

Session 2: Prayer of Gratitude and Peace

Spirit of Life, Source of all that is good, our hearts overflow with gratitude for the many ways in which we have been blessed by your sustaining care. As you assure us of your abiding love, may our gratitude for all your many blessings move us to share that love more freely with those around us, and to move more tenderly through our days. Live in us, and through us, and with us. Amen.

PEACEFULNESS

Living in peace and peacefulness reflects more than the absence of war, anxieties, problems or fears. True inner peace can happen most powerfully *in the midst of* those life events and challenges that threaten to undo us.

In this sense, peacefulness is not a goal to pursue, but rather the result of two attitudes of heart that create and sustain a sense of peacefulness. These are attitudes that we would do well to cultivate and allow to flourish within our souls.

The first attitude is a deep and abiding sense of *trust –* trust in the goodness of life, in the goodness of humanity, and the goodness that undergirds our world. This basic trust allows us to face life’s uncertainties as a temporary state. Certainly we are meant to engage those challenges but not out of fear. Rather, we confront whatever challenges us with confidence that all will work together for good if we remain true to our foundational trust in the goodness of life.

The second attitude of heart that keeps us in peace in the midst of challenge is the attitude of gratitude. Learning to become increasingly mindful of the myriad of ways we are sustained and nurtured on a daily basis opens us to an awareness of the goodness that flows our way that we often take for granted. Too often we only focus on our own efforts to care for our needs and improve our lives. An awareness and sense of gratitude for all the goodness that comes to us unbidden allows us to see the gifts of people and circumstances in our lives with sharper clarity and satisfaction.

A sense of peacefulness in the midst of challenge isn’t something we can pull out of our hats in time of need. Rather, living in trust and gratitude on a daily basis fills the deep reservoir of our souls with the sustenance we can draw on when challenges come our way.

Let peace like a river flow in your heart each day.

\*Special thanks to Reverend Janice R. Ledford for her contribution in writing this prayer and devotional on peacefulness.

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