

## SEPTEMBER 23, 2018

### Pastoral Prayer

O God of the open door, we enter your presence with gratitude, for you are the One who loves each one beyond all measure. The daily reminder of your goodness is reflected all around us in the creative displays that dazzle our senses. And so we gather in this quiet time to thank you for your faithfulness through every chapter of our lives. Prepare us, O God, to be a sanctuary for you – with openness of spirit, sensitivity of heart, and strength of will to be your servants in this world around us.

Compassionate Lord, you know the particular concerns that bow us down today. Some of us are anxious, some are hopeful, some are confused. So, we gather to pray for each one we know who needs you, both in this sanctuary and beyond it, whose burdens are too much for them to carry alone. Again, we pray for those who have felt the devastation of a storm that has upended their lives – give them strength. We pray for those for whom fear has become so ingrained that releasing it seems almost impossible, for those whose hearts are imprisoned by simmering anger, for those who are saddened by loss in its many forms, and for caregivers who love so much that they often suffer in quiet exhaustion. Today, in our community we pray especially for

We lift to your own concerns that we have carried with us in a moment of silence. Lord, we trust that when our words seem so inadequate in prayer, you might listen to the prayers buried deep within us.

We pray for our world in these challenging times. We remember Jesus' example – when he looked at the masses of people in front of him, they were never simply numbers, they were always faces with stories. When you look at each person in this world, when you look at each one of us, you see individual faces and stories. Open our hearts to welcome the stranger, to hear the words behind the words, to be your message of grace in a struggling world that longs for healing. Reorient our path that we might look for glimpses of your realm breaking into our midst, that our vision would be your vision and we would be inspired to treat each one we meet with the dignity and respect you offer. Gracious God, help us to live that we might be the hands and feet of Jesus in our worlds. Amen.