

Pastoral Prayer
February 11, 2024

Gracious God,

Once upon a time, this present day was in our future. Once upon a time, the day in which we imagined this day was in the present. Someday, the day we imagine now will be our present, and this day will be our past. Some day we may be able to hold past, present, and future together as you do, or perhaps we will still wonder at the timeless majesty of your love.

Help us navigate the shifts of land, culture, and expectations. Help us to distinguish what builds up the human spirit from what drags it down. Help us to choose our courses wisely such that our spirits sing. Help us to embrace the good and new, to set aside the old and harmful, and to further the growth of attempts to make things better.

We ask your grace and blessings upon the suffering people of the world. We ask your protection for those who struggle to live in places where war's madness rules: Gaza, Ukraine, Myanmar, Maghreb, Sudan, and so many more. We ask that your healing power come to those suffering from illness or injuries, and that you would increase the caring and skill of those who care for those who are sick. We ask your blessings upon those who lack food, shelter, clothing, employment, and hope. May their own efforts to renew their lives prosper. May your wisdom guide their families, neighbors, and us to support them.

We ask your comfort for ourselves, for we ache with our own losses – recent griefs, and those who passed long ago, both call forth our tears. We face the choices of our days without clarity. What will do better? What will do worse? What will bring us toward your vision of peace and aloha? What will turn us away? Guide us to the good and the true, O God, and forgive us when our best-intentioned choices fail. Forgive us also when our self-interested choices also fail.

God of grace, hear our prayers, offered to you in Jesus' name.

Amen.