

September 2, 2018 Worship
Pastoral Prayer

Good and gracious God, for the gift of rest and renewal, for the ebb and flow of each season, we pause to give you our gratitude. On this Sabbath, help us to take some time to rest in the cooling shade of your presence. Rescue us from the tyranny of the urgent. Slow down our restless busyness and remind us of what is truly important in our lives – and what is important to you. Loving God, this is the weekend that we recognize the task of work and of rest around our country. We thank you, Lord, for the talents you have given us that allow us to earn a living and contribute something positive to our world. Help us to recognize how interdependent we are in our laboring, Lord. We depend on the farm workers, who gather our lettuce and our strawberries, the nurses' aides who lovingly care for those who are ill, the teachers who form our children's minds. We pray for those who long for just employment, those who are unable to labor, for those whose labor has become more important than anything else. We lift up those who work to defend the rights and needs of workers everywhere, reminding us of the dignity of all your children. We are also thankful for the many people who, in retirement, continue to be a blessing through their work in our community and in our church. Thank you for blessing us through their willing hands and hearts.

Healing God, we also lift up each one who may be facing a difficult time in their lives, for a challenging medical issue, for a difficult decision, a relational strain, surround these persons with you healing love and compassion. Hear our prayers, O God, for to you we come seeking rest from the burdens of the world that weigh us down.

Gracious God, we also seek rest. We pray for those who struggle to find any rest, who must work endlessly to meet their needs and the needs of their family. We pray for balance, O God, for purposeful work and reenergizing rest. And, help us remember the words of Jesus: Come to me all you who labor and are heavily burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy and my burden light (Matthew 11:28) In his name we pray. Amen.