



Central UMC Pastoral Prayer

February 20, 2022

by Rev. Lisa Rettew

Loving God, you love us so much better than we deserve, that's what we say, but even that phrase misses the mark, because you've taught us through scripture and experience that your gift of love has nothing to do to with deserving or earning. Your love is given in spite of anything we could ever do or not do. You love your children because You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are love Yourself. Your grace overflows - it is the spring from which we draw the love for which we give back to You, to each other and to all You have created. Oh that we could only remember to draw from those waters with all of our words and actions. Thank You for Your gift of the Holy Spirit continually working within, to draw us away from our selfishness and to ways of loving our neighbors. Nudge us to take a breath and show patience when irritation threatens to take us over. Help us to remember that we can never know what's going on with every person we encounter; that they may carry burdens heavier than we could possibly imagine. Stop us when we assume another to be an enemy. Make us instead find a common ground. Teach us to put ourselves in the place of others so that we may empathize, not just sympathize, with the pain of those who suffer. And then we pray, You will use that empathy to bring comfort to be companions to those who grieve lost loved ones, or who simply feel alone.

Show us ways to wrap our arms around ones who live with depression, anxiety fear, or any other distressing physical or emotional state. You call us each to ministry; help us to see the doors You open, so that we may work for justice in our communities, and partner with our Savior to bring about the kingdom of heaven on earth. We trust that You are ever working in the world to set Your creation to right, to make a world that operates on the love upon which You founded it, we are grateful to be Your children, and so as the people of Your church, we come together now to pray the words Jesus taught the first disciples, saying:

Our Father
Who art in heaven;
Hallowed be Thy name;
Thy Kingdom Come;
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses;
As we forgive those who trespass against us;
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from Evil;
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, Forever.

Amen

