

Opening Prayer: How Wonderful, O Lord, are your tender mercies. The remembrance of them fills our hearts with joy and hope. You are to us a loving parent who nurtures each child, whispering the gentle reminders of your presence. Come again into our troubled world with peace. Come again into our waiting lives with love that will not let us go. Amen.

Pastoral Prayer: O God, creator of life, we turn to you for guidance and strength. We trust in your presence, even when we cannot feel it. We believe in your love, even when we feel unlovely. We are assured of your grace, even when we feel under guilt. We stand firm in your power, even when we have no power to stand ourselves.

Ours can be a frightening world: wars and rumors of wars, hatred and slander, poverty and illness, deprivation and want, rejection and guilt, grief and solitude. Too many shoulders are never met with another's tears. Too many ears fail to listen when we cry for help. But you, O God, are always

there for us - loving, for-
giving, encourage, empowering
us to cope and, in time, to
overcome. For this we are grateful.

We realize, O God, that ~~we~~
as you do for us, ~~we~~ ^{we} are
called to do for others. There
are lonely people whom we
can befriend. There are
frightened people whom we can
encourage. There are hungry
people whom we can feed.
There are homeless people ^{to}
whom we can offer shelter
from the storms. There
are people who have never
been told of your saving love.
We are, O God, stewards of
that message. In all these
things keep us faithful. As
you reach into our lives with
hope and gladness, in-
spire us to reach into others'
lives with the truth that
sets us free. These things
we do in Jesus' name -