

CHRISTMAS PRAYER 2017

O Loving, Holy God, we come in awe and joy tonight to celebrate and worship our Savior, the Messiah, Emmanuel – God with us. Here on earth. In human form. It is easy for us to get caught up in gifts, planning, parties, the “Christmas” expectations of this world. But tonight we come for something beyond this world. We come for you. We come to be part of the mystery in which your Son, Jesus Christ leaves the glory of heaven to be born as someone just like us. To show us that you are a God who loves a wedding, who puts children on your knees, who eats and talks with people of all stages and places in life. You are a God willing to suffer, to have people hate you and betray you, to know pain and loss and injustice, and even to die. And you were willing to do all this to prove your love for us. To save us from going down the wrong path, from feeling like we are alone in this world, to save us from the pain and suffering we can cause ourselves. You came to bring us to you. What an incredible gift. And we thank you.

Lord we know there are some who do not feel awe and joy tonight. We pray for those who are ill, lonely, facing uncertainty, death, loss of loved ones, loss of hope. We lift up those around the world without shelter or warmth. Those who cannot be with family, and those who are estranged from their family. And we pray, too for our country and our world, and for those working to maintain peace in the world. We pray for an end to the violence and incivility that seems to run rampant these days across all sectors of society. Lord, we know that you too are saddened when you see the innocent suffering, the lack of love for one another. We are made in your image God, and yet we have often distorted that image with our self-serving ways, our lack of compassion, and our refusal to look out for the needs of others. Many have taken your good gift of free will and used it to gain power, control, position. And so we pray for change, we pray that you would us to bring understanding and tolerance and peace, remembering that you, God are greater than anyone or anything, and truly “goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate.”

Lord, as our gift to you tonight, we offer ourselves. May this be a time for us of renewed commitment to living the path Christ taught us... love, forgiveness, reconciliation, peace, patience and joy. And as we seek to live the way Christ taught, we also seek to pray the way he taught, as together we pray...