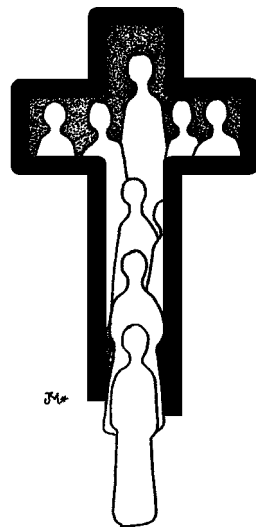


Pastoral Council Prayers and Faith Sharing

**April – June 2016
Cycle C**



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AN INVITATION TO PRAY WITH YOUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

These opening and closing prayers have been prepared to help your pastoral council become what it is intended to be: a *leadership body in communion* with God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—and focused on enabling the community to carry out the *mission* of the Church (to proclaim the Gospel, to worship God, to form community, and to serve especially those in need). As stated in the “Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines” of the Diocese of Rochester, the specific purposes of the pastoral council are:

- to develop a common vision and purpose, actively advocate for the poor and the powerless, and to extend Christian commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods and communities;
- to orchestrate a statement of mission for the parish community and become the reference point for activity in the parish;
- to provide recommendations for priorities, directions, and policies through pastoral planning for worship, evangelization, outreach, stewardship, etc.;
- to promote communication, understanding, and collaboration among parish organizations and between the parish, the diocese, and the universal Church.

In our rush to “get the business of the council done” we may forget that we are challenged to ongoing renewal through prayer, study, listening, and dialogue. Because of our familiarity with secular boards of directors, we may forget that we are a body of church leaders engaged with our pastor or pastoral administrator in discerning the ways God is speaking to this community in this time and place. For our actions to be imbued with the wisdom of God, they must begin with prayer, followed by listening to one another in faith and love and listening to the larger community of parishioners in similar faith and love, and end again in prayer.

And so you are invited and encouraged to set aside time at the beginning and end of your pastoral council meetings to use these prayers. We are confident that the quality of your relationships with one another and the community at large and the quality of your decisions will be enhanced as you take time for shared prayer in God’s presence.

Hints for the Prayer Leader

It may be helpful to designate a different person on your council to lead prayer for each meeting. In this way, more and more of the leaders of your community will gain experience with leading prayer in small groups.

Preparation before the Pastoral Council meeting

1. Read through the prayer session for the Sunday following your meeting. Become familiar with it.
2. Make enough copies of the prayer for all you expect to attend the meeting. You may distribute these at the beginning of the meeting or send them out to members ahead of time along with the agenda and minutes of the previous meeting.
3. If a visual image is suggested for this particular prayer session, bring it to the meeting if possible. Having an image in the center of the gathering will help members remember throughout the evening that the meeting unfolds in God's presence.

A Walk Through the Prayer Outline

Prayer at the beginning of the meeting (allow 10-15 minutes on your agenda):

1. Invite those present to become quiet and remember that they are in the presence of God. After a brief pause, begin the *Invitation to Prayer*.
2. Either read the *Scripture* passage yourself or have someone else do so (ask them before the meeting begins).
3. Allow several minutes for *silent reflection* and consideration of the faith sharing questions.
4. Invite those present to respond (in groups of two or three or in the larger council group) to any of the suggested *questions for faith sharing* out loud. People may also choose to share how the reading spoke to them in general. All do not need to respond but allow silent pauses so that people can reflect comfortably.
5. Go on to the beginning of your meeting's agenda.

Prayer at the end of the meeting (allow 5 minutes on your agenda):

1. Begin the *intercessory prayers* as written in the prayer session.
2. Invite others to share their own prayers aloud.
3. When all who choose to share prayers are done, say "For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts."
4. Begin the *closing prayer*.

Notes

1. The intercessory prayers may be moved to the end of the “prayer at the beginning of the meeting” or offered in the middle of the meeting—as well as at the end as suggested in the prayer sessions.
2. These prayer sessions, while designed for pastoral councils, can be used at the meetings of the parish staff and other parish committees with minor adaptation.

Faith Sharing Guidelines

Each person is led by God on his or her personal spiritual journey. Faith sharing refers to shared reflections on the action of God in one’s experience as related to Scripture and faith. Faith sharing is not discussion, problem solving, or scripture study. The purpose is an encounter, between a person in the concrete circumstances of life and the Word of God, which leads to a conversion of heart. The entire faith sharing process is seen as prayer, i.e. listening to the Word of God as revealed in scripture and in each other’s experience.

1. Participants are given time to reflect before sharing begins, and a period of comfortable silence might occur between individuals sharing. Silence is a vital part of the total process of faith sharing.
2. Sharing is optional. Each person shares at the time and on the level where he or she feels comfortable.
3. There is no set order for sharing (you do not need to go in a circle around the group).
4. Listen respectfully and openly. If someone does not hear the sharing or does not understand, he or she can ask for clarification.
5. There is no discussion or commenting on what is shared. An appropriate response from the prayer leader or group might be a smile, a nod, or a “thank you.”
6. The prayer leader and group are not there as “problem solvers” or “advice givers.”
7. Participants are encouraged to share in the first person (I feel...I believe...etc.).
8. Anything that is shared in the group is confidential and does not leave the group. It is meant to be a gift for this group only.

Faith and Doubt
2nd Sunday of Easter
April 3, 2016



Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Christ our savior, you call us to forgive others.
All: My Lord and my God!
Leader: Christ our brother, you offer us life in your name.
All: My Lord and my God!
Leader: Christ our friend, you give us the Holy Spirit.
All: My Lord and my God!

Scripture Reading: John 20:19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained."

Thomas, called Didymus, one of the Twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger into the nail marks and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." Now a week later his disciples were again inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, although the doors were locked, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands, and bring your hand and put it into my side, and do not be unbelieving, but believe." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you come to believe because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples that are not written in this book. But these are written that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that through this belief you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. *Have there been times in your own life when you have wavered in faith? What or who encouraged you to believe?*
2. *How can our community embrace those who are struggling to believe in Christ or to follow his path as disciples?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

For our young people, that they might find hope and support in our Catholic community, we pray.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...
(When all those who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Good and gracious God,
we ask you to increase our faith
and help us to imitate Christ more closely
so that others will be drawn to a life of faith and discipleship.
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.**

The Courage to Witness
3rd Sunday of Easter
April 10, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Good and gracious God,
 your loving actions proclaim you our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.
 Help our actions and our words give witness
 to the good you have done for us and for all people,
 in all places and throughout all time.
 Give us the courage and strength we need
 to bear the name "Christian"
 and to become the example of Christ
 in our homes, schools, and workplaces each day.
 We ask this through the one who loved us to his death
 and brought us to new life.

All: Amen.

Scripture Reading: Acts 5:27-32, 40b-41

When they had brought them in and made them stand before the Sanhedrin, the high priest questioned them, "We gave you strict orders, did we not, to stop teaching in that name? Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and want to bring this man's blood upon us."

But Peter and the apostles said in reply, "We must obey God rather than men. The God of our ancestors raised Jesus, though you had him killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as leader and savior to grant Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, as is the Holy Spirit that God has given to those who obey him."

After recalling the apostles, they had them flogged, ordered them to stop speaking in the name of Jesus, and dismissed them.

So they left the presence of the Sanhedrin, rejoicing that they had been found worthy to suffer dishonor for the sake of the name. And all day long, both at the temple and in their homes, they did not stop teaching and proclaiming the Messiah, Jesus.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two for faith sharing)



1. *How boldly do you proclaim your faith to your colleagues and friends? If you were arrested today, what would be the evidence that you are a Christian?*
2. *What are some of the things that prevent you/us from acting in a way that is clearly a Christian manner?*
3. *How could an outsider know that this pastoral council was about the work of Christ?*
4. *What are some of the ways, other than prayer, in which we can express our faith during our meeting tonight?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.
That church leaders and all the baptized follow the example of the apostles and live in a way that defines us clearly as followers of Christ, we pray:

All: Christ, our Lord, hear our prayer.

(The leader may add prayers that address the subjects/concerns dealt with in this evening's meeting.)

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them.
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Christ, our Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: God of all forgiveness,
be merciful on us for the times when our courage has failed us
and we have acted in a way that is less than Christian.
Send your Holy Spirit to enliven our faith, strengthen our resolve,
and increase the fortitude we need to live your Word.
Grant this through the One in whose name we live. Amen.**

**The Good Shepherd
4th Sunday of Easter
April 17, 2016**

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

The format of this week's prayer combines silent reflection on the Scripture reading and faith sharing with intercessory prayers. The leader needs to make sure that it is clear to everyone how the flow of the prayer will progress.

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Lord Jesus,
we thank you for gathering us together
to listen to your Word, to listen to and with each other.

All: Good Shepherd, guide us in our prayer.

Leader: The flow of our prayer tonight will go like this.
I will proclaim the gospel reading. There will be a brief period of silence
to rest in God's Word. Then I will repeat the reading, one sentence at a
time. Each sentence is followed by silence. Out of that silent reflection
anyone who wishes to speak a comment or prayer of intercession is invited
to do so.
This pattern--the sentence from Scripture--silence--spoken prayer--is
repeated until we complete the passage.

Scripture Reading: John 10: 27-30

Jesus said:

“My sheep hear my voice;

I know them, and they follow me.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish.

No one can take them out of my hand.

My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all,

and no one can take them out of the Father's hand.

The Father and I are one.”

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting:

**All: O God of Mercies,
hold us safely in your care.
Tender Shepherd,
may we take our rest beside you, never far from your voice.
Holy Spirit of Eternal Life,
abide in us,
now and forever.
Amen.**



Hospitality
5th Sunday of Easter
April 24, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God of us all, we can do nothing without you.
Your love sustains us and protects us in all that we do.

**All: Be with us as we come together and use our God-given gifts
to discern the many issues put before us.**

Scripture Reading: John 13:31-33, 34-35

When Judas had left them, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, 'Where I go you cannot come,' so now I say it to you. I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another. This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

- a) *How does this community show its love to strangers and its compassion toward the poor?*
- b) *What can our council do to make our community more welcoming?*



Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That we continue to reach out to those who are on the fringes of society and of our church by showing our loving kindness at all times, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts,
we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Good and gracious God,
we ask your blessing upon our efforts to reach out to others.
Help us to live up to our baptismal call
to spread the love of Christ to all those we encounter. Amen.**

Peace and Reconciliation
6th Sunday of Easter
May 1, 2016



Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.
All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.
Leader: Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.
All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.
Leader: I am going away and I will come back to you.
All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.
Leader: If you loved me you would rejoice.
All: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.
(from John 14)

Scripture Reading: John 14:23-29

Jesus answered and said to him, "Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

"I have told you this while I am with you. The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I told you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

"You heard me tell you, 'I am going away and I will come back to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father; for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you this before it happens, so that when it happens you may believe."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two for faith sharing)

1. *What causes the hearts of our parishioners to be troubled or afraid?*
2. *How do the ministries of our parish guide the troubled or afraid to the peace of Jesus?*
3. *Where is there a need for more peace in our relationships within the community?*
4. *How can the council be a model of Jesus' peace?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

We pray for those in our families, communities and our world who feel far from peace, may their suffering be eased, may they come to know new light and new hope, we pray to the Lord ...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Risen Jesus,
you offer us precious peace through your life-giving Spirit. May we as
a parish community open our hearts to embrace that gift. May we
become ever more peaceful people as we speak to, listen to, and serve
one another.
Amen.**

That All May be One
7th Sunday of Easter
May 8, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: We gather in Jesus' name

All: and join our prayer to his.

Scripture Reading: John 17:20-26

Lifting up his eyes to heaven, Jesus prayed saying:
"Holy Father, I pray not only for them,
 but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
 so that they may all be one,
 as you, Father, are in me and I in you,
 that they also may be in us,
 that the world may believe that you sent me.
And I have given them the glory you gave me,
 so that they may be one, as we are one,
 I in them and you in me,
 that they may be brought to perfection as one,
 that the world may know that you sent me,
 and that you loved them even as you loved me.
Father, they are your gift to me.
I wish that where I am they also may be with me,
 that they may see my glory that you gave me,
 because you loved me before the foundation of the world.
Righteous Father, the world also does not know you,
 but I know you, and they know that you sent me.
I made known to them your name and I will make it known,
 that the love with which you loved me
 may be in them and I in them."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. *Jesus prays that his future disciples may have the gift of unity. What are the signs of unity in our community?*
2. *Where are we divided? Where do we need to grow so that our love for one another can help others to believe that God loves them, too?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

For an end to polarization in our church so that we may more effectively bring the good news of Jesus to others, we pray:

All: That we may all be one.

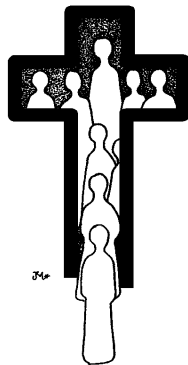
Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: That we may all be one.

Closing Prayer

**All: Gracious God,
Jesus calls us your gift to him.
May your love be in us and be reflected
in the way we live our lives.
Amen.**





**Renew Us with Your Spirit
Pentecost
May 15, 2016**

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when our hearts are heavy and our spirits full of sorrow.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when we are tired from our labors and are in need of rest.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when we become trapped by our successes or see all our efforts fail.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when we become isolated from each other and fail to acknowledge each as brother or sister in you.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us to pursue peace in time of war.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when we take your gifts for granted and plunder the earth for our own gain.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**
Leader: Renew us when we lose the sense that we are your beloved ones, joint heirs with Christ.
- All:** **O God, send down your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.**

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:14-17

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.
For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,
but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!"
The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we
suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two for faith sharing)

1. *When have you most felt like a child of God? How has this influenced your life—your relationship with others, your chosen path, your activities?*
2. *How is God calling you to renewal in the Spirit? How do you experience the Spirit leading you or inspiring you at this time? How is God calling our parish family to renewal?*
3. *In our meeting tonight, how can we bear witness to the belief that we are the children of God, serving the children of God in our parish and community?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That the church warmly welcome all whom God calls as adopted sons and daughters, we pray:

All: Spirit of God, renew our hearts.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

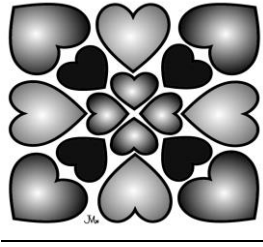
Let us pray in the words our brother Jesus has given us:

Our Father...

Closing Prayer

Leader: God of all power,
send down your Spirit and renew us with the gifts we need to live as your daughters and sons. Help us to seek you and to live with wisdom, understanding and right counsel. Teach us to love as Jesus did, with courage and strength through all difficulties of life. And help us always to worship you with true piety, standing in awe and wonder at the marvelous deeds you have done.

All: Amen.



**Affliction, Endurance,
Character, Hope
Most Holy Trinity
May 22, 2016**

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

**All: to God who is, who was, and who is to come.
Alleluia, alleluia.**

Scripture Reading: Romans 5:1-5

Brothers and sisters:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
through whom we have gained access by faith
to this grace in which we stand,
and we boast in hope of the glory of God.

Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions,
knowing that affliction produces endurance,
and endurance, proven character,
and proven character, hope,
and hope does not disappoint,
because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two for faith sharing)

- 1. Paul speaks of affliction producing endurance, endurance giving proven character, and proven character leading to hope. When has this dynamic been apparent in your own life?*
- 2. What are our hopes for this community?*
- 3. Where is the evidence in our community that God's love has been poured out into our hearts and that the Holy Spirit has been given to us?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.
For those who have little hope, we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...
(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: We praise you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen. Alleluia.**

Responding to Hunger, Physical or Spiritual
The Feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ
May 29, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Lord, you are faithful in all your words, and gracious in all your deeds.

All: Lord, you are faithful in all your words, and gracious in all your deeds.

Leader: The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.

All: Lord, you are faithful in all your words, and gracious in all your deeds.

Leader: You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing.

All: Lord, you are faithful in all your words, and gracious in all your deeds.

Scripture Reading: Luke 9:11b-17

Jesus spoke to the crowds about the kingdom of God, and he healed those who needed to be cured.

As the day was drawing to a close, the Twelve approached him and said, "Dismiss the crowd so that they can go to the surrounding villages and farms and find lodging and provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

He said to them, "Give them some food yourselves." They replied, "Five loaves and two fish are all we have, unless we ourselves go and buy food for all these people."

Now the men there numbered about five thousand. Then he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty." They did so and made them all sit down. Then taking the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he said the blessing over them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd.

They all ate and were satisfied. And when the leftover fragments were picked up, they filled twelve wicker baskets.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing (choose one or two for faith sharing)

1. *What miracles do we see today, where the hungry are fed?*
2. *How does God feed me?*
3. *How are we as a parish being called to feed the hungry? What practical step might we take here to resolve a situation of hunger that we know about?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

For those who hunger for food, warmth, or love in our world, that their needs might be met by the generosity of those who care, we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

**All: Jesus, our Living Bread,
you nourish your people by sharing your whole self with us. Teach us
how to reach out to others in need in a life-giving, hope-filled way.
Amen.**



Compassion and Healing
10th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 5, 2016

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

All: I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Leader: I will extol you, O Lord, for you drew me clear and did not let my enemies rejoice over me.

All: I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

Leader: You changed my mourning into dancing; forever will I give you thanks.

All: I will praise you, Lord, for you have rescued me.

(from Psalm 30)

Scripture Reading: Luke 7:11-17

Jesus journeyed to a city called Nain,
and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him.
As he drew near to the gate of the city,
a man who had died was being carried out,
the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.
A large crowd from the city was with her.
When the Lord saw her,
he was moved with pity for her and said to her,
“Do not weep.”
He stepped forward and touched the coffin;
at this the bearers halted,
and he said, “Young man, I tell you, arise!”
The dead man sat up and began to speak,
and Jesus gave him to his mother.
Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming,
“A great prophet has arisen in our midst, ”
and “God has visited his people.”
This report about him spread through the whole of Judea
and in all the surrounding region.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. *Think back over the past few weeks. Whom have you encountered who was in need of compassion and healing?*
2. *How can we—as individuals and as a community—notice and be more mindful of those we meet who need Christ’s healing touch?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

For those who have no one to pray for them, we pray to the Lord...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)

For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

All: God of the broken-hearted, help us to notice those in our midst who are in need of our care and compassion. May we always respond with your healing touch and so spread your love and mercy throughout our world. Amen.





**Called to Seek Forgiveness
11th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 12, 2016**

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God most generous, we are your people,
called to be holy as you are holy.

All: Open our hearts that we may receive your precious grace.

Scripture Reading: 2 Samuel 12: 7-10, 13

Nathan said to David:

“Thus says the Lord God of Israel:

‘I anointed you king of Israel.

I rescued you from the hand of Saul.

I gave you your lord’s house and your lord’s wives for your own.

I gave you the house of Israel and of Judah.

And if this were not enough, I could count up for you still more.

Why have you spurned the Lord and done evil in his sight?

You have cut down Uriah the Hittite with the sword;

you took his wife as your own,

and him you killed with the sword of the Ammonites.

Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house,

because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah to be your wife.’”

Then David said to Nathan,

“I have sinned against the LORD.”

Nathan answered David:

“The LORD on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

In this story David stands accused of some very grievous wrong doings. Most of us are neither murderers nor adulterers. But what about the underlying sin that is described in this passage? God, the greatest and most gracious of givers, wants to shower us with blessings and yet so often we impulsively choose to act alone and on our own power to satisfy our desires. What is the area in my life where I am most likely to ignore my relationship with God? Is there a sense that in some way God has not really been admitted into the working relationship of this pastoral council?

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: Gracious Giver, with deep desire for your presence and action in our lives, we offer you the prayers of our needs and desires:

Give us the grace to do your will.

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Leader: For what else shall we pray...

(When all who choose are finished voicing prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold in our hearts...

All: Lord, receive our prayer.

Closing Prayer

Women: You who are the power of life,
you never cease calling us into relationship with you and with each other.

Men: You who are the saving grace,
when we have failed to honor our relationship and lost connection,
you never fail to create the way back to your forgiving heart.

Women: You who are all holy,
you nourish us and nurture us in every way, encouraging us to grow
deeper and deeper in never-ending communion with you.

Men: For all you are, O God,
from the bottom of our hearts we give you thanks and praise.

All: Amen.

One in Christ Jesus
12th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 19, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: God, you are our God, we are seeking you.

All: We are thirsting for you.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 3:26-29

Brothers and sisters:
Through faith you are all children of God in Christ Jesus.
For all of you who were baptized into Christ
 have clothed yourselves with Christ.
There is neither Jew nor Greek,
 there is neither slave nor free person,
 there is not male and female;
 for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
And if you belong to Christ,
 then you are Abraham's descendant,
 heirs according to the promise.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. *How do you understand the image of being "clothed with Christ"? What do these words mean to you?*
2. *How do we, in this church community, show that we are one in Christ without distinction according to rank or status? What could we do better?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

In thanksgiving for our baptism into Christ's Church, we pray...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

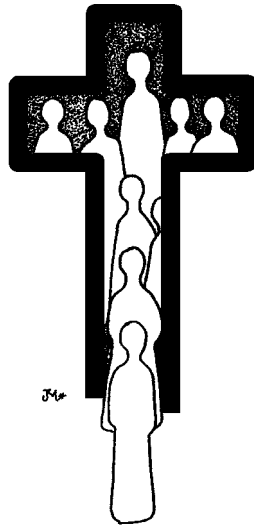
Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deep in our hearts...

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer:

**All: Gracious God,
help us to be more like your Son,
to imitate his words and deeds
so that all the world will know of your deep love for humanity.
Amen.**



God's Freedom
13th Sunday in Ordinary Time
June 26, 2016

Prayer at the Beginning of the Meeting

Invitation to Prayer

Leader: Look after us, God, we take shelter in you.

All: You are our inheritance, O Lord.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 5:1, 13-18

Brothers and sisters:
For freedom Christ set us free;
 so stand firm and do not submit again to the yoke of slavery.
For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters.
But do not use this freedom
 as an opportunity for the flesh;
 rather, serve one another through love.
For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement,
 namely, *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*
But if you go on biting and devouring one another,
 beware that you are not consumed by one another.

I say, then: live by the Spirit
 and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh.
For the flesh has desires against the Spirit,
 and the Spirit against the flesh;
 these are opposed to each other,
 so that you may not do what you want.
But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Silent Reflection

Questions for Faith Sharing

1. *What do you think St. Paul means by freedom in this passage? Is his understanding different from other definitions you've heard?*
2. *For St. Paul, "flesh" does not refer simply to sexual immorality but to any form of selfishness. How does selfishness challenge us as individuals and as a church community?*

Prayer at the Conclusion of the Meeting

Intercessory Prayers

Leader: In confidence we now offer God our prayers and our needs.

That we as individuals and as a church community grow in our desire and ability to follow God's will for our lives, we pray...

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Leader: Please offer any other needs so that we may pray for them...

(When all who choose are finished offering prayers)
For these prayers and all those we hold deeply in our hearts...

All: God of love, hear our prayer.

Closing Prayer

All: Our Father...