your wonders—the mighty Missouri and Waghi Rivers, the Ozark and Cromwell Mountains, the rivers and ocean teeming with fish, the gardens and fields abundant with crops.

B: Keep us safe from tornadoes that level towns and blizzards that bury us in snow, from tsunamis that wash away villages and earthquakes that move buildings off their supports, from droughts that parch the land and the people, and floods that drown all we have worked for.

v. 27: Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God”?

A: Friend of the friendless, we thank you that not one of us is too insignificant to escape your loving regard, that you comfort the widow whose severed fingers show how many family members she has lost, that you embrace the child tumbled in the clothes dryer by an angry parent, that you have compassion on the alcoholic spending yet another weekend in jail, that you strengthen the girl whose parents have sold her to pay the school fees for a more favored child, that you give honor to the father who cannot find work and so cannot satisfy the needs of his family.

B: Open our hearts to see the need around us and to be your loving hands at work in the world.

vv. 28-29: Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

He gives power to the faint and strengthens the powerless.

A: Thank you, loving Father, for the agencies that impart your compassion to the world: the advocates for immigrants, the orphanages and homeless shelters, extended families and ecumenical efforts to support the needy and sick, counselors that offer legal aid and emotional support.

B: Make us generous, so that we share what wealth we have been given to help others go and do what we ourselves may not be able to do in person.

vv. 30-31: Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,

they shall mount up with wings like eagles,

they shall run and not be weary,

they shall walk and not faint.

A: Lord, we have heard and seen; we do know.

B: Help us to live so others may come to know you through us. Amen. I tru.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION based on the prayers from *Sundays and Seasons* for February 5, 2012, with specifics drawn from the Central States Synod and ELC-PNG Kotte district contexts.

L1: As God's beloved people made radiant by the light of Christ, let us pray for the church, our companion synods around the world, the whole human family, and God's good creation.

A brief silence.

When your church grows weary and weak, give courage to our US and PNG leaders, especially our head bishops Mark Hanson and Giegere Wenge and our synod bishops Gerald Mansholt and Kelly Rabisang. Strengthen for service your people of Kansas, Missouri, and the Kotte District that everyone who searches for you might share in the blessings of the Gospel. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: When the earth is exhausted by our demands, bring rest and restoration to creation.

L2: Forgive us for the carelessness that leads us to pollute the waters with factory and sewer run-off, and with animal and human waste. Make us mindful of our role in caring for your creation. Help us restrain ourselves from polluting the air with factory emissions and our constant use of pollution-emitting vehicles; and from defacing the land with our thoughtless discarding of plastic sacks and mounds of garbage that will not decompose. Help us to find better solutions for cancer, obesity, HIV-Aids, hypertension, malaria, malnutrition, tuberculosis, and tropical ulcers.

L1: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: When war and violence threaten innocent lives, and displaced people flee in search of shelter, raise up presidents and premiers, congress people and parliamentarians, who value justice more than power.

L2: Give us the courage to engage in the discussions that will end gang violence, Christian-Muslim conflict, and political partisanship; that will stop tribal fighting, political corruption, and lawless rascal activities.

L1: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: Where the brokenhearted and powerless cry out for relief, lift them to new hope.

L2: Give us strength to protect the rights and ensure the well-being of the weak. We lift up before you the victims of domestic violence and racism, all abused women and children, and those who are mocked or disregarded because of physical and mental challenges.

L1: Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: Comfort all who grieve losses of any kind.

L2: We pray for those who have lost jobs, family members, homes, wantoks, opportunities, rights to natural resources, abilities, faculties, old ways of living.

L1: Sustain with your healing power all those suffering from illness, especially

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: We are often frantic and troubled.

L2: We have too much and not enough; we have no time and nothing to do; we are expected to lead but have no clear direction; we are forced into paths we'd rather not take; we form

unsavory coalitions in the hope of accomplishing good ends; the doers of good seem powerless against the forces of evil; we would care for our parents but they live far from us; we love our children but their choices and the world distance them from us.

L1: Lead us into quiet places of prayer, so that, restored by your peace, we gladly serve you and our neighbors in their daily lives.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: We give thanks for those who trusted in your steadfast love and promises, especially the pioneers who braved unknown conditions to establish Lutheran congregations in Kansas and Missouri, and the American German churches that remained loyal to God and their new country during World War 2.

L2: We remember with gratitude the missionaries and evangelists in Papua New Guinea who stood strong in the face of disease and antagonistic tribes people, and the early Christians who maintained their faith during the occupation and persecution in World War 2.

L1: Give us the same patient hopefulness that sustained all the saints before us.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

L1: Holy God, whether we pray in English or Pidgin, in Spanish, or Kotte, we lift our prayers to you in hope, entrusting all for whom we pray to your great goodness and mercy, made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen. I tru.**