

PRAYER OF APPROACH, CONFESSION, & LORD'S PRAYER

Gracious God of all time and space,
who was and is and is to come,
of past and present and future,
we worship and adore you
for you alone are worthy of our praise.

Lord, your glory is ever before us
and this morning we are glad to take our place alongside all those who even now,
on earth and in heaven, are raising
 their voices to exalt you,
 their minds to know you
 and their hearts to love you.

May our worship be a fitting offering –
a gift in return to the giver of every good and perfect gift.

Today may be the start of our week,
but we are living in an in-between time, God.
We know what has come, and we can experience this present day,
but the days to come are only shadows.

Eternal One,
We confess that we desperately want some inkling
of how much longer the things we experience will go on for—
whether good or difficult,
whether they bring us joy or pain,
we confess to allowing ourselves to focus more on wonderings and “what ifs”
than growing in our faith and trust in you.
Forgive us for leaning too much on the future
and not enough on the goodness of today.
Forgive us for demanding our own preferred endings
instead of trusting in your love,
instead of trusting in our faith.

Help us, God, to slow down and focus,
to avoid distractions in order to truly connect.
Foster in us an openness with you and with one another,
so that we are less enticed to close in on ourselves.
As you did with your disciples, open our minds and hearts
to understand you,
to understand the scriptures,
to understand the need for repentance and forgiveness.
Nourish our desire too grow and discover,

but also to trust:
to trust in you, God;
to trust in the love and goodness of your followers;
to trust that our faith will lead us into the unknowns of tomorrow.

We receive the power of the Holy Spirit with gratitude
and ask for the Spirit's guidance as we discern new dreams for our lives
and spiritual growth in this time of in-between.

Restore us as we journey, loving God.

Continue to bless us and foster in us our desire to continually bless you, too.

We ask this in the name of Christ Jesus, who ascended into heaven, and who taught us
during his time on this earth how to pray, saying, Our Father...