

A Prayer for International Women's Day, March 8, 2018

God of Eve and Mary, we thank you for women.

God of Deborah and Lydia, Abigail and Priscilla, into our lives and the world you have brought creative and skilled women, wise and innovative women, strong and nurturing women, we rejoice in their impact in our lives. We thank you for women who lead companies and countries, for women who build emotional communities of care and create physical communities of streets and houses and buildings, for women who proclaim your word through preaching and administering the sacraments.

God of Shiphrah and Puah, by your creative hand, women give birth to the next generation. We thank you for the mystery and wonder of child-bearing through which women offer life and blessing to the new generation. In many parts of the world, child-birth is still risky, we pray for supports, both physical and emotional, for women during pregnancy.

God of the widow of Zarephath, women are disproportionately among the poor, often anonymous and not acknowledged. We pray for women who struggle to feed their families, who skip meals so their children can have enough. We pray for women who are underpaid and overworked. Bring change so that all may have enough, and each woman's work, each person's work, can be recognized and respected.

God of Tamar and the Levite's concubine, women are raped and murdered, sexually harassed and experience gender and spousal violence. We pray for the end of violence against women – act we pray to protect women. Act in the lives of men that they would hold each other and themselves to account, so that women can live without fear. We pray for healing of body and spirit for women who have been harmed. We pray for comfort and hope, for those who grieve the killing of a mother, sister, daughter, niece, relative, friend. We thank you for agencies and places that provide shelter and safety.

God of the woman who reached out to Jesus for healing, show mercy to, pay attention to, those women, who feeling nameless and ignored, who waiting for healing in body and relationship, reach out to your Son for help and hope.

God of Eunice and Lois, we rejoice in the ways you have nurtured our spiritual lives through the work and ministry of women, who have mentored us, challenged us, and called us to follow you.

God of Hagar, she named you "the God who sees", you see all women and hold them in the palm of your hand.

These things we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who welcomed women to be his followers. Amen.

Peter Bush, Moderator
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