

PASTORAL PRAYER

O God, in a world that seems to have gone crazy and lost its way, we come to you this morning, not just seeking answers, but seeking strength and courage for the days ahead. We pray for courage to be the people who you have called us to be –people who seek justice and peace through your love for all of your people. We struggle with questions that seem to have no answers and problems that have insurmountable solutions. We seem to be a deeply divided people. But as we look and listen to people around the world, so many seem divided and at war with one another either through words or worse, through guns and killing. Surely we humans must test your patience, but we know that your love is all encompassing, never ending, always forgiving. This is our hope – that you love us unconditionally. For we know and struggle with our imperfections and our shortcomings, know all the while that in the end it is you who loves us the most and is always there waiting for us. You are our hope for the world and it is in this hope that we live and move and have our being.

God, this morning we lift up the people of Orlando, the families and friends who have lost loved ones. Give them strength and courage for the days ahead. Help us to find ways to not alienate people, to affirm all of your people. Surely we know that you love us all and consider each one of us important and a part of your creation. Help us to be more like your son who you sent to show us how to live and respect others.

Today, oh God, we ask your blessing on all those who are the fathers or role models for fathers in our lives – teachers, coaches, grandfathers, uncles, single moms who both mother and father their children, Sunday School teachers, pastors. Give them patience, understanding, and unconditional love for those to whom they are this role model. But we know that you are the father to us all and you love us more than any earthly parent could.

This morning we lift us those in our congregation who are sick or hurting in any way. Give them peace and strength to face their situations. Give strength to the addicted, comfort those who are victims of violence, help us find ways to feed the hungry. But God we also lift up those who are bullies, persons who are perpetrators of harm, those who feel the need to put others down through name calling and jokes. For these too need your love. Use people in their lives to show them a different path, a path of goodness and hope.

God, we ask you to help us be change agents in this world. Give us courage to speak out about our faith, to teach those around us about your love for all people, and to lead by example showing and speaking with respect to others.

All these things we ask in the name of the Prince of Peace who taught his disciples to pray saying “Our Father who art in heaven....”