

Oak Grove Presbyterian Church

Rev. Mary Koon

Dec. 26, 2021

Prayer

Gracious God, in this season of Christmas we offer you our praise and thanksgiving. Thank you for life and breath, for moments of joy, for the beauty of winter. For family, friends, and our Oak Grove community. For hope that comes only from you.

God, it has been a long and challenging year. We continue to face uncertainty in our world and long for the peace that passes understanding. Today we pray for those who need your healing touch, people who are sick with Covid, those who face a diagnosis, those who feel lost and alone. We pray for people who deal with depression and anxiety, addictions, or abuse, and those who endure chronic pain. Bring healing to those on our prayer list this week: Bill, Sue, Bob, Pamara, Sheri, Larry, Mike, and Mitchell.

Sustain and energize all who care for the sick, particularly our health care workers in hospitals that are full to overflowing. Uplift our teachers and give them (and families) rest this holiday week.

Comfort all who mourn. We pray for Jim McCarl on the death of his brother, Chuck. We join the world in mourning Desmond Tutu. May his life, wisdom, and teachings inspire us in non-violent resistance, and serve as a model of love and connection.

Emmanuel, remind us today that your Word stands true and strong, and that we can trust your promises. Show us how to keep Christmas alive in our hearts this day and throughout the year.

Give us generous spirits that allow us to see goodness in the other. Let us recognize that we are part of an interconnected web of people, the divine, and the earth.

God, may we continually ask how we can serve the world, rather than wonder how we might be served.

Help us to make room for those who are continually told that there is no room. Grow our compassion. Enable us to show kindness to all who are lonely. Encourage us to trust in your goodness and light.

As Christmas people, may we be a reflection of God's light in a world that would extinguish that shiny presence.

O God, make us fools, foolish enough to believe that anything is possible. May we hold on to Christmas for more than a day, for every day. We pray all this and the prayers we whisper in our hearts in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray.

Benediction

(based on the words of the incomparable Howard Thurman)

"Go in peace to light candles this Christmas.
Candles of joy, despite all the sadness.
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch.
Candles of courage where fear is ever present.
Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days.
Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens.
Candles of love to inspire all of your living.
Candles that will burn all the year long."

(from "Meditations of the Heart")