

"To confess your sins to God is not to tell God anything God doesn't already know. Until you confess them, however, they are the abyss between you. When you do confess them, they become the bridge."

Frederick Buechner

Lord God, first of all, we come to you with thanks. We thank you that we know you, that we can trust in you, that we can find peace and comfort and direction in our lives because you are in our lives. And we thank you, Lord, that you know us – individually and intimately. And Lord, when we really reflect on that, it is freeing to confess our sins. For we all have failings and frailties; we've all done and said things we wish we hadn't; we've all not done something we should have done. And we feel pain or guilt or disappointment in ourselves. And it does us no good to try to hide it or to wish things were otherwise. This is the way it is. As Buechner said, "You know it anyway." And so when we come to you, admitting what is on our hearts – honest and transparent to you, then we can truly feel a melting away of the heaviness we feel. For we know that your forgiveness is immediate and complete, and when we lay our burdens, our sins, at your feet, you say to us, "Your sins have been forgiven. You have a new start, a clean slate." And that is a relief, a joy, and it gives us hope and encouragement to live our lives as Christ taught. And so, Lord, in just a moment, we will come in silence and in honesty to make our confessions, to bring our lives to you. But first, we wish to lift up others who are in need.

There are many, Lord, who are hurting or needing peace or guidance or healing. You have heard those on our prayer list, and hear us now people in this congregation lift aloud the names for whom we ask your blessing.

In silence

Lord, we pray that we may leave this place, desiring to "sin no more," but to be pure in heart, compassionate in our actions, and faithful to your word. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.