



## Wednesday Prayer

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Epiphany – A New Song

**I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD. Do not, O LORD, withhold your mercy from me; let your steadfast love and your faithfulness keep me safe forever.**

**Psalm 40: 1-3, 11**

Today is National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, and *all of January* is highlighted for the nation to act and work together to prevent all forms of trafficking. The Psalm for this Sunday begins with God delivering the Psalmist from some devastating situation – drawn up from a desolate pit, out of a miry bog. Accounts from survivors of trafficking may mirror these images, and for some who are well along on their healing journey, they may also relate to their steps now being more secure and a new song revealed – a new beginning.

This month, we can seek out many activities in our communities to engage in prevention work and support young people so that they are better equipped to keep themselves safe. Reaching out consistently and being a safe and supportive adult in the life of a young person can help them in keeping their steps secure. If we hear their cries, we can share steadfast love and the safety that comes in relationships with healthy adults.

In December, the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children issued a public safety alert due to the significant increase in online child sextortion cases. Here's an excerpt:

“The protection of children is a society’s most sacred duty,” said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth A. Polite, Jr. of the Justice Department’s Criminal Division. “It calls on each of us to do everything we can to keep kids from harm, including ensuring the threats they face are brought into the light and confronted. Armed with the information in this alert message, parents, caregivers, and children themselves should feel empowered to detect fake identities, take steps to reject any attempt to obtain private material, and if targeted, have a plan to seek help from a trusted adult.”<sup>1</sup>

We can educate ourselves first to these risks, and then respond with positive ways to help youth navigate their online worlds. Join us January 21, 10am – 12pm for a hybrid event [Supporting Youth Safety & Healthy Choices in the Virtual Playground](#). (Follow link to register.)

**Dear Lord, you hear the cries of those in despair. Help us to do our part to provide safety, sharing your steadfast love and revealing a new song to those in need. Amen.**

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Written by Joy McElroy, Cherish All Children Executive Director.

<sup>1</sup> [FBI and Partners Issue National Public Safety Alert on Financial Sextortion Schemes | USAO-OR | Department of Justice](#)