

Woman: Gather this morning in this place as the people of your promise, men and women who have been created, redeemed, and sustained by your gracious and unfailing love. We come together to praise you, to hear your Word proclaimed, and to open our lives to your gracious Spirit. Hear us now as we remember those both near and far. Lord God, we pray for your church, the Bride of Christ, for her bishops, ministers, leaders and all who work in her endeavors. May your church meet with confidence the new task of today and may she be responsive to the call of duty wherever it may lead. May she be filled with great compassion for the suffering of the world and may your church always be utterly loyal to your will. Heavenly God, we pray for the President of this country, for the leaders of nations across the world, for those who sit in Congress, for those who serve as judges in courts of law around the world, for those who lead the state and this city. For all of these men and women we ask that you grant to them a spirit of wisdom and understanding and a vision of truth and justice. Gracious Lord, we pray for the larger world of which this nation is but a small part. In the midst of our own plenty and the bountifulness of this country, we read and hear of the terrible situations of other of your children. We would look beyond our own petty problems and remember the real pain of the people of Poland, the people of Nicaragua, the blacks of South Africa, the starving millions of East Africa. Help us to be sensitive to all these needs of our brothers and sisters. Help us to use our power and resources to be their advocates on the world scene. Hear our prayers for these persecuted peoples and help us to shape our prayers into meaningful deeds and actions. Eternal God, we pray for the sick, for the homeless, for those who suffer from terminal disease, for those who are confined to nursing homes, for those who know the immense pain that comes with the death of a loved one. Open our hearts that we may be your servants in offering support, in offering comfort, and giving love in these hurting situations. Holy Spirit, walk among us this morning. Touch our eyes that we may see the people who need an expression of kindness all around us. Touch our ears that we may hear those unspoken cries for help from persons too afraid to speak aloud. Touch our hands that we may touch others with sensitive caring. Touch the whole of our beings, Lord, that we may live lives consecrated to you. We offer our prayers in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, who as spirit became flesh that our flesh might become spirit through him. In his name we pray. Amen. Let us now worship God with the giving of our tithes and offerings. (slow organ music) (choir sings)

(muffled voices) (organ music) ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ O Lord, our God, the author and giver of all good things, our Lord Jesus has said that it is more blessed to give than to receive. And yet on this magnificent Spring day, we realize that we have received so bountifully from you our lives, our families and friends, this world, the witness of prophets and apostles throughout the ages, the gifts of unseen and unsung men and women who have contributed to our lives. Most especially, Lord, we give thanks to you for the gift of our salvation through Jesus Christ. Accept these gifts, we pray, as a small token of our love, and use them to advance your kingdom upon the earth and the work of your church around the world. Even as we offer these gifts, we offer also our lives in service to you, O Lord, and we pray too as Christ taught us, saying, Our Father,

All: who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (organ music) (congregants sing)  
(music drowns out voices)

Woman: Go forth in peace and be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. And may the blessing of God Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever.  
♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (organ music) (people clapping) (congregants talking)