

I want to share something Pope Francis said about prayer. He said “Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters. In prayer, we all learn to say “Father”, “Dad.” In prayer, there are no rich and poor people, no, as the Bible say, Greek or Jew, servant or free, there are only sons and daughters, sisters and brothers.” And so together, let us pray.

Holy and gracious God, we gather for worship as people of your kingdom. As those called from different places in life, different abilities, different interests, different personalities, and yet, all one on Christ Jesus. And there is something beautiful in that. And today, as we celebrate World Wide Communion Sunday, when people from across the globe are sharing together this day in Holy Communion, we celebrate the different ways you have made us. And we celebrate that we seek to live in unified faith with one another. For it is not easy, Lord – to live in this world. We want to be examples of love and peace and understanding. And yet sometimes we fail, and we ask your forgiveness. For your calling is full of paradox that seems to make no sense and defies all worldly logic. Enemies are to be loved, not hated; outcasts are to be embraced, rather than disregarded or scorned; the humble and the meek are lauded, not the rich and powerful. In your kingdom, life springs forth from death, and childlike faith, not human knowledge, is the way to wisdom. Salt, mustard seeds and yeast are the commodities of choice, not gold or silver or precious jewels. This is the kingdom to which we have been called as disciples of Christ. Give us courage to embrace this way of living, faith to trust the Lord we serve, and joy as we become kingdom builders in our church, our community, in our homes, in our lives.

Lord, we come to you, knowing that you have the power, the presence, the love and compassion to help those who are in need. Lord, we know the devastation in Puerto Rico, and we pray that there would be unity in working together effectively and efficiently. We can't even imagine the extent of the problem, and in many ways it is unprecedented and uncharted waters. And so we ask that wisdom, patience, and yet a sense of urgency be with leaders and decision makers. There are others, Lord, who need your healing, your comfort, your guidance, your peace. You have heard those on our prayer list, but hear us now as people in this congregation lift aloud other names.

We know that when we confess our sins you are faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. We are grateful for this table of Christ, and in his name we pray, amen.