

Holy and compassionate God,

We're grateful that we can come to you in prayer, that you hear us when we pray, and that you act on behalf of us and on behalf of the whole world.

Lord, in your light we see light. We praise you for the light of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who fills the world with grace by your Spirit. You revealed yourself to us in Christ, and as we grow in faith and in life, set our hearts on the things of Jesus – teach us to pursue peace, mercy, faithfulness, meekness, and love. Teach us to walk in your way.

We ask that you be near to us always, Lord, and especially near to those in our community mourning the loss of someone they love. Hold them close to you, and tangibly remind them of your presence in their lives. Thank you for the hope of Christ's resurrection – it's a real hope, and not just a wish – set that hope in the hearts of all of us who mourn. Pierce the darkness with your light!

Lord, we ask too that you would be present with all those wrestling with health complications or difficult situations. Make your life and the life you give known to them. Today, we especially pray for Natalie Poortenga as she anticipates surgery on Monday, John Shooks, Elaine Harper, Irene Wiersma, and Kim Stapert. Bring full healing to each of these folks, and preserve them in your goodness.

As always Lord, we recognize that we are a community in the midst of a much larger world. And so we don't want to neglect our responsibility to pray to you on behalf of our world, particularly now as it seems embroiled in divisiveness, tension, violence, and confusion. Almighty God, this is our prayer today: that you would hold chaos at bay, that your justice might roll down like mighty waters and your mercy like an ever-flowing stream. We also ask that we might join your Holy Spirit in godly work; convict our hearts and mobilize our whole selves to serve you and your creation.

Finally, God, we admit that we do not always know how to pray or what exactly to pray for, so we thank you for Jesus, who prays with us and for us. In his name we pray the prayer he taught us to pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**