

Pastoral Prayer by Bill Chadwick on October 17, 2010 -

Almighty God, Tender God,

We are told that there are a billion stars in our galaxy alone...and a billion galaxies in the universe...and our minds are boggled. Boggled at your creative power and imagination. And we are in awe at Jesus' words that you number each hair on our heads and that you cherish us individually and unconditionally and you invite us to be in relationship with you and you relish in our prayers, halting and unworthy as they are.

We praise you and honor you and glorify you, God beyond all our words.

We thank you for the wonders of the universe, from galaxies to electrons, from spectacular sunsets to ocean breezes and golden wheat fields. We praise you for mountain majesties and mountain ash trees, mountain biking and mountain herbs, mountain lions and mountain goats and endangered mountain yellow-legged frogs.

Those of us so fortunate, thank you for work to do and health to work. We pray for those who are unemployed and underemployed, that all who wish may find good work.

We celebrate with the Chilean miners and families and all that can be accomplished when we work together.

We remember people who remain trapped, trapped in so many ways; trapped in horrific slums, in refugee camps, in slavery and the sex trade, those imprisoned for speaking out for human rights, especially Nobel Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo. We remember those trapped in addictions, in abusive home situations, trapped in old ways of thinking that lead over and over again to violence and revenge. O God, you are the God of freedom, from the Creation through the Exodus, the prophets and above all Jesus. You cry out, "Let freedom ring!" Help us to be bearers of your freedom.

We remember those in the military serving in dangerous places, among them: Robert Hagen, Paul Hardin, Aaron Short. Hold them and their families close to your heart. We remember the families of those who have been killed, so many. Particularly we remember Kandi, at the loss of her fiancée. Help us to forge a world where justice reigns and where families

need not be separated. We especially pray for the peace talks between Israel and Palestine and in Afghanistan. May your spirit blow through with winds of forgiveness and creativity and courage.

We pray for the middle school kids at Clearwater Forest this weekend. May this be a time of grace and growth for them.

We rejoice with Don and Judy Olson as they celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary. What a witness.

We pray for those in need of healing. So many, we list but a few: Karen Linscott, Steve Tighe, Kim King, Akosua Awere, Bill with a brain injury, Gerald Gerken, Lynn James Dulak, Lindsay Alexander Owen, those struggling with depression and anxiety, and others we name in our hearts.

We thank you for all your good gifts to us and we commit ourselves to be faithful stewards and to live lightly on this earth, with hands wide open to receive and to pass on your bounty, as we rest each day and each night in the sparkling streams of your never-ending grace and love.

All this we pray in the name of Jesus, Your Greatest Gift of All, and we pray as he taught. Our Father, ...