

Sunday Worship - Guide for Writing Prayers of the People (updated 2/10/2022)

Prayers of the People are called this because they come from the congregation that has gathered for worship. Shorter and more focused prayers work well and we have developed these guidelines to help you prepare the weekly prayers for the BLC community. We are requesting no more than five petitions each week, as described below.

Prayers of the People begin by calling the congregation into a time of prayer. Please use this call to prayer:

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world,
and all who are in need.

Following this call to prayer, we would like to include up to three separate petitions each week. Please end each petition with these words:

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

These three petitions will be read by members of the congregation. They need not be long or complicated. They are most effective when they are written in words that come naturally for you. We often order these petitions from the needs of the whole world or the whole church to the needs of individuals. Some suggestions for these three petitions:

- *Lift up signs of community connection in the world around us.*
- *Consider drawing on the imagery from the scripture reading each week. In addition, each week throughout the season after Lent, we are focusing on Sabbath. You are welcome to include this, as well, if you would like.*
- *Consider including a place in our community or world that is especially in need of new life made visible through increased justice, mercy, peace or reconciliation. Throughout the season of Lent there will be a mission focus on overcoming food insecurity and you are welcome to include that if you wish.*

The fourth and fifth petitions include prayers for our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe, prayers for members and friends of Bethlehem and their families (we will provide a list of names each week), and the specific prayer requests known to the Bethlehem community (listed in the Star).

Here's an example of the fourth petition:

We give thanks that in baptism you form us into community. Today we pray for these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: NAMES. We also pray for our sisters and brothers in our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe.
Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Here's an example of the fifth petition:

God of compassion, you know our needs better than we ourselves. Hear the prayers that we offer you now.

Those prayer concerns known to the Bethlehem community will be included here in the bulletin.

Hear also these prayers we raise to you in our hearts or on our voice.

Silence for people to offer their prayers

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We end all our petitions by asking God to receive them in the name of Jesus Christ. Please use this concluding prayer during this season:

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

We ask that you send the written prayers to Beth S. by the end of the day on Tuesday each week so she can add these to the bulletin. Please send the text of the prayers to office@blcfairport.org.