

Sunday Worship - Guide for Writing Prayers of the People (updated 4/4/2022)

Prayers of the People 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. We are including the guidance from Sundays and Season, but please edit them according to these instructions.

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

Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation.

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

God, in your mercy,
hear 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.*
- *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; or a situation where new life is being seen. Throughout the season of Easter we continue to lift up 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:

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, you make all things new. Strengthen and renew the relationships we share with these members and friends of Bethlehem and their families: NAMES. Bring new life and growth to the ministry of our twinned parish in Shurugwi, Zimbabwe. God in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here's an example of the fifth petition:

Breathe new life into those struggling in body, mind, or spirit.

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

God, in your mercy,
hear 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:

In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us by your life-giving Spirit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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.