

Dear Fellow Members,

I trust this message finds you each healthy and finding ways to focus on the blessings of the day while dealing with concerns of the coronavirus.

This morning for me it was with our new puppy, Ringo, as we stepped outside to begin our morning walk about 7:15 am. We anxiously took those first few steps, breathed-in the breaths of crisp, fresh air, looked around to see green grass, flowers in bloom, birds singing and instantly "For the Beauty of the Earth" came to mind:

"For the beauty of the earth, for the splendor of the skies, For the love which from our birth over and around us lies, God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the wonder of each hour of the day and of the night, Hill and vale and, tree and flower, sun and moon, and stars of light, God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise,

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent child, Friends on earth, and friends above, for all gentle thoughts and mild, God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise.

For the good that love inspires, for a world where none exclude, for a faith that never tires, and for every heart renewed, God of all, to you we raise this our hymn of grateful praise." (This verse written by Miriam Therese Winter, 1993)

Following our walk we settled in for breakfast and I found a you-tube recording of this profoundly moving hymn to listen to as we ate.

After breakfast I began to research this hymn and it was no surprise to find that in 1864 Follitt S. Pierpoint, author of numerous hymns, poet and classics schoolmaster at Somersetshire College, Bath, England, penned these verses near his native city of Bath on a late spring day when flowers were in full bloom and all the earth seemed to rejoice.

The tune, DIX was composed by Conrad Kocher in 1838, and as noted above a fourth verse was added in 1993.

The hymn is based on Ephesians 5:20 (NIV) "always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Therefore, during these times of extended time away from our regular church ministry together, I suggest you take a walk or look out your window and then listen to, sing, or reread this hymn. There are several recordings from which to choose as you ponder the meaning of the words and enjoy the beautiful melody.

Thus, praise and thanksgiving to God for our many blessings, and until we are able to gather together, please know that Shelley and I miss you all and pray for your continued health and well-being. Should you need help in any way please let us know right away.

In Love, Bob