

Prayers: 2016 February, 21

Living God – full of grace and truth we gather to celebrate your goodness today. We gather to remember how in the beginning before any of us were – you formed us lovingly from the dust of the earth – and filled our innermost parts with the breath of your love – ensuring that when we love, we live out our original calling and when we fail to love, we divide and fragment from within. No wonder our hearts constantly speak to us – saying that we should seek your face because they know we will have no rest until we sit with you face to face.

We gather to remember that you provided for us with Eden-abundance, willing us to live humbly in harmony with the creation that sustains us. We marvel at the interconnectedness of the web of life. How we are dependent on the work of the worms and bees for our nourishment. And how nature selflessly offers herself for our wellbeing yet we struggle to contain our desire for more – so in refusing to live within sustainable limits we bring death on ourselves and the environment on which we depend.

We gather to remember that you entered into covenant with us. Promising to be faithful and true until death joins us as one. Promising to neither sleep nor slumber but to always have our back. Promising to be our lover, passionate and intimate. Promising to be our parent – guiding and caring. Promising to be our refuge – strong and dependable. Promising to be our defense advocate – tenacious and wily. Promising to be our shade in the heat of the day and our rock when the sand of our living begins to shift. You have been all these things and more – yet we have scarcely been attentive, never mind appreciative. It is as if we are asleep – living in a state of numb unawareness – oblivious to what truly sustains us.

We gather to remember your instructions for living: That none of us are self-made people and all of us are to have you as our first loyalty; That when we put others first it is the best thing for ourselves; that work without Sabbath rest is silly; that if we are generous we will always have enough; that if we are truthful we will always be free; that when we are gentle we are guaranteed to conquer even the most vicious of enemies; that when we are merciful we ourselves will experience the joyful gift of mercy; that when we hunger for justice the world will be more healthily nourished; that when we love we cast out the fear that robs us of life. We have not trusted you enough to follow these instructions – they seem crazy to consider in the real world we live in – and yet all the alternatives have not helped to untangle us from our multitudes of mess.

We gather to remember what it means to be human – fully human like Jesus your revealer. That when the foundation of our life is knowing we are loved and accepted by you we can freely risk to embrace vulnerability – our vulnerability; to give up the need to guard ourselves from the fear of rejection – to risk discovering and living out our true selves – to risk making your ways the only ways we give our lives to and to risk living life without the fear of death. We have preferred to focus on Jesus' divinity – stressing his difference from us and so letting us off the hook to follow his example.

Gracious God we gather today with much expectation and with much to remember. Come and surprise us in ways we cannot even articulate. Come and do something in us and to us that will gift us with the abundance of the life Jesus promised.

Amen.