

THE CALL TO WORSHIP:

"One thing have I desired of the Lord,
that will I seek after;
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord
all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the Lord,
and to enquire in his temple."

THE PASTORAL PRAYER:

Almighty God, who hast brought us to this year,
we thank Thee for all we have seen and experienced of
Thy grace every day. We thank Thee for quiet hours
when in solitude we have gained insight into life's
meaning and Thy purpose for us;
for unquiet hours when in a troubled spirit we have
learned where the source of creative peace may be found;
for the times when anxiety or fear or discouragement
drove us to Thee and we found renewed courage and
faith and hope in thy blessing;
for dear ones who trusted us, and believed in us even
when we failed to meet their expectations;
and for those who criticized us and whose criticism
aught us to face ourselves and to take the help Thou
dost provide to do better through the strength which
Thou dost give.

O Lord of unchanging wisdom, goodness, love, and
mercy, we bring Thee all who must serve in patient waiting
in suffering or sorrow; all who face the coming months
with dread--especially those whose fears are unrelieved
by the knowledge of Thy providential care; all whose
marriage may be in jeopardy; all who find temptation
for narcotics, alcohol, gambling, and profane living
too strong for their weakness; and we pray for all who
are strong, that they might not be overconfident of
themselves and that they may make responsible use of their
powers. Come close in tenderness and sustaining power
to those who have recently laid their dead away,
that they may know that in Thee love can never lose
its own. We remember in Thy presence all who are
far from home and friends, especially those Christian
missionaries who are serving Thy cause in distant,
isolated, and unfriendly places. We pray for all who
are serving in the armed forces of the nation, risking
their lives for the cause of freedom, democracy, & justice.

Keep us from trying to find in our religion an escape from life's problems, but may our faith confer upon us the strength and courage to face life ~~squarely~~ squarely and victoriously, through Jesus Christ, who taught his disciples to pray together saying:

"Our Father which art in heaven....
