

Salt – Light – Hope

reflections and care for those who serve in pandemic
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March 31

Therefore encourage one another and build up each other,

As indeed you are doing. . .

May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely,

And may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound. . . .

I Thessalonians 5:11, 23

Around the presbytery the past couple of days, there have been sighs. Sessions were virtually checking in with each other concerning upcoming program plans, congregational giving concerns, and shared frustration at continued physical distancing as we wait for the contagion in our midst to peak. Pastors exhaled weariness. Congregants touched screens instead of sharing hugs.

So, for now, we are called to keep steady, non-anxious hands on the tiller. But that's not all we can and should do. We can encourage one another—just as we members of Christ's body might be doing even without contagion in our midst., As we keep looking and moving forward, we can infuse courage (which comes from "coeur" the word for heart) into each other.

We can lift up prayers for the vulnerable. We can learn new ways of care and service. We can explore new understandings of our common faith and practice. We can reach out to each other to share and receive stability. Therefore, encourage one another, dear friends.

Prayer for Conscience and Courage

Loving God,

lead us beyond ourselves

to care and protect,

to nourish and shape,

to challenge and energize
both the life and the world
You have given us.

God of light and God of darkness,
God of conscience and God of courage
lead us through this time
of spiritual confusion and public uncertainty.

Lead us beyond fear, apathy and defensiveness
to new hope in You and to hearts full of faith. Amen.

[Prayer for Conscience and Courage by Joan Chittister]