



# Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

## Wednesday Prayer – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Lent

***“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid.” Psalm 27:1***

This text has been referred to as “David’s Triumphant Song for Joy.” Images of light and safe shelter lead to a peaceful redemption. Refuge in God is a joyful state of revealing rather than one of fearfully concealing. The psalmist ultimately proclaims, *“Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy; I will sing and make melody to the Lord.”* (27:6) This is a song of restoration, not of defeat!

I am reminded of a healing service held in the small garden of my church last summer. After a traditional liturgy, we introduced a few new seeds among the already existing vegetation. In the darkness later that evening, I returned alone to check on a single forget-me-not sprout that had been planted earlier that day.

In search of this single tiny seedling, my posture was stooped, eyes focused downward. As I raised my head, I became aware that lights in the sanctuary space above me were on. This felt like a moment of awakening. Like the psalmist, in “lifting my head” I saw things from a new perspective. That which I had perceived as me being in complete darkness of the night sky, was in truth me completely sheltered by light illuminating the colorful stain glass windows about me! I came to the garden that night weary from the long day; I left feeling my strength restored.

Through the work of Cherish All Children, congregations are invited to shine a light into the shadow of our broken and hurting world. Through our education, prayers, and actions, we are able to continue bringing public awareness to the dark issue of sexual exploitation many youth face today. Working together, we can identify steps of primary prevention so that all children may be safe, valued, and nourished with life affirming examples.

***Merciful Creator, both mother and father to us all, shelter us in your restorative healing light. Strengthen our ability to see all youth, especially those who may experience feeling marginalized. Help us support these youth with safe places of refuge so that they too may grow in confidence in their inherent dignity as blessed children of God. Amen.***

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