

Rev. Carleen Gerber
Pastoral Prayer
January 18, 2026

I know that I have life
Only insofar as I have love
(And) I have no love
Except that it come from Thee, O God
Help me, please, to carry
This candle against the wind..... (Wendell Berry)

Let us pray...

There is much for which we are grateful: the warmth of the fellowship we find in this house of meeting..... the snow that drapes the world around us with purity... the tiny chickadee who darts about looking for the lost seed from the feeder... the candles we light to remind us of the persistence of light in the dark of winter. Merciful, Creator God – you have blessed us richly. Remind us, we pray, to be grateful each and every day, for even the smallest of blessings.

Merciful, loving God, you hear our innermost thoughts as we gather in prayer. You hear our fears, our anxieties, our doubts. You know of the vestiges of terror that can awaken and quicken our hearts in the night. You know, not **only** the perplex and frightening, complicated world in which we live and love... you know us in the deepest, innermost parts of our being, perhaps better than we know ourselves. We lay before you, on the altar of your grace, all the things that beleaguer us: worries we carry for those we love - anxieties we feel for this nation, and for the wider world that seems poised on the precipice of chaos... frustrations we feel for the reluctance of leaders around the world to take responsibility for the precious common humanity – the UBUNTU – that makes us all one. We lay before you on the altar of your grace our deep fears for the grievous and tragic divisions that wrack society around us, and for the violence that mounts in response. We pray for those from our congregation who are visiting even now in the West Bank and in Israel, carrying the tender candle-flame of compassion to those we know in that beleaguered land. We yearn for peace, Gracious God. Peace within ourselves.... peace with our neighbors.... peace within our nation.... peace in the world..... We pray for accord.... and

for reconciliation.... and for a deep harmony that could settle us *within* when the world around us screams discord. We pray that thou would help us to be rock solid in our faith; faithful to You... faithful to one another... faithful to the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ.

Be with us, God of justice. On this Dr. Martin Luther King celebration weekend, we remember with gratitude the life of Dr. King; honoring him for the light he shed upon the darkness of his time. We remember that he sought to carry a fragile flame against the wind. And in his time the wind blowing against him was fierce and relentless. We seek to be a people that have the courage to carry that candle of love out into the world each and every day, knowing that in our time, the wind that assails *us* is chaotic and strong and intimidating. But you are stronger, O God, than any wind that can blow. We claim that promise, and we ask for your guidance, God of the ages.

And now, we pray for the broken everywhere... those who have insufficient food... those who struggle with illness of the mind or body or soul... those who live in fear of the power of the mighty... those who are lonely. We pray for the children of this world who live at the mercy of those who have the loudest voices and sit in seats of power.

Mend our hearts, loving God. Give clarity to our sight and courage to our will. Grant that we might trust that our work, our prayers, our songs, might be agents of change in this world we so love – in this world YOU so love.

We know that the love we carry – and for which we pray – is a tender and fragile flame. Help us to carry it in remembrance of the man, Dr. King, and the man whom we know as Jesus the Christ.

Amen.