

This embodied prayer is something I wrote to use in worship at White Memorial Presbyterian Church during my month as their Theologian in Residence. I also used this prayer at the General Assembly breakfast at the 220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA. Prior to writing this prayer I had experienced several different versions of a prayer in four directions—some from Native American traditions, some from Celtic origins, others with a particularly Christian character from Native American worship resources.

My friends and colleagues [Valerie Tutson](#) and [The Rev. Irvin Porter](#) have modeled versions of prayer in the four directions in several settings where we were worshipping together. The prayer below is informed by those experiences even as I wrote it in my own words.

This particular version of embodied prayer and prayer in four directions has connections to ancient traditions and ceremonies but it is my own interpretation and expression.

Invitation to Embodied Prayer: For centuries and generations God's people have been called to pray for what we need and for the world around us and beyond us. And for centuries and generations God's people across cultures have used our bodies and the world around us to pray. I invite you to join me now in prayer using the world around us and our bodies to give thanks, to ask for what we need, and to pray for the world. Please stand as you are able, empty your hands, and follow me. When you hear "In your mercy" you say "Lord hear our prayer."

One: All face center. God of Mercy, God of Incarnation, Christ is the center, the weaving together of heaven and earth, the one who knows our suffering, the one who is the salve for our wounds, the one who redeems us and heals us. Christ is the center. In your mercy,

All: Lord, hear our prayer

One: All face East. From East comes each new day. Light, renewal, second chances, and hope rise with the sun. We pray for the people of the East and for the resources of warmth, energy, and connection. May all of us walk warmly in the sun that rises again and again. In your mercy,

All: Lord hear our prayer

One: All face South. From the South comes heat and fire. From the

South comes fresh rains. It is the place of summer, of fullness of life, of vitality. We pray for the people of the South and for the refining heat of change and the cleansing wash of living water. May all of us be bold enough and humble enough to receive your refining heat and your cleansing water. In your mercy,

All: Lord hear our prayer

One: All face West. From the West comes the end of each day, darkness, dreams, and wonder. It is a place of broad skies and countless stars. It is a place of death and resurrection. We pray for the people of the West and for the beautiful things we can only see in the dark. May all of us be fearless enough to rest in you, O God. In your mercy

All: Lord hear our prayer

One: All face North. From the North comes winter, the powerful winds, the wisdom of age that comes with silver hair and worn skin. It is a place of stillness and knowledge. We pray for the people of the North and for the gifts of growing old, of slowing down, of purifying wind. May all of us have the courage to trust life's rhythms and the purifying breath of life. In your mercy,

All: Lord hear our prayer

One: All face front. Place your hand on the shoulder of the person to your left and silently hold that person in Christ light, if there is no one to your left, let this be a prayer for the one who thinks no one prays for them. (Silence) In your mercy

All: Lord Hear our Prayer

One: Place your hand on the shoulder of the person to your right and silently hold that person in Christ light, if there is no one to your right, let this be a prayer for another who thinks no one prays for them. (Silence) In your mercy

All: Lord Hear our Prayer

One: Please place your hand on your heart and pray for others who you know stand in need of prayer. You may hold these names silently or voice them out loud as the Spirit moves you. (Give a little time for silence and/or voicing) In your mercy

All: Lord Hear our Prayer

One: Turn to center and join hands. We are the church, Christ's Body, Christ's broken body, Christ's powerful body. Silently pray for the church, for the Body of Christ (silence) In your mercy

All: Lord Hear our Prayer

One: Turn toward the front. We thank our Creator (arms raised). We ask the help of our Redeemer (arms out). And we pray that our Sustainer with fills us with all that we need to be God's people in this world (bring arms into an embrace) (3 hand motions again as you say the following) Thank you, help us, fill us.

One: Turn to center. Gracious God, we end our prayer where we began. Christ is at the center. And we pray all these things with voices joined together in the unity Christ gives us, in the words Christ taught us and in the language of our hearts. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.... (the Lord's Prayer) Amen.