

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

Pray with Lebanon Sunday, April 19, 2020

BY NISHAN BAKALIAN ON APRIL 13, 2020

Lectionary Selection: John 20:19-31

Prayers for Lebanon:

Our Lord and our God, help us to stop doubting and to believe, even when we huddle behind locked doors, building walls of anxiety that are not a true refuge for our souls. Because of your boundless love you enter our hiding places unhindered and boldly declare, "Peace be with you!" We sit, wounded and paralyzed by our fears and sins, yet you heal us through the wounds you bore for our sake on the cross and victory of your resurrection. As you spoke to Thomas, speak to us now in our doubts and invite us to touch and remember your pain, to receive your forgiveness, to believe, and to go and minister in your name. Send us out into the world, help us bring this message of peace and reconciliation accomplished through your redeeming death. No matter how broken our world is, and no matter how self-centered and fear-driven our societies are, no matter how crushed our spirits are, O Christ, you are still our only hope for peace, forgiveness, and life. We pray in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our God. Amen!

Mission Stewardship Moment from Lebanon:

The explosion of rage in Lebanon against decades of endemically corrupt governance brought thousands to the streets last fall, demanding a complete change in the way the country operates. The Armenian community in which we serve is but one group suffering the same crushing blows felt by all, including almost a month of lost school days; strikes and road closures that shuttered businesses; a financial crisis and severely limited bank withdrawals; salary and income cuts and the stoppage of tuition payments; and all of this coming before the coronavirus even appeared. That last event knocked the country, already on its knees, flat on its face. An Armenian Evangelical school principal relates her concerns about 9th and 12th-grade



students being unprepared to take their required governmental exams in June. She also cites students' general lack of motivation to learn in the current environment, despite teachers' best efforts to "teach" online... and the challenge of how to pay teachers their salaries, or half-salaries. The recently-appointed government is struggling to be transparent and accountable as it deals with waves of economic instability, while also combating the coronavirus threat, but it is unclear whether they will succeed in salvaging the country. Amid all of this, safety concerns resulted in the stoppage of all gatherings, so the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAECNE), a partner of the Disciples and the UCC through Global

Ministries, in March began a new ministry of [Sunday morning broadcasts](#), to share the good news of Christ, his comfort and strength to a community looking for hope. Maria and I continue our work in many of these areas, looking to the only One who has the authority to say to us and to all, "Peace be with you!"

Prayer and Mission Moment by Nishan Bakalian

