

Living God source of life, receive our breath as our praise.

We breathe-in your grace and we breathe-out our gratitude.

Grace and gratitude. Grace and gratitude.

We breathe because you have first breathed into us.

Yours is the creative breath that hovered over the formless void drawing creation from the chaos.

Yours is the liberating breath that held up the waters enabling slaves to secure freedom on dry ground.

Yours is the inspiring breath that spoke courage into the heart of a trembling prophet with a silent whisper.

Yours is the comforting breath that covered the distressed and grief stricken disciples with peace.

We know this to be true not only from the testimony of the scriptures but from the experience of our own lives:

When we have made a mess of our lives – we give thanks for how you are able to take our chaos and make something meaningful out of it and even beautiful.

When we find ourselves captive – locked in behind the bars of bitterness or resentment; denial or despair; prejudice or pride; grief or fear you break-in to be with us until we are able to trust that your mercy has already unlocked our prison.

When we compromise our integrity we thank you for whispering the truth to us fanning our conscience into flame once again.

When we are lost in loss. When our own breath is weak, we thank you for breathing over us in ways that resurrect us filling us with hope again.

All this you do without charge. But not without cost.

Remind us Lord that it cost Jesus his life.

Remind us that though we longed for the light we loved the darkness too much to let it go.

Remind us that we needed to be rescued.

Remind us that Jesus would stop at nothing until we were free and that not even the threat of death could distract him from this liberating work you set him.

Remind us that we are somehow complicit in Jesus' killing. Help us to see that it wasn't just someone else at some other time who was responsible, but that it is each of us. That the evil we do and the good we do not do are not without divine consequence. Give us insight into how this is so. Introduce us to Judas within us – for where we forsake Jesus for money. Introduce us to Peter within us – for when we deny Jesus for fear. Introduce us to Pilate within us – for when we have Jesus whipped to please the crowd. Introduce us to the hammer and nail carrying soldiers within us – when we simply follow orders without question.

Help us to see that we are not innocent.

Fill us not so much with guilt as with grief. Help us to see that the pathways of our sin are death – within us and around us. Open our eyes to see the extent of the death that we are responsible for. Give us not only the desire but the means to turn towards your ways that lead to life in all its fullness.

Come and roll the stone away that prevents us from living faithfully – for we don't have the strength to do so. Breathe on us until we come alive for you in all things. Address us with your peace that restores our relationship with you. Call us now to follow you as you did in the beginning, reminding us that we still can.

Amen.

15 March 2015.