

Henry Ward Beecher wrote, “God asks no man whether he will accept life. That is not the choice. You must take it. The only choice is how.”

O Creator God of all things, Creator God of us, thank you for this gift we call life that you have given us. You have given it to us out of love, given it to us out of a desire to be in relationship with humanity, with your children. A gift given us to use as we choose. Forgive us when we take life for granted. Forgive us when we just routinely go through our days without being aware, without really seeing the beauty or even the people around us, without appreciating the blessing upon blessing we enjoy every day. Jesus, you told us we must become like little children to enter the kingdom of heaven, so help us, like children, to have a sense of wonder about life, a sense of joy, an enthusiasm for learning, growing, enjoying, no matter what our age or stage in life. And, Lord, we ask your help, that we would make good choices, right choices, so that we can make the most of this miraculous gift of life you have given us.

And Lord, we think of those who also gave us life, our fathers. On this special day, we give you thanks for our fathers and pray for them, just as we did our mothers. We pray for birth fathers, adopted fathers, stepfathers, grandfathers, and men who were father figures and taught us by their example. We thank you for the sacrifices they made for us, the ways in which they provided for us, and the ways they prepared us for life. We give thanks for the fathers that now reside with you in your kingdom, and may we honor them with our continued memories. We pray for new fathers, and those who are expecting a child, that you may give them strength, wisdom and joy in their responsibility. We pray for fathers who mourn the loss of a child, and feel that lingering pain. And we pray for fathers whose child is lost, hurting, struggling to make their way in this world – may they put their hope in the One who welcomes prodigals home. And we pray too for fathers who, for whatever reason, could not quite fill their role in a healthy and loving manner. May your blessings of forgiveness and reconciliation be present to those who need it this day. And as we remember those men we so love, may we honor them, by the way we live our own lives.

Lord, there are others we wish to lift up to you today. You have heard those on our prayer list, but there are others.

Lord, we come in name of the One we seek to follow, to learn from and to emulate, Jesus Christ our Lord, as we hear Diane sing for us.