

Pastoral Prayer

O God of this season, whose peace is often felt in the most surprising places – in the deep breath we take as the sun sets over the horizon, in the candles glimmering around our homes, in the comforting assurance of your presence in a moment of morning quiet sipping coffee. We give thanks for this community of faith and for spiritual gifts found, not under a brightly adorned tree but in the hearts of those around us. Help us not only to carol our traditions, but to wait for the newness of Christ's presence to be awakened in us again. Help us also to see you waiting with us in the darker valleys of life – in a hospital room where words of hope are whispered in prayer, into parts of this world where poverty and violence are a part of daily life, into hearts that are trying to cope with loss and addiction and hopelessness. Today, we lift up the Bush family as they grieve the loss of their father and grandfather. In our gathering each week, we offer our prayers for those in this fellowship...

Help us to lift the concerns that we have carried with us into your everlasting arms. Enable us to see your hand in all of life – that we might experience the hope you offer to each who reaches out to you this day.

God of all glory, this year more than ever, we need advent, the time for slowing down for reflection. Help us to develop a longing for connection deep in our souls, for when we are honest with ourselves, many of us sense that something is missing – and we suspect it's about you, Lord. We know that you are not missing from our lives, but we are missing the awareness that you are here ready and willing to break into our days to surprise, transform, stir up, and encourage. Be with us, but more importantly, help us to be with you, to make space in the crowded inns of our lives for you to come and dwell.

O Lord in this season of hope, our world needs advent more than ever. We pray that those whose hearts are heavy would find relief, that those who are carrying anger might find it possible to let go and forgive, and those who dream impossible dreams for our community and world might see them unfold before their eyes. Wherever we find ourselves this season, our prayer is that you would walk with us that we might be people of hope, opening our lives to provide a sanctuary of peace for others, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.