St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, November 1st, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Grace That Builds Christ's Church
Proper 26
Acts 9:32-43

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Lord.
Our hope is in Christ alone; our help comes from his gracious hand.

He sees our weakness, receives our prayers, and sustains his people.
We bring him our burdens, our thanksgiving, and our praise.

Let us serve the Lord with love and proclaim his saving mercy.
To the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be glory, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty and everlasting God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we adore you. You are holy in all your ways, wise in all your purposes, and faithful in all your promises. You made us for your glory, and in your mercy you have redeemed your people through Jesus Christ. We praise you for his obedient life, his atoning death, and his victorious resurrection. Our Saviour lives and reigns; nothing can separate his people from his love.
Gather our wandering hearts before you. By your Holy Spirit, awaken faith, deepen reverence, and teach us to worship in spirit and in truth. Speak through your Word, receive our prayers and praises through Christ our Mediator, and strengthen us at his Table. Let every part of this service turn our eyes away from ourselves and toward Jesus. To you alone be all glory. In his holy name we pray. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

As we prepare to come to the Lord's Table, let us examine ourselves before the God who knows our hearts. We do not come claiming that we are without sin; we come confessing our need of the Saviour. Let us turn from our sins, lay aside confidence in our

own goodness, and seek the mercy secured by Christ's body given and blood shed for us. Together, let us confess our sins.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful Father, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We have trusted our own strength rather than your grace. We have neglected prayer, withheld mercy, and passed by neighbours whose burdens we could have shared. We have sought praise for ourselves instead of glory for Christ. Forgive what we have done, and forgive what we have left undone.
We have no righteousness of our own to bring before you. For the sake of Jesus Christ, who died for sinners and rose again, cleanse us and receive us. By your Holy Spirit, renew our hearts, reconcile us to one another, and make our love visible in faithful service. As we come to your Table, strengthen our faith in Christ alone and fill us with gratitude for your undeserved mercy. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the gospel: our acceptance before God rests not upon the strength of our repentance, but upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. He bore the sins of his people at the cross and rose victorious from the grave. To all who repent and trust in him, God grants forgiveness and receives them as his children. If your hope is in Christ alone, you may rest in his promise: your sins are forgiven, and there is no condemnation for those who belong to him. Thanks be to God!

Children's Song #378: "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus in the Morning" (V 1,2,3)

Jesus, Jesus,
Jesus in the morning, Jesus in the noontime;
Jesus, Jesus,
Jesus when the sun goes down!

Love him, love him,
Love him in the morning, love him in the noontime;
Love him, love him,
Love him when the sun goes down!

Serve him, serve him,
Serve him in the morning, serve him in the noontime;
Serve him, serve him,
Serve him when the sun goes down!

The Lord's Prayer

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One.
For Thine is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory,
Forever and ever. Amen.

Hymn # 375: "Fairest Lord Jesus" (V 1,2,4)

Fairest Lord Jesus,
Lord of all creation,
Jesus, of God and Mary the Son:
Thee will I cherish,
Thee will I honour,
O thou, my soul's delight and crown.

Fair are the meadows,
fairer still the woodlands,
robed in the verdure and bloom of spring:
Jesus is fairer,
Jesus is purer
he who makes the saddest heart to sing.

All fairest beauty
heavenly and earthly,
wondrously, Jesus, is found in thee;
none can be nearer,
fairer or dearer
than thou, Saviour, art to me.

Responsive Reading

Psalm 103:1–5

1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name!
2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all his benefits,

3 who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
5 who satisfies you with good

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Anthem (Music Ministry): "Behold the Lamb"

Prayer for illumination
(Congregant Prepared)

Scripture

Acts 9:32–43

32 Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.' And immediately he rose. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. 37 In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. 38 Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, 'Please come to us without delay.' 39 So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. 43 And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.

Sermon

Last week we saw something wonderful. Saul, the persecutor, has been stopped in his tracks by the risen Christ and made into a preacher of the Gospel.

And now God's Word turns our attention back to Peter. Peter is not standing before kings or rulers. He is simply traveling from town to town, visiting ordinary believers. Along the way, he meets a man who has been confined to his bed for eight years. Peter steps into a

room filled with grieving widows. And he stays in the home of a tradesman whom polite society preferred to keep at a distance.

And yet, in each of these ordinary places, the glory of Jesus shines. A paralyzed man gets to his feet. A dead woman opens her eyes. Two different communities hear what has happened, and many turn to the Lord. This passage is not about an impressive apostle. It is about the living Christ, still at work through a dependent servant and a caring church.

That focus comes to the heart of the passage in Peter's declaration: 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you' (Acts 9:34). Peter does not call attention to his gift, faith, or office.

Instead, he points away from himself to Jesus—the same Lord who healed the sick, raised the dead, died for sinners, and rose from the grave. It is an absolute truth that Christ is exalted at the Father's right hand, but he has not grown distant from his people.

And because the risen Christ remains near to his people, this is good news for those carrying needs they cannot solve and griefs they cannot undo. This passage offers no formula guaranteeing immediate healing; it gives us Christ—the Lord who sees the weak, rules with all authority, and guarantees the final renewal of everyone who belongs to him.

> **Acts 9:32-35**
> **32 Now as Peter went here and there among them all, he came down also to the saints who lived at Lydda. 33 There he found a man named Aeneas, bedridden for eight years, who was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.' And immediately he rose. 35 And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.**

Peter travels among the believers until he comes to Lydda, where he finds Aeneas, a man bedridden and paralyzed for eight years. Eight years is a long time to lie in the same place, to depend upon others, and to wake each morning under the same burden. Whatever strength he once possessed could not free him now. He could not simply decide to rise, summon greater determination, or try harder; the command was beyond his natural ability.

If Aeneas was to stand, power had to come from outside himself. That is precisely what makes this moment such a vivid display of grace: before Aeneas moves toward Christ, Christ comes to Aeneas. Before the helpless man acts, the living Lord acts upon him. His need is great, but Christ's power is greater; his weakness is complete, but Christ's mercy is sufficient.

Peter says, ‘Aeneas, Jesus Christ heals you; rise and make your bed.’ Christ supplies the power, and Aeneas responds. Even the command to make his bed shows that the healing is complete: the bed that carried him will no longer hold him. This ordinary act becomes evidence of extraordinary mercy.

This healing pictures the deeper work of saving grace. Sin did not merely inconvenience us; it left us dead in trespasses (Ephesians 2:1). Salvation begins not with us moving toward Jesus but with Jesus showing mercy to us. When he calls a sinner to rise and come to him, grace gives the willingness and power to come.

The result reaches beyond Aeneas. The people of Lydda and the plain of Sharon see him and ‘turn to the Lord.’ The verb is *epistrephō*, to turn or return. Conversion is a real turning—from idols to God, from self-rule to Christ’s rule, from unbelief to trust. They do not turn to Peter. They turn to the Lord. A true work of God never ends with admiration of the servant; it leads people to Jesus.

> **Acts 9:38- 43**
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> **[36] Now there was in Joppa a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas. She was full of good works and acts of charity. [37] In those days she became ill and died, and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. [38] Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men to him, urging him, ‘Please come to us without delay.’ [39] So Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they took him to the upper room. All the widows stood beside him weeping and showing tunics and other garments that Dorcas made while she was with them. [40] But Peter put them all outside, and knelt down and prayed; and turning to the body he said, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. [41] And he gave her his hand and raised her up. Then, calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. [42] And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. [43] And he stayed in Joppa for many days with one Simon, a tanner.**

The Scripture then takes us west to Joppa, the seaport from which Jonah once fled God’s call to the nations. Now Peter is being positioned there for the Gospel’s next advance.

In Joppa lived ‘a disciple named Tabitha, which, translated, means Dorcas.’ Both names mean ‘gazelle,’ but Luke’s most important description of her is ‘disciple.’ She belonged to Jesus, learned from him, and followed him—and the life she lived made that discipleship visible.

Her discipleship was visible: ‘She was full of good works and acts of charity.’ These works did not earn salvation; she is a disciple first and the works are the fruit. As Ephesians 2:10 says, we are created in Christ Jesus for good works.

Yet the reality is that Tabitha’s discipleship does not shield her from the sorrow common to this fallen world. She became ill and died. They washed her body, according to the custom of preparing a person for burial and placed her in an upper room. Her death is stated clearly; God’s Word does nothing to soften it. A faithful believer died. A useful servant died. Her good works did not make her immune to illness and death.

When Peter arrives, the widows surround him, weeping and showing the garments Dorcas had made. These were useful clothes for people who needed them. Their tears show that she had known them, loved them, and used her hands for their good.

Most Christian service looks more like sewing than standing on a platform: carrying a meal, giving a ride, teaching a child, visiting the lonely, or praying by name. First Corinthians 15:58 assures us that our labor in the Lord is not in vain. Christ sees every hidden stitch.

It is into this grief that the disciples send two men to Peter with the urgent request, ‘Please come to us without delay.’ They do not tell Peter what to do. They simply bring their need to him. There is humility in that and a reminder for us that Christian prayer does not command God; it lays grief before him and trusts his wisdom.

Peter goes with them. He enters the upper room, sees the body, hears the weeping, and receives the visible testimony of Tabitha’s love. Then he puts everyone outside, kneels down, and prays. Peter does not perform for the crowd. He does not speak until he has prayed.

The scene deliberately echoes Jesus raising Jairus’s daughter. Jesus said, ‘Talitha cumi’—‘Little girl, arise.’ Here Peter says, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ The words sound strikingly similar, but the difference is crucial: Jesus speaks by his own authority, while Peter first kneels and prays, depending entirely upon the Lord.

Prayer confesses that the real work belongs to God. We can preach, teach, counsel, invite, and serve, but only the Holy Spirit can give life.

When Peter turns to the body and says, ‘Tabitha, arise.’ She opens her eyes, sees Peter, and sits up. He gives her his hand and raises her. The same verb family, *anistēmi*, appears again. In verses 34 and 40, two people are told to rise. One rises from a bed of paralysis; the other rises from death. Both signs point beyond themselves to the risen Christ.

Tabitha returned to mortal life and would die again. Jesus rose never to die again. His resurrection is the firstfruits and pledge that all united to him will be raised in glory. Her opened eyes point toward that great morning.

So we grieve, but not as those who have no hope. At a Christian funeral, we do not pretend death is harmless. The widows wept, and their tears were right. Jesus himself wept at Lazarus's tomb. But grief does not have the last word. Christ says, 'I am the resurrection and the life'. The believer's body is sown in weakness and will be raised in power.

The Lord's mercy now widens from the upper room to the whole community. Peter calls the saints and the widows and presents Tabitha alive. Her restoration is personal but not private: God shows compassion to a community that needs her while displaying his Son as the author of life. Christ cares for widows who need clothing, and he reveals his life-giving power to all.

Mercy and mission belong together. Tabitha's garments did not replace the message of Christ, and Peter's preaching did not make garments unnecessary. The Word explains our mercy, and mercy adorns the Word.

A church today might wonder what difference it can make in its community. This passage answers with a room full of garments. We do not need to do everything; we use what Christ has placed in our hands—a practical skill, a spare hour, a listening ear, or a quiet gift.

Ask yourself this simple question: Who would miss my acts of mercy if I were gone? That is not a question for pride. It is a question that helps us examine whether love has become visible. Tabitha's theology reached her fingertips. May ours do the same.

That public display of mercy becomes a witness throughout Joppa: the news spreads, and 'many believed in the Lord.' Again, the miracle does not produce a fan club for Peter. It directs faith to Jesus. The signs in Acts confirm the apostolic witness and show that the kingdom has come in power. They are not random displays. They reveal who Jesus is.

We must not turn these signs into a promise that believers can demand healing. God may heal, and we should pray boldly, but every healing in this life is temporary. The greater promise is resurrection, when Christ 'will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body'.

Until then, we need to trust his wisdom. Sometimes he removes the burden; sometimes he gives grace to carry it. Second Corinthians 12:9 remains true: 'My grace is sufficient

for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' The Jesus who healed Aeneas is also the Jesus who sustained Paul through the thorn.

The Scripture closes with a small detail that carries the story forward: Peter stayed in Joppa 'with one Simon, a tanner.' Because tanners worked with animal carcasses, many strict Jews regarded the trade as ceremonially troubling and kept their distance.

Peter has not yet understood everything that is coming—Acts 10 will show that he still needs a vision before entering a Gentile household—but the Lord is preparing him through this small act of obedience. Staying with Simon the tanner is a hinge in Peter's life; soon messengers from a Roman centurion will knock at that house.

The Gospel brings Peter into fellowship with someone others avoided. The cross tears down our boasting: we all come by the same blood, receive the same mercy, and belong to the same Lord. The church must not rebuild walls where Christ has opened a door.

Brothers and sisters, what has the Spirit shown us? A helpless man meets the Christ who heals; a faithful disciple makes grace visible; a servant kneels in prayer; a grieving church receives back someone they love; and communities turn to the Lord. Jesus holds it all together: Peter serves, Tabitha works, and people believe, but Christ directs, gives life, bears fruit, and receives the glory.

If you feel like Aeneas, held down by what you cannot change, look to Christ. He may not remove every limitation today, but he forgives sin, gives life, sustains faith, and promises resurrection.

If you stand with the widows, holding reminders of someone you miss, bring your tears to Christ. He entered our world of graves and defeated death. Because he lives, those who die in the Lord are not lost, and the cemetery is not the end.

If you see yourself in Tabitha, continue in quiet faithfulness. Keep serving with what Christ has given you. Your name may never be widely known, but Christ knows his disciples, and your works follow you.

If you see yourself in Peter, kneel before you speak. We are jars of clay so that the surpassing power belongs to God, not to us.

And as a congregation, may we ask the Lord to make us this kind of people: a people among whom truth is clear, mercy is practical, prayer is natural, grief is shared, and every good work points beyond us to Jesus. Let us welcome those who are overlooked. Let us help the weak, clothe the needy, and proclaim the risen Lord.

All of these present acts of grace direct our hope toward the day when Christ will speak a command greater than the words heard in Lydda or Joppa. The hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come out. For those who are in Christ, that day will not be a temporary return to mortal life. It will be resurrection life—incorruptible, glorious, and everlasting.

So, until that day, let's keep serving with our hands, praying on our knees, speaking the good news with our mouths, and placing all our hope in Jesus. Let's live as the Salt of the earth and the Light of the world, so that when people see the good we do, they won't praise us—they'll give glory to our Father in heaven.

Let us pray,

Gracious Father, all our hope rests in your abundant mercy. Give us the grace to do what you command, and lead us according to your holy will. We cannot give ourselves life; we cannot make ourselves faithful. We need the risen Christ, and we need the renewing work of your Spirit.
Teach us to depend upon you as Peter knelt in prayer. Make our love practical, as Tabitha's love became visible in the garments she made. Sustain those who carry weakness, comfort those who grieve, and turn our neighbours' hearts toward Jesus. Keep us from seeking glory for ourselves. Let our words and works point to the Saviour who died and rose for us.
As we approach his Table, nourish our faith and deepen our hope in the resurrection to come. Until we see him face to face, keep us serving, keep us praying, and keep us trusting in Christ alone. In his name. **Amen.**

Based upon the prayers of Augustine

Invitation to Offering

Everything we have is a gift from God, and our greatest treasure is Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us. We do not give to purchase God's favour; we give because his grace has already met us in the gospel. As Tabitha used what she had to care for others, let us offer what the Lord has entrusted to us for the ministry of his Word and the relief of those in need. Let us give freely, gratefully, and for Christ's glory.

Offertory Prayer
(Congregant Prepared)

Offering Hymn #830: "Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow"

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him, all creatures here below:
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Brothers and sisters, this is the Table of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who brings life to the helpless and hope to the grieving invites his people to remember his death and rejoice in his resurrection. We come not because we have earned a place, but because he has shown us mercy.

Come, you who are baptized into Christ, who turn from sin and trust in him alone for salvation. Come with repentant hearts, seeking peace with one another. This is not a reward for the strong; it is nourishment for believers who know their need. Lay aside confidence in yourself, and receive with thanksgiving what your gracious Saviour provides.

As we share this bread and cup, let us remember that we belong to one Lord and one body. May God gather his people from every place into his kingdom. Come in faith; come in gratitude; come looking to Jesus.

The Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Let us lift our hearts to the Lord.
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to God our Father.
We give him thanks through Jesus Christ.

Almighty Father, we thank you for creating all things and providing the food that sustains our bodies. Above all, we thank you for the life and salvation you have made known to us through your Son. When we were helpless in sin, you did not leave us to save ourselves. You sent Jesus Christ to live in obedience, to bear our sins upon the cross, and to rise victorious over death.

We praise you that our Saviour lives and reigns. In him we have forgiveness; in him we have fellowship with you; in him we have the sure hope of resurrection. Receive our thanksgiving as we remember his body given and his blood shed for us.

Set apart this bread and cup for their holy use. By your Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith and nourish us with Christ himself. As we receive these outward signs, grant that we may truly partake of Christ and the benefits of his saving work—not by bodily eating and drinking alone, but spiritually, through faith. Unite us in love, sustain us in weakness, and make us willing servants of one another.
As many grains are gathered into one loaf, gather your church into the unity of faith and bring your people into the fullness of your kingdom. To you, Father, through Jesus Christ your Son, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be glory forever.
Amen.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. AMEN.

Communion

Our Lord Jesus Christ established this meal on the night before his death. He took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples as the sign of his body given for them. He also gave them the cup as the sign of the new covenant in his blood, directing them to remember him.

We do not offer Christ again; his sacrifice is finished and sufficient. We receive these signs in remembrance of him, proclaiming his death until he comes. The

crucified Saviour is the risen Lord. Through these signs, let us receive by faith the grace he promises to his people and feed spiritually upon Christ himself.

Taking of the bread

Father, we thank you for the life you have given us through Jesus Christ. As this bread nourishes our bodies, strengthen our souls through faith in your Son. Brothers and sisters, take and eat this bread in remembrance that Christ's body was given for you. Feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Drinking of the cup

Father, we thank you for the mercy secured for us through the blood of Jesus Christ. Our pardon rests upon his sacrifice, and our hope rests upon his victory. Brothers and sisters, take and drink this cup in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for you. Rejoice in the forgiveness he has purchased, and give thanks for his covenant grace.

Prayer after Communion

Holy Father, we thank you for the knowledge of your grace, the gift of faith, and the promise of everlasting life through Jesus Christ. You provide our daily food, and in your Son you nourish us for the life to come. To you be all glory.

Thank you for receiving us at this Table and reminding us that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient. Keep us resting in his finished work. Let the fellowship we have shared bear fruit in patient love, practical mercy, and faithful prayer.

Remember your church throughout the world. Deliver us from evil, make us steadfast in your truth, and mature us in your love. Gather your people into the kingdom you have prepared for them.

Send us out with willing hands like Tabitha's and prayerful dependence like Peter's. Sustain those who are weak, comfort those who mourn, and keep us looking toward the resurrection. Until that day, let our lives proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Lord Jesus, come. To you, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory forever. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn #543: "Here, O My Lord, I See Thee (V 1,4,5)

Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
here would I touch and handle things unseen;
here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace
and all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Too soon we rise, the symbols disappear;
the feast, though not the love, is past and done;
the bread and wine remove, but Thou art here,
nearer than ever, still our shield and sun.

We have no help but but thine, nor do we need
another arm but thine to lean upon;
it is enough, O Lord, enough indeed;
our strength is in thy might, thy might alone.

Pastoral Prayer

Sovereign and merciful Father, we thank you for your Word, for the fellowship of your people, and for the grace you have set before us at the Table of our Lord. Our strength is not in ourselves. Our life, our pardon, and our hope are in Jesus Christ, crucified and risen.

We bring before you those who are ill, those who live with lasting limitations, and those who care for them. Grant healing according to your wisdom, give patience in suffering, and provide the help they need. Let none mistake continuing weakness for abandonment by you. Uphold them with the sufficient grace of Christ.

Comfort those who mourn. Meet them in the quiet hours when loss is keenly felt. Give us tenderness to share their grief and steadfast hope in the resurrection. Remember those who are lonely, those who lack daily necessities, and those whose burdens remain unseen. Open our eyes, our hands, and our hearts to serve them.

Guard your church in truth and holiness. Give ministers faithfulness in proclaiming your Word, and make every congregation a place where prayer is earnest, mercy is practical, and Christ receives the glory. Bring those who do not yet know him to repentance and faith. Grant those entrusted with public responsibility wisdom to pursue justice and peace.

As we leave this service, keep us in fellowship with you and with one another. Bless the food prepared for us and those whose work has provided it. Receive our thanksgiving, nourish our bodies, and make the fellowship that follows a time of welcome,

encouragement, and sincere love. Help us remember those who lack food or companionship, and move us to share your gifts.

Send us out to serve with willing hands, to speak with gracious words, and to depend upon you in prayer. Keep our hope fixed upon the day when Christ will raise his people in glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and praise, now and forever. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. May the risen Lord sustain you in weakness, establish you in faith, and make you fruitful in love, until the day you see him face to face. **Amen.**