

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING & PASTORAL CONCERN

We are here, O God... we are alive and breathing, O God... Thank you.

We are loved, O God, and we have love to give and to share... Thank you.

For the experience of encountering you as creator, as mother and father to us... Thank you.

For the experience of knowing your presence in Jesus as one who knows our humanity and shares its struggles... Thank you.

For the experience of your energy flow in and through us we draw on as your Holy Spirit, we thank you.

May we experience you in all your ways of being above us, among us and within us, O God...

The world is in turmoil, O God, and when we imagine it can't get any worse, it does... With so much freedom and randomness in our world and all life in it... how can we access your power so that real change, change at the heart level, may happen, O God?

We focus our prayers this day particularly on two realities pressing in upon us all right now...

First we mention our struggle as societies not just in the U.S, but here too and throughout the world, with racism... racism as systemic, so ingrained we don't see it or notice it unless our skin is black... Open our hearts, convict our minds and emblaze our spirits, O God, so that justice is the face of your love that motivates us to listen and learn, protest as safely as we can, find ways to build bridges with authorities of all kinds, and ways to show our siblings of various colours that we are one and we stand with each other until we become the change we want to see in our world... We especially pray for our black children and youth, O God, as they must see hope for their future in a world that so often criminalizes them...

God above us, God among us, God within us... show us the way and empower us to inspire and become the way...

We also continue to pray for our struggle to manage and overcome Covid-19, O God. We continue to pray for all those who are extra vulnerable because of their health, where they live, their economic situation, or because of the kind of work they do to keep the rest of society as safe as possible until we all come through this... For those of us who struggle with our mental health, O God, trying to see each day as a new day rather than the same old, same old... for those of us who struggle to see hope that something good can come out of all this for all the bad that's so evident...

God above us, God among us, God in, between and through us... fill us with new faith, new hope and a new resilience and steadfastness in our love...

Finally, O God, we pray for specific people for which special prayer requests have been made... We continue to pray for Molly Persaud, sister to Sally, in Guyana, having suffered much violence and abuse, struggling with health issues in a context where quality medical care is not as readily available... May healing hope and faith for a new day and way be opened up... We pray for Al, good friend of Dave and Norma Alexander, struggling with loss and grief, alienation from children, Alzheimer's disease, and now Covid... How do we find hope, O God when we're struck down past our breaking point?... We also pray for Barbara Thomas and her family, as they grieve the death of her niece, Denise Thomas in New Jersey, from Covid 19... We are reminded, O God,

that the staggering numbers of sick and dead around the world are real people who love and are loved... send us your peace...

We also take a moment, O God, in silence, to name before you those precious to us personally, whom we are carrying heavily at this time...

We are praying for your healing and strengthening, O God... for new doors opening... for sustenance and inner peace... for pathways yet to unfold... Make possible what we cannot see, O God... In Jesus' name... Amen.