

Prayer for This Church
by Nancy Shaffer in *Instructions in Joy*

*May each one among us have skin that longs to touch
other skin: fingertips that long for other fingertips
or whole hands and even arms; bodies that
want to stand next to other bodies, not alone,
while singing and bending, stirring soup.
May ones whose skin doesn't cry out for other
skin wish it did, and so teach it, so that no one
stands alone and no one aches and does not say so.*

*May our doors be so open it is drafty inside,
and people sometimes shout because noises without
come also within. May those sheltered here
sometimes cry, all at once, letting tear
water clean what words by themselves cannot.
In silent times, may every one present hear
every one else breathing, and know this is not
separate from how the world breathes all night.*

*May we always have enough room for those
many who want to come in. May those who cherish
this church be so glad they cannot stop speaking,
stop asking, and may that crowding itself be a gladness
as we keep adding rooms. May we notice
each one who is new and invite her to stay.
May our list of names for the Holy not ever
be finished; and may we hear God chuckling
with us as we find still more.*