

Prayer of the People *(written by Rev. Colin Ward)*

Oh God of Grace and Mercy,

The rhythm of our season is out of step. The upbeat songs of joy, sung a few months ago in celebration of Emmanuel, seem distant. What should be normal, seasonal, is to hear the church filled with new songs of salvation, renewal, and redemption. It is time for the crescendo of an empty tomb!

In our hearts, we reluctantly acknowledge and confess our shortcomings of faith. That our shouts of hallelujah have given way to the familiar phrase found throughout the history of your people. 'How long, Lord?'

How long do we need to wait? When can we go back to work? How long will life be this way? When can we see our family? How long until...normal?

Like Thomas, confused and stuck in the days between hearing of the resurrection and seeing it with his own eyes, we too long to know the answers. To have our questions addressed; to live without fear, to mourn no more.

We ask you to help us find the new songs for this season, even if they are sung with faint voices. Songs that echo with strength and encouragement, songs of safety and well-being for those stocking grocery shelves, operating trucks and buses, for the farmers. Songs that are sung in unison to show support of our Health-Care workers and First-Responders. For those that attend our elderly, those at-risk, for school children. For those that keep the stores open for our bread and milk. May these songs give them strength and courage for the day.

As we pray for these days ahead, we ask for wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, and ears to hear your songs of grace and mercy.