



Central UMC Pastoral Prayer

May 29, 2022

by Rev. Lisa Rettew

Holy and loving God,

Our hearts are full this day. It is the middle of Memorial Day weekend in America, which brings up conflicting feelings. There is the anticipation of vacation season and taking free time, but there is also the remembering of those who gave their lives in service to their country & all who served and live now with you. We feel emotions of grief and sadness for ourselves and on behalf of our friends, feelings that well up from empty places at the table or from phone calls that can no longer happen.

Events taking place around us evoke emotions across the spectrum, too. We know feelings of loss and grief are acutely felt by those in Buffalo, and in Uvalde. We, too, feel anger and sadness at lives cut short by human violence. There is frustration and bewilderment that schoolchildren must drill for potential violence where there should be safety. It is discouraging to realize that whole communities have been forever changed by these tragedies; when each life touches so many others and the ripple effects cannot be counted. Whole countries are changed by wars waged from outside and within. We confess to the hatred that rises up against those responsible and anyone connected to them; you call us to love – to love you and out of that love, to love all our neighbors. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to love, and out of that love kindle in us a desire born of your Spirit to enact change. Guide and direct leaders in our city, our state, our country and around the world to act in ways that acknowledge the worth and dignity of all peoples.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Help us wrestle and sort through all the emotions that we carry, wherever they come from. Give us strength to face the trials before us, and let us share your strength with those hindered by their own particular suffering and pain. Reveal to us how we might show your love in actions that will bring healing change. You have made each of us as unique expressions of your own image; you have given us gifts to use in the service of others. Give us eyes and ears to see and hear your Spirit going out ahead of us preparing the way.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, your love overflows so deeply for your children that we are swimming in it. You teach us that you weep with us in our sorrows, that all of heaven rejoices in our joys. With the faith of knowing that we are supported in your embrace, we join our voices together as your Body to pray the words Christ Jesus taught us:

"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