



## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 4.19.26

God. Our Father. You sent us the Holy Spirit that we might never be alone. Jesus. You set hope in motion before the earth was ever formed. Spirit. We have you. Right here.

Many in our congregation walk long, dry desert paths. And God, you know how doses of joy can help to carry us through. It's hard to find joy in long-lasting heartache – the rotten test results that upend plans, life-altering injuries, erosion of mental health, long goodbyes, years of poverty, a family member who struggles so deeply. These roads hold deep exhaustion, times we wish something would at least touch the needle let alone move it, and the discouraging knowledge that hardship can last for generations. We long to trade our 40 year desert for a three day storm and then some smoother waters. Struggle can blind us to the tiny joys that glitter our earth like dust in a sunbeam.

As we consider precious ones in our body who are living through such trials, infuse them with knowledge that the hard is still so very hard, but the hard has not overcome. Grant them sufficient courage and a sense of purpose. Let them sense when they are being led by you in a particularly difficult moment. Let them enter into the truth that good can come and may already be here – not as a dismissive platitude – but as they make their way, make that goodness to be their help and their hope. Let their eyes see the joys that exist along each one of our paths. And cause them to remain in the hope of the gospel.

May your gospel travel anew among each person in Antioch and all your people in Central Oregon. Constantly renew our trust in your saving grace. Uphold those who love you anywhere in the world. As they walk their deserts, bring them goodness and joy as well.

And for those anywhere who do not yet know you – whether they be in positions of power or in ruins, let the truth of who you are cascade into their lives as they also find joy in the smallest things you have made. Be undeniable, and guide each one to a relationship with you.

“Elusive God, companion on the way, you walk behind, beside, beyond; you catch us unawares. Break through the disillusionment and despair clouding our vision, that, with wide-eyed wonder, we may find our way and journey on as messengers of your good news.” (RCL)

Amen.