

Pastoral Prayer

June 29, 2025

God of warming fires, come to us.

Our nights are not so cold, O God, to need heat to keep us warm – at least not in Hilo. Further up the mountains' slopes, they may need warming fires. And in cooler climates of the world, they certainly need them. May your people, O God, always have the comfort of warming fires on a cold night.

More than that, it is our hearts that need your warming fire, O God. We suffer the chills of fear when illness or injury strikes us; we suffer the chills of loneliness when our loved ones are far away. We suffer the chills of the spirit when we have lost our sense of your presence. Do not let our chilled hearts become hard and harsh, O God. Do not let our hearts reach a place we feel abandoned. Hold us in your tender care in our crises of body, mind, or spirit. And when we celebrate, O God, be there with us, so that our hearts beat warm and strong.

You have told us not to bring fire from the sky. We have not heeded your caution. Our wars bring fire from above, below, and from every side. We cannot yet pray for your forgiveness because we continue to turn our self-righteousness into violence. We pray first for the strength of your wisdom to encourage us to lay down our arms. And then, in the silence of a former battlefield, we pray that you bring us a forgiveness that will warm the coldest, hardest heart.

Bring us your warming fires, O God.

Amen.