

At the Core

Service Prayers for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost October 23, 2011

Leviticus 19:1–2, 15–18, Psalm 1, 1 Thessalonians 2:1–8, Matthew 22:34–46

CALL

One: You, O God, know our hearts.

All: **Guide our hearts, O God.**

One: You, O God, see our ways.

All: **Shape our ways, O God.**

One: You, O God, call our spirits.

All: **Call us now, O God, as we call on you.**

GATHERING PRAYER

Happy are we, O God, when our hearts are full,
our ways are yours, our spirits enlivened by your call.
Happy are we, O God, when our lives are guided by delight.
We gather here today for just that, holy God.
We gather to draw on all you would give us
to be more fully yours. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

CONFESSION

Happy are those who turn away from the counsel of the wicked.
But oh, that counsel can be so seductive –
it draws us in, holds us fast, distracts our priorities,
obstructs our capacity to love.

But we seek no obstructions, we reject wicked counsel.
We embrace God's embrace.

For whatever ways we don't, we confess.
In whichever ways we sin, we repent.

Hear our prayers, O God, as, before you, we seek wholeness.

Silence

**God of mercy, grace, reconciliation and goodness:
We are sorry for so much – for words we cannot bear to say
for memories we cannot bear to relive
for thoughts we cannot bear to admit.**

But you know our hearts.

**Relieve us of our burdens,
Bind our hearts not to the unbearable but rather, to you
So that, in all ways, we may live in the joy of your salvation
And the delight of your loving embrace.**

Silence

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

One: Happy are we, holy people, when we walk in the ways of our God.
Happy are we, beloved ones, as we receive God's forgiveness.

All: **Happy are we, God's own,
Because we are made whole, through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

INVITATION TO OFFERING

Anyone who has ever loved knows that to love is to give –
to give from the place we feel it most.
This giving may be sacrificial,
but the sacrifice is compromised if it cannot be done joyfully.
May we join together in the delight of giving?

DEDICATION

**With what you see before us, God, we demonstrate our deepest love.
Receive our gifts – our very best – as sweet offerings before you.
May they be the blessing to others that they have been for us. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

One: Almighty God bless and keep us
All: **Merciful God, make your face to shine upon us.**
One: The blessed and Holy Trinity +
All: **Be with us now and forever.**

At the Core: Service Prayers for the Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost was written by the Rev. Kaji R. Spellman, a United Church of Christ Pastor who serves as a pastor of Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in New York City.



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