

Pastoral Prayer
Feb. 8, 2009

O God, we gather this morning to sing your praises and to give you thanks for a new day and a new chance... to be with
our families and friends,
our community of faith, this church,
and the wider community of St. Paul, this nation and the world.

Help us to make all we can of this new day and the opportunities it brings, to live faithfully and lovingly in the midst of the settings in which you have placed us. May we reach out with that love and faith to those who are most in need around us:

those who are lonely and troubled
those who are anxious and depressed
those who have lost loved ones this week and who are in grief.

We particularly pray this morning for the family of our pastor, David Van Dyke, who mourn the loss of David's father Harold. Watch over them as they gather in Michigan this week and comfort them by the power of your Holy Spirit. May they and all who mourn know of your unfailing love as we and others who know them surround them with our thoughts and prayers.

We pray today for all those people in need of healing, of body, mind and spirit. We particularly ask your blessing on Darlene Stensby as she regains her strength following back surgery, and on several members of our congregation who are hospitalized this week. May they trust in you and find renewal as their strength and determination get rekindled by your Spirit.

We pray this morning for a world in the midst of social and economic turmoil. Give guidance and courage to our elected leaders, particularly our new President, Barack Obama, as they try to steer a way forward through the rough seas of crisis confronting our nation and the world. May the leaders of the various different nations work cooperatively together to find common solutions to the economic downturn gripping the globe. We ask your comfort and sustaining presence for those who have lost jobs and livelihoods here and abroad, or who will be facing furloughs and reductions-in-force at companies on whom they've relied to make their living and support their families. May you open new doors and new opportunities for them as they make their way forward to seek new careers, using the gifts and skills with which you've endowed them.

Lord help us to do the best we can with this new day you've given us, welcoming it as a gift from you, and seeking to follow in the path of the One who came to show us a new and better way, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray his prayer together, saying:

“Our Father, who art in heaven...”