

Pastoral Prayer

July 25, 2021

Holy One,

We pray this week for those athletes, coaches, trainers, medical professionals, officials, and others gathered in Tokyo. We pray for their well-being, that their efforts to win will push their bodies' limits but not injure them. We pray especially that they might be kept from illness, even as we pray that those who have already fallen ill from COVID-19 at the Olympic Games might fully recover. Mostly we pray that this effort to demonstrate a peaceful gathering of nations might become the guiding thinking for the leaders of the nations.

With the United Church of Christ's General Synod now concluded, we ask your guidance and presence with the people of our churches. For all the power and struggle of decisions at a national level, there is also power and struggle in decisions in congregations, in committees, and each and every day in households. May your wisdom be ours, O God. May your comfort support our spirits. May Jesus Christ inspire us, and the Holy Spirit strengthen us to do as you would have us do.

We look around the world, O God, and cases of COVID-19 are rising. We see it in the United States, in the state of Hawai'i, and on this island of Hawai'i. Globally, O God, more and more families are weeping. Guide us, O God, to decisions that consider our near neighbor and our distant neighbors. Guide us, O God, to compassion for those who are vulnerable to disease. Guide us, O God, to set aside our pride and take up our contribution to the health of the world's people.

Further, O God, guide us to consider the planet you made and upon which you placed us. We have been indifferent gardeners, O God, making some places grow in abundance while designating others as waste and poisoning those places with our waste. We have favored short-term gain over long-term sustainability. We chosen today at the expense of tomorrow. Hear our confession, O God, and as we strive to make amends to one another and our planet, forgive us and lead us in new, wiser, more compassionate ways.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray, saying...

Amen.