**Prayer Service: Pilgrims of Hope**

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*(For Staff at the Beginning of the School Year)*

**Leader:**
As we begin this new school year, we gather as a community of colleagues, friends, and fellow pilgrims.
This year, we celebrate the **Jubilee Year of Hope**, and we pray for the gift of hope in our lives, in our schools, and in our world.

Let us listen to a short poem that captures the enduring presence of hope within each of us.

**Poem: “Hope is the thing with feathers”**

**By Emily Dickinson**

*Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all,*

*And sweetest in the Gale is heard
And sore must be the storm,
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm.*

*I’ve heard it in the chillest land,
And on the strangest Sea;
Yet, never,in Extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.*

**Prayers of Intercession**



**Reader 1:**
We pray for the gift of hope in our own hearts—that no matter the storms of life, we may hear the quiet song of hope that steadies us and leads us on.
**Lord hear us.** *(Lord graciously hear us.)*

**Reader 2:**
We pray for our students, that they may never lose sight of hope in times of difficulty, and that our schools may be places where hope is nurtured and encouraged.
**Lord hear us.** *(Lord graciously hear us.)*

**Reader 3:**
We pray for one another as staff—that we may support each other with kindness, patience, and generosity, and that our hope may inspire us to persevere.
**Lord hear us.** *(Lord graciously hear us.)*

**Reader 4:**
We pray for our world, especially where conflict, fear, or despair threaten to overwhelm. May hope lead people toward peace, reconciliation, and healing.
**Lord hear us.** *(Lord graciously hear us.)*

**Leader:**
Pope Francis reminds us:
*“Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of hope. Hope is bold; it knows how to look beyond personal convenience, beyond the small securities and compensations that shrink the horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile.”*

And so we pray together:

**All:**
God of Hope,
bless us as we begin this new school year.
May your Spirit guide our work,
strengthen our faith,
and renew our joy in teaching and learning.

Help us to be people of hope—
to inspire it in our students,
to encourage it in one another,
and to live it in our school community.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Mary, Mother of Hope – pray for us.**
**Saint Joseph, Protector – pray for us.**
**Saint Brigid and Saint Patrick – pray for us.**

Hilda Campbell- Kandle resources