

Pastoral Prayer

O God of the cosmos, who created the eternal vastness of the universe, we give thanks for the wonder of being alive on this most amazing day. We are grateful for beauty in all its forms – for the wide canopy of brilliance that we have named sky, for a single butterfly circling a flaming fire-bush, for the enveloping circle of harmony that stirs our spirits, for your word that strikes our souls with undeserved grace. This day and every day, we pray that our hearts would be awakened to the wonders that beg to be celebrated.

As we gather in this place to worship you, we come from different life experiences. Some of us have had days of refreshing joy, and others of us have come to this place to experience renewal, for perhaps the first time this week. Some of us are in the midst of a wintering season in our lives. We are like trees whose leaves have fallen, waiting for spring's new blossoms of life to appear. Our empty hearts are waiting sometimes patiently, oftentimes not, for your presence to break through in ways we can see – with a prayer answered, with a freedom promised, with resentments released, with spirits renewed, with direction offered. Lord we want to live our lives in such a way that we turn to you not only in the crises of our lives, but also walk with you in the calmer joyful days as you lead us into a deeper faith and a fuller discipleship.

Our prayers encircle those among us and beyond this sanctuary who need the mercy of your embrace. We lift to you our concerns for _____. We pray your healing comfort for: _____ Today we also pray for your wider church, as decisions are being made, may your grace abound. There are times when we look all around us, O God, and it is easy to feel discouraged. Yet, somehow, you reach out to us calming our anxieties and granting the gift of your peace filled presence. O Healing God, bring wholeness to the ragged parts of life – our lives and the lives of all those we lift to you.

Give us the wisdom to know the next steps you are calling us to take. And then, grant us the willingness to be change makers in our own spheres of influence. O Lord, challenge us to walk where we may not have dared to go before, and encourage us to step up to the challenges you place before us, for we pray in the name of the one who has modeled this path for us, Jesus the Christ. Amen.