**PRAYER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN-2019**

For children—made in the image and likeness of God,

For time to play and to learn

To discover and develop the gifts they have been given,

To be the best they can be—

To build a world of love and of justice—we pray:

For victims who bear the scars of betrayal and sexual abuse-

For their parents whose broken hearts ache at the loss of innocence never to be regained,

For courage to roll away the stone and come out from the tomb of despair,

With hope that all things are possible with God--for the gift of healing, we pray:

For the intentions that were placed in our Hope Box at the Service of Lament,

For all who surrendered their fears and their pain to God on that day,

For victims who continue to come forward-

For assurance that their voices are heard, and their stories ever will be honored,

For those who do the long and painful work of accompaniment—we pray:

For those who never turned away from speaking what is true and demanding what is right—

For those who continue to ask for transparency from every diocese, every religious order and every bishop—

With gratitude for those, who in conscience, cannot remain silent—we pray:

For Kathleen Chastain, Carrie Cooper, Sherry Huffman and Jenifer Valenti-

For Bishop James Johnston—

For abiding strength and faith –and continued openness to God’s Spirit-

For diminishment of all fear in pursuit of the work that must be done

To heal the wounds of a faithful people and restore trust in our diocese-we pray:

For safe environment coordinators—

For teachers and principals—

For parents and grandparents and all who protect our children-we pray:

For the perpetrators of sexual abuse—

For those who protected them, and inexplicably, continue to protect them—

For the people of God who bear the wounds that they inflicted—

For grace to forgive, but never forget, the sins that robbed us of security and peace-we pray:

For the Church, wounded in body and soul by the sin of abuse-

For Bishops in our country and throughout the world who are called to be voices of moral authority—

For contrition and repentance in the face of their failures—

For renewed grace to seek and to accept what is true,

And to pursue what is right and just—we pray: