



Central UMC Pastoral Prayer

March 27, 2022

by Rev. Lisa Rettew

Good and Loving God,

You give of yourself so freely! You are the good shepherd who guides us to abundant life. Body and soul, you offer sustenance that satisfies beyond longing. The doors to your house are flung wide open, and you welcome all with open arms. Entry into your Kingdom does not depend on a spotless record, nor does it require any currency the world could conjure, for we could never do or have enough to equal the gifts that we receive through your divine grace. Your invitation extends to all your children, come as we are. Your merciful eyes are always looking out for us to return home to you when we go wandering off the path.

Dear God, your love and grace toward us is so difficult to wrap our heads around on the best day. If we are truly honest when we look in the mirror, we see our many shortcomings. We realize how frustrating our habits and our actions must be for you, because we are confounded with them ourselves. And not just as individuals, but as communities small and large. How can it be that countries war against each other? God of love and peace, work in the hearts of all leaders in all places to bring peace back to Ukraine and Russia. Let your face be shown in the faces of all who assist those affected by this terrible conflict. Guide each of us in ways that we may bring your peace and love into all the broken places of this world.

Forgive us for the ways we have given thought to ourselves alone while we ignored the needs of others. Give us your ways of seeing each other, that your reflection might be revealed in every person we encounter, and that we might always respond with your perfect love. Let your Spirit work within us so we can become comforters to all who suffer. We pray for those who live in fear, with constant pain, in anxiety, with debilitating illnesses, with depression, with addiction. We pray for lost relationships, for lost loved ones, for those who grieve, for those who don't know where they'll sleep tonight. And when it is we who suffer, dear God, help us to receive the help you send, for you made us not only to be givers of your gifts of love and healing, but to be the ones who are loved and healed as well. God, giver of life, you created us for relationship to you and to each other. Awaken us to those connections now as we pray that we may carry that knowledge with us when we go out into the world. Link us together with all the saints and make us one body as we join our voices to pray the prayer Christ Jesus taught us, 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

Text: Deuteronomy 8:7-10; Luke 15:20b-27,32