



Central UMC Pastoral Prayer

May 1, 2022

by Rev. Lisa Rettew

Gracious and loving God,

Your glory that you share so freely is beyond our comprehension. We experience your creation around us: the beautiful landscapes, the glorious heavens, the myriad of living things. Scholars do their best to make sense of it all, but there is so much more to know. We taste the earth's bounty, your creation nourishes and gives energy and life. Your Spirit moves in the world, going out ahead of us, working to usher in your Kingdom, extending your call to be disciples, showing us how to be your Church. Your boundless love spills into everything you have made, where it overflows again and again, connecting humanity to itself and to you. Glorious and powerful and unfathomable as you are, you entered the world with common flesh and bone, to live among your creations as one of us.

Christ Jesus, you showed us the way to live: with regard for every person as valued children of God. You placed the needs of others as more important than your own. Help us to also relate to our neighbors as you did, to be of service to all who are in need. Give us the eyes to recognize the wounds that folks work so hard to hide from the world, and to acknowledge when others suffer. Open our eyes and our hearts to the ones on the outside margins.

Make us mindful of the pain and disconnection borne of mental illness; make us mindful of the stress and anxiety of poverty and homelessness. We can be angry or dismissive when we see behavior we don't understand, so God please remind us there is more to a person's story than we know. Remind us everyone deserves respect, no matter how different they may be or how unfamiliar. Holy One, guide the hearts and minds of world leaders to value and respect all persons by turning from war and violence to ways of your peace. Strengthen all who are providing help and comfort to refugees of conflict and persecution.

We are so grateful for your love and faithfulness, for your acceptance even in the midst of our wandering ways and imperfections. You choose us as your people, and we ask for your help to continue to choose your ways of love as we pray together the way that 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: John 21:1-14