

A contemplative and breath prayer of lament, waiting and remembrance.

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Holy God who blesses the space we're in and reminds us: for all things, there is a time and season—we pause to center ourselves in your presence, to celebrate our interconnectedness with your world, and to surrender ourselves to your tender care and radical transformation.

As we breathe in, we notice the calming stillness and dynamic movement in your spirit. As we breathe out, we release our anxiety, our frustration, our loneliness, our exhaustion, and our grief. As we breathe in, we receive your enduring compassion, guiding hope and prevailing grace. As we breathe out, we abandon our bitterness and cynicism, our self-righteousness and short-sightedness, and our frailty and stinginess.

Gracious God who ministers justice, healing, and possibility—we thank you for being the source of all authority and power and blessing —even when our world breaks around us, even when our resilience is depleted, and even when our faith falls short. May we be your people united in/by your son Jesus Christ, who make a place at the table for all your children, who forgive one another as you forgive us, and who rise with courage to claim your promises for the common good.

Loving God who anoints us with gifts of prophecy and witness. Free us from the despair of serving our own narrow interests. Encourage us as we engage in your mission even as it costs us our own. Uphold your people who suffer from war, poverty, abuse, discrimination and exploitation. Show us, help us, and embolden us to walk humbly, correct oppression, and maintain the right of the poor and destitute—even in a day and age where hierarchy, patriarchy, and whiteness are heeded and prioritized.

God of all ages past and God who is our hope for years to come. We think especially of all whose lives and livelihoods have been upended in this Pandemic: Those who have died of COVID. Those who have been murdered at the hands of police brutality or due to systemic racism. Those who have lost jobs or their sense of security. Those who have fought the fight for equity, inclusion and advocacy.

Bless those of us who are poor in spirit. Bless those of us who mourn. Bless those of us who are meek. Bless all of us who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Be present and near to us, Holy God. Envelop us in your benevolence. Restore us with your peace. Listen to our cries. Hear our silence. And speak tenderly to us.

And all God's people have said. **Amen.**

—Rev. Katherine Lee Baker