

A Responsive Prayer for Clergy Appreciation Month

For all the clergy who touched our lives in the past we are grateful. For childhood pastors, camp directors, chaplains met once who prayed before surgery, led a life-changing Bible study in a cell block, accompanied a college student to a protest, and unfamiliar “reverends” called in by a funeral home to shape a blessed memorial service for someone close to us –

We give you thanks and ask your tenderness to surround them.

For the clergy who accompany us now and those who care for those dear to us, we pray, and name for our own appreciating, not your information, these who need your grace.

Receive our prayers and grant your blessing.

Bless Pastors of churches who preach and visit and teach and pray, who assist church groups that have tasks and those that build relationships, who think about buildings and budgets, navigate new technologies and protocols for safety, and give from a source deep within.

Bless Ministers of Education who open minds, Pastoral Counselors who heal spirits, and, Ministers of Music who always lift hearts but this year seek new ways to share song.

Bless interims and conference staff, seminary faculty and supply preachers whose calls are itinerant and easily forgotten, but who can change lives.

Bless ordained and commissioned, licensed and lay, full-time and part-time ministers. Bless those who guide and shape accreditation processes and those who prayerfully respond to church conflict, assist in interventions, and work to keep churches safe.

Bless clergy who share their mistakes, affirm and celebrate the ministry of all believers, mediate compromises that cannot please everyone, and absorb some of the behavioral side effects of the anxieties of this year.

Bless clergy who have felt judgment based on ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, either end of the age spectrum, or who have been body-shamed or compared to the last pastor or the one across the street.

Bless those who modeled Sabbath and were called lazy, preached justice and were called interfering, celebrated the small church even in a tough stewardship year, shared hard truths, forgot to publicly thank someone or thank them enough, missed an important meeting, and still responded to criticism with grace and prayer.

Bless family and friends of clergy who sacrifice time, fun and elements of privacy, and offer wellsprings of support and hours of listening ... and bless amazing companion animals who are the best keepers of secrets and sources of laughter.

Bless, O God, clergy in the midst of this year's strange virtual search process with ingenuity and churches waiting for new clergy with patience. Bless people in discernment of ministry with bright hope and clergy retired from active ministry with well-sorted memories, cautious tongues and excellent boundaries.

Grant us always an appreciation of the many gifts of the Body of Christ, but particularly this month an appreciation of your children who are clergy. Amen.