

## ***Holy Week Prayers***

This is Holy Week. On Thursday, many of us will gather with our faith communities for Love Feast as we remember Jesus' last meal with his disciples when he alone knew what the next hours would bring. Some of us will gather again for Good Friday services and remember what did happen in those next hours. His disciples were at a loss. Even though Jesus told them, they did not understand. We have an advantage over those who were literally able to sit at Jesus' feet. We know the next chapters of the story without having to live through the fearful, agonizing, and despair filled days that followed that meal in the upper room. We know, because the disciples did live through those days and ever after shared the transformation that resulted from Jesus' selfless act. The next chapter was Easter Morning! Death was overcome and eternal life with Jesus became possible. God's forgiveness and mercy became alive and freely available to all who accept the gift, and take on the commitment to change their way of living by following the lessons Jesus taught. This response is an expression of gratitude for the new life Jesus promised not a duty or a payment. The gift is not a promise of ease or prosperity or perfection. It is the knowledge that we are never alone in good or bad times; that there is joy and hope in our living; that there are infinite possibilities for interaction with others and meaningful opportunities for service to a needy world in Jesus' name. Part of that service is through our prayers.



### **This week, remember:**

- **People in the U.S. recovering from storms & flooding** – tornados in **Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia; Illinois, Iowa, Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, & Tennessee;** high wind damage in **Ohio;** flooding in California, Arizona, etc.
- **Those who are sick, homeless, hungry, abused, alone.**
- **Recovery continues After Earthquakes in Turkey/Syria, Afghanistan/Pakistan, & Ecuador/Peru**
- **Congo where there is a cholera outbreak in refugee camps**
- **Malawi, Mozambique, & Madagascar** recovering from cyclone **Freddy.** **Malawi** is also dealing with a cholera outbreak.
- **Around the world, thousands of people are fleeing their homes due to political crisis & violence** – As of 2022 there were some 103 million people forcibly displaced (people forced out of their home countries). There were 53.2 million internally displaced people (in 2021).
- **Victims of Gun Violence** – Already this year, 10,939 people have died in gun violence (up 814 from last week) including 444 children (up 29 from last week). 8,347 people have been injured (up by 674 from last week) including 1,062 children (up 93 from last week). 6,270 of the deaths are suicides (up 462 from last week). There have already been 140 mass shootings (up 10 from last week) this year. (Gun Violence Archive statistics). There are, on average, 1.5 mass shootings every day in the U.S. No other developed country has anything like the gun violence seen in the U.S.
- **Ukraine where the war, now over a year old, continues.**
- **The continuing COVID Pandemic** – COVID continues to be a serious issue. While vaccines & treatments have reduced COVID death rates, COVID continues to spread. (The number of new cases is increasing in some places, including India, while remaining flat in others.)