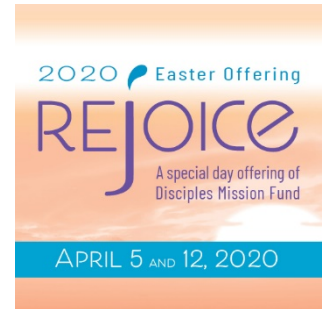


## In times like these

*By Rev. Dr. Timothy James, Associate General Minister and Administrative Secretary of the National Convocation*

The news and a predominance of social media attention is given to coronavirus also known as Covid-19. This pandemic has caused a major interruption in our plans and activities. The instructions for self-care and restrictions on travel and gatherings has impacted the Church locally, regionally and nationally; most of us are working from home.



At my local congregation, Light of the World Christian Church, Rev. Dr. Jenae Pitts Murdock our Interim Pastor, has encouraged the servant leaders and members of the congregation in times like these, if you will, “to encourage one another with these words”:

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (I Thessalonians 5: 16-18)

“Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4: 6-8)

When I read these verses, the word that resonates in my mind and heart is *always*. Always means all the way, at all times, perpetually, and forever. Jesus promised to go with us all the way from earth to glory. Jesus promised never to leave us nor to forsake us, therefore He is with us at all times.

It is with confidence and faith in the real presence of Jesus that we may face the living of these days with joy. Rejoice always! My faith in Christ Jesus is an Easter faith. This Easter faith reminds me over and over that the best is yet to come. Jesus said, “In the world you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world.” (John 16: 33)

We are requested to pray without ceasing, to pray always. Prayer is our heart to heart connection to God. God wants to hear from us, especially in times like these. Prayer was important for Jesus and we should not ignore or take it lightly. Assisted by the Holy Spirit, fervency and humility accompanies our prayer. The text tells us to give thanks in all circumstances, in other words always give thanks. It seems that it would be hard to be thankful in the face of pandemics and difficult times. But we may be thankful because our God is faithful and He loves us.

Andrae’ Crouch wrote, “I thank God for my mountains, And I thank Him for my valleys, I thank Him for the storms He brought me through; For if I never had a problem I wouldn’t know that God could solve them, I’d never know what God could do.” (*Through It All*).

God is worthy of our thankful praise in times like these. May we all be prayerful that we may have a testimony of what faith in God can do.

Let us pray:

Eternal and All-wise God, you are merciful and Holy. We are grateful for your love toward us. We thank you for the confidence we have in the loyalty of your love. We pray for healing and renewed health for those who have been infected with coronavirus and other illnesses. We pray you comforting grace with those bereaved by this tragedy. Lord, remember to make a way for those hard-pressed financially by these current events. Lord God Almighty, use us as instruments of peace, love and joy in your hands. In Jesus' name. Amen.