

Prayers of the People
St. John's Lutheran Church
July 8, 2007

THE PRAYERS

A Confident in God's steadfast love through Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, let us pray for the church, the world, and all people according to their needs.

A brief silence.

A God of creation, we are reminded of the delicate balance of our natural resources as floods, wildfires, and droughts continue. We hear of wildfires that threaten homes, lives, wildlife and ecosystems. The drought is impacting farmers as crops perish and livestock have no vegetation to eat, lakes and rivers are low and water supplies are limited. We yearn for plentiful rains to assist firefighters who are struggling to put out the fires and to replenish our lakes and rivers and heal our parched land. And yet, we yearn for the rains to subside in Texas as homes, businesses and crops are flooded and loved ones are swept away in rising flood waters. May clear skies provide relief for them and allow the water to recede. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion.

A God of peace, we give thanks for the freedoms we have in the United States: to worship in the church of our choosing, to speak freely, to walk down the streets without the rumble of tankers and bombs exploding. We lift up our world leaders – their burdens are great. Countries are at war, lives are being lost or changed forever, the fear of terrorist attacks grows. Open their hearts to listen to one another and to hear the cries of their people. Give them the courage to lead boldly, honestly, and justly. Equip them with the skills and passion to negotiate an end to conflict. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion.

A God of healing, we pray for all among us who yearn for healing: those who struggle with hurts and secrets too painful to share, those who mourn, victims of violence, abuse and intimidation; families in conflict, those who struggle with fear, addiction, or depression and those who face illness. We especially pray for those on our St. John's prayer list and those we now name either on our lips or in our hearts:

May the light of hope shine upon them and your healing touch embrace them. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion.

A All knowing God, our congregation opened our hearts to the call of the Holy Spirit 7 yrs ago and we rejoiced as Pastor Brad was called to ministry at St. John's. We knew then that one day, the road might be bumpy. We also knew that you would be there to walk with us when that day came. 15 months ago, we celebrated as Pastor Brad shared that he had found his life partner, Darin. Together we began a new journey. Some days, it hasn't been so easy. Some days we'd like to return to those more simple days, out of the glare of the media and quietly continue to do your work. But the spirit is here nudging us forward, calling us to do your work in new ways and we know you are walking with us. The path has had its ups and downs, its twists and turns and we have longed to reach the end where justice and mercy reign. But we are not there yet and the journey continues through the darkness. Let us not grow weary or give up. Let us continue to use this opportunity to work for the good of all. Continue to guide us on our journey and hold us securely in the palm of your hand. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

A God of compassion, we cry out to you today. After hearing the decision of the Committee on Appeals, we are overwhelmed with emotions. We are confused.... angry.. deeply hurt...afraid.... frustrated... disappointed....discouraged....shocked... sad.... numb.....tired..... In the days to come, bind us together in your love. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

A God, our pain is at times unbearable. Our hearts break for Pastor Brad and Darin, who followed your call to ministry, taught the Gospel and administered the sacraments faithfully with compassion and integrity. Now they have been rejected by the denomination that ordained them, a pain no church should inflict upon your faithful servants. In the midst of pain, may their love for each other provide them boundless strength and courage and may that love continue to grow and flourish. Grant them peace and opportunities for rest and renewal in the days ahead. Give us the pastoral skills to minister to them in their time of need. We pray that Pastor Brad and Darin will always be able to see themselves through your eyes - as the unique and beautiful creations they are, so lovingly crafted by you. **Senor en tu bondad,**

A Escucha nuestra oracion

C God, we are sad, even angry that the ELCA continues to struggle with a policy that is unjust, that they are so afraid that they are unable to be a church of grace and mercy

though they proclaim it loudly. This week's decision feels so harsh and impersonal. Why now we wonder. Couldn't removal have waited until after our collective voices could be shared in Chicago??? You teach us to have love and compassion for all. How can this be the church? Can they even see what they are doing? Are we lambs in the midst of wolves? We grieve for those who have been hurt by the church in the past and who have longed to feel welcomed, who have hoped and prayed for a day when all might be included – who once again hear rejection. We long for reconciliation. We pray for transformation. Peace be upon this place. Let St. John's be a place that welcomes all and continues to seek justice in the world. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

A We lift up the ELCA, Bishop Mark Hanson, Bishop Ron Warren, the members of the Disciplinary Hearing Committee, the members of the Committee on Appeals, and the delegates to the assembly in Chicago. We pray that the Holy Spirit will open their hearts to the stories of faithful servants who long for justice and inclusion. We pray that the ELCA will find ways to continue to serve together faithfully in the midst of our differences, that those will not just be empty words. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

Our needs and the needs of the world are great oh God. Hear now our individual prayers lifted silently or aloud.....

A God, our burdens feel so heavy this week. It is easy for us to lose sight of our many blessings over the past 15 months. We have grown in our collective and individual faith and nurture of each other. We have gained a better understanding of who we are and what we stand for. We have learned to speak those words for others to hear. You have brought wonderful new friends into our lives; people around the world have prayed with us; you have used Pastor Bradley, Darin, and St. John's as voices for justice. We have cried, laughed, prayed, sung and held each other in love. You have showed us how to hold on to hope and faith and how to disagree in loving, grace-filled ways when we weren't sure we could. You have given us the energy and focus in the midst of it all to continue our ministries and to welcome all to hear your word. **Your light shines brightly in this place and we know that all shall be well. Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

A We give you thanks for the saints and martyrs who have gone before us.

Nurture our faith in Christ so that throughout our lives we may rejoice that our names are written in heaven and we may look forward to sharing the joy of full communion with you and all whom you hold in life. **Senor en tu bondad,**

C Escucha nuestra oracion

P Teach us to pray, O God, and grant to all for whom we pray the good gifts that you have promised, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen