

JANUARY 27, 2019 WORSHIP

Pastoral Prayer

O Spring of Life, our thirsting spirits come each week to drink deep of your living water. Many of us come with lighthearted laughter, yet others of us bring bogged down spirits that have limited our capacity for wonder. So we enter your presence, trusting that you will surprise us with your renewing hope. As we find ourselves in a new year, keep us from defining ourselves by the categories of our past as the blueprint for our future. Free us from ruminating remorse, nagging guilt, or clinging fears. Usher us into the sunshine of your grace, as we invite the winds of the Spirit to sweep us in new directions. Help us to pay attention to the attitudes that may keep us from you and from others – our stubborn pride, our crippling fears, our cynical thoughts – and forgive us. Help us to turn to you, trusting that you will help us through our own obstacles to a new hope for a deeper life with you.

In this sacred space, we turn to hear your word speaking deep into our souls. We have spent far too much time wandering, unsure of our purpose in this world. There is deep within us the desire to live with purpose and meaning. On this week when we have celebrated the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., we hear again to your call toward justice and peace. We pray for all those impacted by injustice – may our prayers be transformed into action. We thank you for all who are working tirelessly to create a more just world, through advocacy and through service. And so, we thank you for all those who serve you with quiet purpose in this place and beyond.

In prayer, we also gather up our concerns – our worries over loved ones, our burdens over our world and its challenges. There are so many that need our prayers this morning. We lift to your healing love and comforting grace...

Help us to release our concerns into your hands. Empower us to discern that which we are powerless to change, but also give to us the boldness to risk changing the things that we can change. And then, grant us spirits that seek to serve in our worlds -- guiding us that we might venture out with courage in the journey you have entrusted to us, in the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Call to Worship

Good morning friends, as we gather, let's open ourselves to the astounding possibility that new life can break out at any moment!

Let's challenge the thought that we have planned the future so efficiently that there will be no surprises!

Let's celebrate our beyond imagining, irrepressible power of God, breaking through our lives with unanticipated joy.

So, come let's worship with anticipation, as we stand as we are able, to sing our processional hymn.

Offertory Invitation

As you saw this morning, Naples United Church of Christ is a place of abundant generosity – it is you who make it possible to be a mission driven congregation. Thank you that each of these mission partners is here because of what all of you have done. Thanks be to God.