



LITURGICAL RESOURCES FOR ELECTION SEASON

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING, EDITOR

About the editor: Rev. Stephen M. Fearing is pastor and head of staff of Guilford Park Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) in Greensboro, North Carolina and co-founder of the Clergy Emergency League, a grassroots network of clergy supporting one another and their congregations to resist white Christian nationalism. Currently, he is a doctoral candidate at New Brunswick Theological Seminary where his thesis is exploring collaborative congregational song as an under-utilized tool for preaching social justice while maintaining the unity of the church. In addition to his work and study, he is an aspiring hymnwriter and his hymns can be found at his website at www.stephenmfearing.com. He is married to Tricia, a child play therapist, and shares responsibility with her as chaos coordinators to their two young children, Hazel Grace and Windsor (Winnie).

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INTRODUCTION

As we navigate the complexities of the 2024 U.S. Election Season, it is crucial for clergy to have resources that encourage congregational unity, foster hope, and promote justice. This guide is thoughtfully curated to support you in leading worship that is both spiritually enriching and socially conscious.

Originally published in 2020 by the Clergy Emergency League, a grassroots network committed to resisting white Christian nationalism, this resource has been updated and expanded to address the unique challenges of the current election cycle. Edited by Rev. Stephen M. Fearing, a pastor, hymnwriter, and doctoral candidate researching collaborative congregational song as a tool for preaching social justice, this guide offers a wide array of liturgical elements designed to inspire and unify your congregation.

In these pages, you will find candle lighting liturgies, opening prayers, calls to worship, confessions, prayers for illumination, affirmations of faith, prayers of the people, charges, and benedictions. Each entry is crafted to speak to the heart of the election season's anxieties and hopes, encouraging a spirit of compassion, resilience, and faithfulness within your community.

We invite you to adapt these resources to fit your unique congregational context, ensuring that worship during this election season is a source of solace, strength, and inspiration. May this guide serve as a beacon of light, reminding us all that goodness, love, and justice will prevail.

For additional information and support, please visit www.ClergyEmergencyLeague.com or contact us at ClergyEmergencyLeague@gmail.com. We offer these resources with full permission for use and adaptation in congregational worship, provided appropriate credit is given to the authors.

May your worship be blessed, and may your leadership continue to shine brightly in these challenging times.

CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGIES

A

REV. MARIE DUQUETTE

KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Note: *This liturgy emphasizes hope during the election season through the act of lighting a candle, symbolizing the light that darkness cannot overcome. Inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's words, it reminds us that goodness, love, and life prevail over evil, hate, and death, encouraging unity and compassion within our communities.*

We light this candle remembering the Light that shines in the darkness has not, is not, and will not be overcome. As the glow from this candle illuminates our space, we reflect on the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu: “Goodness is stronger than evil; love is stronger than hate; light is stronger than darkness; life is stronger than death.”

B

REV. BEN FITZGERALD-FYE

SCIPIOVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SCIPIO CENTER, NEW YORK

Note: *This liturgy invites clergy and congregants to light candles as a symbol of hope and solidarity during the election season, acknowledging grief, injustice, and the struggles of marginalized communities. Each candle represents a commitment to justice, love, and the unwavering belief that we are called to shine light in the darkness, challenging us to embody mercy and truth in our actions.*

Holy One, in a time of shadows, we gather to seek the light.

In a time of sorrows, we gather to claim the light.

We light this candle with holy hope.

We light this candle to acknowledge the grief of those who lost loved ones to violence and to illness, to injustice and to inaction, to brutality and to lies.

We light this candle for the dead and the grieving.

We light this candle to shine light on the oppressed and the marginalized, for the forgotten and the dismissed, for the poor and the powerless.

We light this candle for the least of these.

We light this candle for black and brown siblings living under the weight of systemic, institutional racism in the self-described “land of the free.”

We light this candle because black lives matter.

We light this candle for children made orphans by state-sanctioned cruelty,
for young ones kept in cages, for people fleeing violence only to find violence.
We light this candle for humanity unrecognized.

We light this candle to see injustices, to see them and commit ourselves to their dismantling.
We light this candle for justice and equity.

We light this candle for rainbow siblings, for L and G and B and T and Q and I and A and beyond
who live in fear of lost rights, harmed bodies, and unholy rejection.
We light this candle because love is love and labels destroy.

We light this candle to embolden our faith that we may speak truth to power
and cry out against the idolatries of wealth, power, and weaponized religion.
We light this candle for the soul of our nation.

We light this candle because we believe in the light that cannot be overcome,
in the light that shines justice, in the light of peace,
in the light of truth, in the light of a whole-hearted faith.
We light this candle because we are called to be of the light.

Holy One, see this light and brighten it, see this light and know our struggles,
see this light and know our faith.
Let this be for us a liberating light, a loving light, a light to guide our feet toward mercy,
toward justice, and toward a steadfast love. **Amen.**

OPENING PRAYERS

A

REV. BETH M. WOODARD
ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This opening prayer serves as a reflection for clergy and congregants during the election season, inviting God's presence as we await electoral outcomes. It encourages us to find peace amid anxiety and to embrace a spirit of love and justice for all, seeking healing and wholeness in our communities.*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Most holy God, almighty King:

You love justice and bring equity to the Earth.

Ps. 99:4

On this [day/evening/night], as we await electoral information and results,
may our hearts, our minds, our spirits, and our bodies abide in your unfailing presence.

Still our anxieties, O God, and point us toward the way of love
for all with whom we live and walk, work and play, tend and love.

Pour out your healing and wholeness upon us all, in the name of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

B

REV. MARIE DUQUETTE
KING OF KINGS LUTHERAN CHURCH
ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

Note: *This opening prayer offers a heartfelt prayer for protection and guidance during the election season, acknowledging the feelings of despair and isolation that may arise. It calls upon God's love to envelop us, reminding us of the courageous work of the saints who champion truth and compassion in the face of hatred and corruption.*

Wrap us in your love, good Lord, on this night when the chill of separation, the ache of isolation, and the tension of tears left un-cried, threaten us with a sense of despair.

Remind us of the actions of all your saints who do the dangerous, holy work
to overcome hatred and corruption, and who insist upon leading with truth, compassion,
and the wisdom of those whose life's work centers on serving all of your beloved.

Protect your servants this night and surround them with your light. **Amen.**

C

MARY SANDERS
UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Note: *This opening prayer invites clergy and congregants to come together in worship, whether in person or virtually, while holding those unable to join in our prayers. It emphasizes the importance of preparing our hearts and minds to encounter the divine, clearing away distractions to create space for God's presence. Through this prayer, we seek openness to God's word, service, and love, fostering a community that recognizes and praises the divine in all.*

Merciful God, we thank you for gathering us, virtually and in person.
Be with those who could not join us today. Hold all in your care.
Help us to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.
Clear out the worries, troubles, and idols of this world so there is only room for you.
Open our ears and minds so we may hear your word and know the truth you offer.
Open our hands and arms so we may offer ourselves and our gifts in service to you and others.
Open our eyes so that we may recognize you in those we see.
Open our mouths so we may sing your praise and speak of your love.
Open our hearts so you may dwell in us always.
We ask all these things in your Son's name.
Amen.

D

MARY SANDERS
UNITED LUTHERAN SEMINARY

Note: *This opening prayer invites God to guide us in embodying love, truth, and reconciliation during the election season, urging us to confront our biases and seek justice. We ask for divine strength to create harmonious communities free from poverty and oppression, fostering unity and peace among all.*

God, Lord of all,
You command us to love our enemies,
to love our neighbor as ourselves and to seek peace with our siblings.
Lead us from prejudice and fear to truth.
Save us from our own cruelty, hatred and spite
and help us to seek reconciliation with one another and with you.
Guide our elected officials to seek and promote justice for all,
to serve in humility and truth, and to pursue wisdom and understanding.
Give us purpose and strength to end poverty, prejudice and oppression,
to create healthy and whole communities and to live in harmony with one another.
Grant us the willingness to love you with our whole heart, mind, and strength.
Bless us with a sense of your presence, so that we may have peace. **Amen.**

Note: *This opening prayer acknowledges God's eternal presence as the Alpha and Omega, celebrating the abundance of love and beauty that surrounds us. It invites us to trust in God's wisdom and to unite in envisioning a world of peace, justice, and healing, affirming that through divine presence, all will be well.*

Oh Wise One,
You stand at the beginning and at the end of time, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.
From the first Creation of life on this planet
the Abundance of Your love and blessing has poured forth
and is visible still through the beauty and the gifts around us,
from the vastness of the stars and all the myriad pieces moving in the heavens above
to the warm touch of loved ones and the eager hug of a child.
We know we are but puny flecks of dust in comparison,
for we know the barest fraction of the grand scheme of it all.
We glimpse only the smallest portion in the vast expanse of time.
And so, Wise One, we celebrate that even though we see and know only in part,
Your wisdom sees and knows in full.
We celebrate that while our vision is inadequate,
You bless our best intentions to join in the wideness of Love's possibility.
We celebrate each other as we join with all of the wider global family
to envision peace with justice, unity of spirit, and the healing that brings wholeness.
Be present in us, with us, and move through us.
We trust that when Your people lean into Your abiding presence, all is well and all will be well.
We praise Your name.
And all the people say,
Amen.

F

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This opening prayer seeks God's guidance and mercy as we gather during uncertain times marked by discord and disruption. It calls us to embody neighborly love for all marginalized communities while fervently pursuing justice, inviting divine wisdom and hope in our efforts to protect democracy and serve the oppressed.*

God of Justice, we gather this [evening/day/morning] in uncertain times -
times of discord, dissonance, disruption, and disorientation.
And in the midst of such trials, you call us to be neighborly to one another -
to our black, brown, indigenous neighbors,
to our LGBTQIA+ neighbors,
to our undocumented neighbors,
to our unemployed neighbors,
to our addicted neighbors,
to our neighbors without health insurance,
and all other neighbors around us who are oppressed.

Phil. 2:4

We gather in prayer this [evening/day/morning] to petition you in your mercy,
to guide our footsteps to ferociously and faithfully pursue your call to justice.
As we await the results of the elections, may peace prevail by all people in this nation
and may our democracy be protected so that we may be free to protect the least of these among us.
Giver of Every Mercy,
give us a double portion of your Spirit this [evening/day/morning]
that we might be guided by Her wisdom and held in Her hope.
This we pray in the name of your Beloved Child, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

G

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *This opening prayer implores Holy God for peace and unity in our land, emphasizing the importance of our worship space as a refuge for those seeking love and acceptance. It calls us to recognize our shared humanity, fostering a community where all are treated as beloved neighbors and live together in safety and sufficiency.*

Holy God, we pray for peace in our land.
May our sanctuary (or virtual worship space) be a shelter for those who need love and acceptance.
The refugee and the stranger among us will be called beloved neighbor and honored guest,
for we are all one family.

Unite us in love, love of God and love of one another,
so that no one is in need or overindulged but that all live together in sufficiency and safety.
In Jesus name we pray. **Amen.**

H

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This opening prayer seeks the presence of the Great Healer, asking for grace and peace amidst the noise and chaos of election season. It invites us to find solace in the Good News of Jesus Christ, who steps into our divides and holds us in our fears and hopes.*

Great Healer of Every Divide,
we are gathered in uncertain times to be held by a certain grace,
a grace that covers us like the dew of Mount Hermon. *Ps. 133*
As we gather in the closing weeks of yet another hectic election season,
may we - even for a moment - tune out the noise and nuisance, the din and doomscrolling,
to hear the Good News of your Son, Jesus Christ, who willingly stepped into the divide.
Hold us in our fear,
hold us in our curiosity,
and hold us in our hope for the day when it will no longer be neighbor versus neighbor,
but neighbor *with* neighbor. **Amen.**

I

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer is designed to center our hearts and minds during the turbulent times of election season. It seeks God's grace to help us rise above the noise and division, focusing instead on the teachings of Christ and the call to love our neighbors.*

Gracious and Merciful God,
may we rest this day in the words of the late John Lewis who once said:
“Nonviolence is one of those immutable principles
that we cannot and must not deviate from.”¹
We, your people, are weary from a world wrestling with division, anger, and animosity.
Help us to rest, as Jesus commands us, *Mark 6:29-31*
that we may be repairers of the breach, and not deepeners of the divide. **Amen.**

¹ <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/1573354>

J

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
 GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer calls us to emulate the example of Lydia, who thrived in a diverse environment, and Jesus Christ, who bridged divides through healing, teaching, feeding, and loving. It acknowledges the temptation to see our differences as irreconcilable but challenges us to pursue reconciliation with the same determination as Christ.*

Gracious God, as did your servant Lydia, *Acts 16:11-15*
 we too live in places of many viewpoints, beliefs, and backgrounds.
 It's all too tempting to throw in the towel and declare those chasms irreconcilable.
 But your son Jesus Christ refused to treat reconciliation as a pipe dream.
 Instead, he stepped into the divide and healed, taught, fed, and loved.
 Gather us this day that we might come together with the same goal:
 to heal a weary world, to teach the message of grace and love that you've taught us,
 to feed others as you have fed us manna from heaven,
 and to love others as you first loved us. **Amen.**

K

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
 GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *On the Sunday after the election, your congregation will likely find itself in a complex emotional landscape. The results will have evoked a spectrum of feelings—gratitude and fear, hope and exhaustion—reflecting the diverse perspectives within your community. In the wake of a tumultuous election season marked by division and discord, we have engaged in difficult conversations and practiced the sacred art of listening. This prayer invites us to bring our full selves—our fears, longings, and weariness—before our Gracious and Merciful God. It calls us to seek gentleness, both in our interactions with one another and in the way we hold our own emotions.*

Gracious and Merciful God, the election is over;
 some of us are grateful for the results, and others fear them.
 There has been much name-calling, animosity, attack ads, and divisions of many kinds.
 We've had uncomfortable conversations, practiced the holy art of listening,
 and perhaps learned a thing or two about our neighbor with whom we differ.
 To this space we bring our fear, our longing, our hope, our exhaustion,
 and a plethora of other emotions that leave us so very tired and weary.
 Hold us, God. Be gentle with us as seek to be gentle with one another.
 Be with us in this time of worship, that we may heal and be healed.
 May the songs we sing and the scriptures we read and the prayers we pray
 be an offering to you, pleasing in your sight. **Amen.**

CALLS TO WORSHIP

A

REV. DR. ROCHELLE A. STACKHOUSE
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *This call to worship invites the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts and spaces with transformative presence, dispelling fear, hate, and anger. It encourages us to listen deeply—to God, one another, and the earth—creating a sanctuary of warmth and understanding as we gather in this sacred time.*

Come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come with wind to blow away fear, hate, and anger.
Come with flames to warm those who are cold and sad.
Come with enough noise to drown out shouts and lies.
Come with whispers to force us to be quiet and listen:
to you, to each other, to the earth.
Come, Holy Spirit, come.

B

REV. DR. BEVERLY DALE
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *This call to worship invites us to gather in the spirit of Love, reminding us of our sacred duty to uplift one another and work towards a more just and compassionate world. As we seek courage, wisdom, and joy, we affirm that together we can reflect the Divine, embracing our call to be justice seekers, peacemakers, and caretakers of creation.*

We gather to remind ourselves that Love calls us to our crucial work at hand:
to save the children and save the planet, save one another,
friends and strangers and even our enemies.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We gather to remind ourselves that Love calls us to see a wider vision that embraces everyone:
a vision of health and well-being, of goodness and kindness, of peace with justice.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We gather to remind ourselves that together we are stronger,
that all God's children are created to connect, to care,
and to compassionately assist and defend one another.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We gather to remind ourselves that this is who we are:
justice seekers, peacemakers, spirit comforters, truth defenders, earth lovers.

And we remember this is how we are called to be reflections of the Divine.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We gather to remind ourselves that the work of binding ourselves together in unity and love is difficult.
The challenges of creating a more just world are tiring and sometimes grueling.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We gather to remind ourselves that all is well and all will be well for God will not be mocked.
The power of Love is greater than our deepest fear,
stronger than our deepest sorrow, and wider than our wildest expectations.
The one whose eye is on the sparrow is also watching out for each one of us.
And so we say, **give us courage. Give us wisdom. But especially give us joy.**

We are called to this moment - in this hour and in this time and place.
We say “yes” to this life to which we are called
and will not fear the Spirit’s “yes” that is inside of us.
We do not know the future but we know who holds it.
And this assurance gives us joy.
Let us rejoice in this knowing.
Love is here, in our midst.
We are not alone. **Amen.**

C

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This call to worship invites everyone to come as they are, encouraging us to lay our burdens before the Lord and embrace the transformative power of scripture. As we gather in community, we are reminded of God's promises and the call to pursue justice, kindness, and humility in our shared journey of faith.*

Come, however you are, and lay your burdens on the Lord -

burdens of fear and anger, of anxiety and uncertainty.

Come, however you are, and turn your heart to scripture’s mandate:

to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.

Micah 6:8

Come, however you are, and remember the promises of God’s word:

that we shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

Ps. 27:13

Come, however you are, no matter who you are, and no matter where you are,
and let us gather to lean on the everlasting arms of Christ Jesus.

D

REV. LUCY YOUNGBLOOD

Note: *This call to worship invites all who are weary and burdened to bring their struggles and emotions into the light, finding solace in Christ and community. As we gather together, we are encouraged to lay down our heavy loads and discover the rest and renewal that comes from worshiping God as one body of faith.*

Jesus said,

"Come, all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

Matt. 11:28

Come, all who carry grief and loss.

Come, all who carry loneliness and fear.

Come, all who carry grief and anger.

Come, all who have had it up to here.

Open our arms! Open our hands and do not hide what weighs us down.

In this time, lay our burdens down before Christ and the Community of Faith.

Come all together and find rest for our souls.

Let us worship God.

E

REV. MAXWELL MUSKA

ASSOCIATE PASTOR, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SHELBYVILLE, INDIANA

Note: *In this pivotal moment for our country, we gather to worship the God who calls us to unity amidst division, recognizing the profound impact of our collective choices. As we reflect on our responsibilities as followers of Jesus, may our worship inspire us to actively seek justice, peace, and equity for all, transforming our voting into a continuous commitment to engage with the world around us.*

At a moment in our country's history when we seem more divided than ever:

We gather to worship the God who unites us all.

As the nation votes for leaders and issues at the national, state, and local levels
and awaits the election results,

knowing that millions of lives will be affected by the outcome,

we remember what we are called to do and be as followers of Jesus:

To do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God

Micah 6:8

**and one another, to seek welfare, peace, justice, and equity for the poor,
the oppressed, and the marginalized, to be a neighbor to all.**

May we gather our voices together in word and song.

May we unite our hearts to praise the One who makes all things new:

Revelation 21:5

**And may our voting be the beginning and not the end of our engagement
with the systems of power in our world,
joining with God in the work of creation and re-creation.**

F

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *We begin by acknowledging both the beauty and challenge of living in unity, as highlighted in Psalm 133. This call reminds us of the blessings that come when we choose to listen, practice love, and strive for unity, even when it feels difficult or impossible.*

How very good and pleasant it is... *Ps. 133*

**when we live together in unity,
when we gather to break bread as neighbors,
when we choose to listen to one another,
when we practice love - publicly and without fear.**

How very hard and frustrating it is...

**when all those aspirations seem like a pipe dream,
when we've endured so many years of deepening divisions,
when we've seen families, friends, and churches torn apart,
when we've been pitted against our neighbor.**

How scary and fearful it is...

**when we don't know what to expect,
when we're not sure if breaches can be repaired,
when we struggle between advocacy and self-care,
when we wonder if it's all gone too far to be restored.**

How unbelievable and gracious it is...

**that despite all this, God ordains a blessing for us,
and dares to dispel upon us life forevermore!**

How very good and pleasant it is...

**that the oil running down Aaron's robes, spilling over his collar,
would spill into our lives, healing wounds that run so deep.**

Come, neighbors, for now is the time to worship.

G

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *We are reminded of the courageous stand taken by Shiprah and Puah, who bravely defied Pharaoh's murderous command with a resounding "no." Similarly, in times of violence and turmoil, Jesus instructed his followers to reject the cycle of violence. This Call to Worship invites us to recognize the many forms of violence that permeate our world. It challenges us to resist the urge to contribute to this woundedness and instead stand firm in justice without resorting to violence.*

When Shiprah and Puah were instructed to obey the murderous command of Pharaoh,
they said "no."

Exo. 1:15-22

When Jesus' followers were tempted to respond to violence with violence,
Jesus said "no."

Mark 6:29-31

There are many forms of violence - physical, emotional, spiritual -
and when we, too, feel the need to add to the woundedness of the world,
we can say "no."

We can take a stand for justice and advocate tirelessly for our neighbor
without resorting to violence.

And so, today, may the people of God gather in the presence of the Prince of Peace,
as we say "no" to violence and "yes" to God's everlasting shalom.

H

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer invites us to reflect on the power of the word "if," which can remind us of both the potential harm of our actions and the empowering possibility of making choices that build each other up. Drawing on Isaiah 58:6-12, it calls us to remove injustice, feed the hungry, and care for the afflicted, so that our light may shine in the darkness.*

"If" can be a scary word, reminding us that our actions can cause harm:

"If you hit your sister, then she will feel pain."

"If you say that mean thing, then he will feel worthless."

"If you tell that lie over and over again, then people might begin to believe it."

"If" can also be an empowering word,
reminding us that we have the capability to make better choices,
ones that build each other up:

**"If you remove the yoke from among you,
the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,
if you offer your food to the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,
then your light shall rise in the darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday."**

Isa. 58:6-12

Come, Repairers of the Breach, and let us be gathered before our Loving God,
who shows us in Jesus Christ that love is always the best choice.

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
 GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *As we gather in worship this Sunday after the presidential election, we are reminded of the enduring truth found in Psalm 146:3-7. In a time marked by political tension and uncertainty, our hearts may be tempted to place trust in human leaders and their promises. Yet, the psalmist calls us back to the foundation of our faith—the steadfastness of God, who alone offers true hope and justice.*

“Do not put your trust in princes,
 in mortals, in whom there is no help.
 When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
 on that very day their plans perish.”

Psa. 146:3-7

**Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
 whose hope is in the Lord their God,
 who made heaven and earth,
 the sea, and all that is in them;
 who keeps faith forever;
 who executes justice for the oppressed;
 who gives food to the hungry.”**

Come, People of God, and be gathered in the good news that nothing –
 no election, no victory, no loss, no change in power –
 can ever change the source of our hope and our trust as Christians.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

A

REV. KRYSTAL LEEDY

PASTORAL FELLOW

TEXAS INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Note: *In this season of reflection and decision, we come before Almighty God to confess our tendency to prioritize issues over the dignity of individuals, recognizing the ways we have lost our humanity. As we seek forgiveness and renewal, may we remember our interconnectedness and the call to embody love and empathy in our community.*

Almighty God,

we confess that we have been looking at issues over people.

We have lost the humanity of others and lost our own humanity in the process.

We have looked inward with self-preservation rather than outward with empathy.

As you have taught, we are nothing without each other.

As we stumble to see others as brothers and sisters, fill us with the catalyst of loneliness, that we might remember that we are a community bound in love for you and for each other.

(Kyrie Eleison- in song or repeat thrice kyrie eleison, meaning Lord, have mercy)

Assurance:

People of God, remember that you are one body of people, bound together in love.

When one suffers, we all suffer.

May we look beyond the masks to the spark of life in people's eyes.

As you are resilient, realize that your fellow humans are also resilient. Tell them so.

People of God, you are forgiven, go and sin no more.

B

REV. MAXWELL MUSKA

ASSOCIATE PASTOR, FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

SHELBYVILLE, INDIANA

Note: *As we gather amidst the challenges and divisions of our times, we are reminded that it is all too easy to lose hope in the face of overwhelming struggles. Together, let us turn our hearts to God, confessing the ways we may harm ourselves and others, and seeking renewed strength and faith in the One who is our light and salvation.*

Call to Confession

It's easy to lose hope,

especially when the problems and divisions we face seem insurmountable in our personal lives, the church, our country, and our world.

But the psalmist reminds us that our hope is in the Lord.

Let us together confess the ways that we harm each other and ourselves when we lose sight of the source of our faith and hope.

Prayer of Confession

O God our light and salvation, *Ps. 27*
our strong fortress and hiding place, we confess our lack of hope and trust in you.
We can feel so small in the midst of our struggles,
that our work is insignificant when the problems we face loom so large over us.
As a result, we can become complacent and slow to act for the benefit of those on the margins.
Help us to look to you as our source of hope.
Help us to act out our faith and represent your hope and truth
in our communities and throughout your world.
Help us to be active participants and partners with you
in bringing your kingdom (*or kin-dom*) on earth as it is in heaven.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who shows us the way, Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness/Pardon

May we have sure faith that we will experience the Lord's goodness in the land of the living. *Ps. 27*
Hope in the Lord! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the Lord!
Know that we are forgiven and be at peace! **Amen.**

C

REV. MELODIE LONG
WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *As we gather in this sacred space, we are invited to come before God, who hears our cries and offers healing and renewal, even amid our failures and stumbles. Together, let us confess our shortcomings and seek God's guidance in reflecting love and justice in our lives, especially as we engage in the electoral process.*

Call to Confession

Come, come to the place where God hears, where God heals, where God makes all things new.
Though we stumble, though we fail, God is faithful and believes in what can be. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Holy One, you created us in your image,
people meant to be reflections of your love, your grace, and your justice.
More often, though, we put our own selfish desires above you,
our ambitions above your beloved community,
our greed above the needs of others,
our justice above your compassion,
our fear above your grace.
The realization of all that we have done and left undone is heavy indeed
for we have damaged the world you have entrusted to us.

**As we participate in this election process and in the life of this nation,
remind us who we are to be as your people.
Free us from ourselves, and show us how to live.
Hear now the silent prayers of our hearts..... Amen.**

Assurance

Believe the good news!

God loves us and accepts us who we are and where we are – and God believes in who we can become.
Know that grace takes us and wraps us in the gift of new beginnings. **Thanks be to God!**

D

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

***Note:** As we open our hearts to God's grace, we recognize the ways our actions and attitudes have strained our relationships with one another and with the Divine. Together, let us confess our failures to embody the fruits of the Spirit, seeking forgiveness and renewal as we strive to heal our broken nation.*

Call to Confession

With hearts broken open to receive the grace of God,
let us confess the ways our sin has hurt our relationships with each other and with God.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious and Merciful God, you call us to bear fruits of the Spirit: *Gal. 5:22-26*
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
We've spent much time these past few years wondering if these things still matter.
We confess that we've been quick to ask these fruits of others
but have not cultivated them for ourselves.
Forgive our shortcomings and help us reflect the fruits that will heal this broken nation.
Help us to live by the Spirit and be guided by Her wisdom.
This we pray in the holy name of your Beloved, Christ Jesus. Amen.

Assurance

Hope in the Lord! Be strong! Let your heart take courage! Hope in the Lord!
God's mercies are from everlasting to everlasting.
I declare in the strong name of Jesus, our sins are forgiven. **Alleluia! Amen.**

Ps. 27:14
Ps. 103:1

E

REV. MELODIE LONG
WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *As we gather in this uncertain season, we hear God's call inviting us to return home, to embrace life, and to unite as a community. Let us take a moment to confess our fears and the ways we have been swayed by the tumult of the world, seeking God's grace to renew our hope and courage.*

Call to Confession

Did you hear? God's voice is calling us –
calling us to come home, calling us to dare to live, calling us together in community.
Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Holy One, it is frightening right now.
The voices of the world are loud and angry,
filling us with a deep fear and despair that this is all that can be.
We are told we must win at all costs,
even when the price involves the sacrifice of the most vulnerable among us.
We are told that we are superior to others,
even though our faith tells us that we are all your creation.
When we speak up in defense of our faith, we are even told that our faith is wrong.
We find it tempting to give in to the chaotic demands, for we are so very weary of it all.
Breathe into us your grace that gives us hope and courage for the living of these days.
Hear our prayers..... Amen.

Assurance

Take a deep breath.
Let God's sacred spirit fill your heart, your soul, your mind.
Breathe in the grace of new life.
Be at peace.

F

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In our confession, we admit our shortcomings in loving God fully and sincerely, particularly in the context of politics and societal divisions. We seek forgiveness for partial hearts, souls, and minds that have strayed from God's command to love.*

Trusting in the everlasting mercy of God, let us gather to confess our sins:

Gracious and merciful God,

Matt. 22:34-40

**you teach us that the greatest commandment is to love you
with all our heart, all our soul, and with all our mind.**

Forgive us when we've given you partial hearts,

**choosing to care only for that which affects us personally,
turning our attention from those who are crying for justice,
and loving power over everything else.**

Forgive us when we've given you partial souls,

**giving our highest allegiance to any politician,
making idols out of any nation, flag, or party,
and sacrificing the wellbeing of our neighbor for money, power, or privilege.**

Forgive us when we've given you partial minds,

**allowing the rhetoric of election season to harden our hearts,
casting aside truth when it doesn't serve our ambitions,
and refusing to look at things from another person's perspective.**

Hear our confession, O God, and receive it with your abundant compassion. Amen.

[water may be poured into the font if it is your practice to do so]

Neighbors, hear the Good News of the Gospel:

Rom. 8:38-39

division is nothing new to the Church, and it has yet to separate us from God's love.

Nothing can do that, not height, not depth, nor things present, nor things to come,
nor even the rage and rancor of another election season can do that.

Friends, I announce to each of us, through the mercy of the Resurrected Christ,
our sins are forgiven! **Alleluia. Amen!**

G

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING

GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer of confession draws inspiration from Victor Frankl's powerful words on the space between stimulus and response, where our power to choose resides.² It calls us to reflect on the times we have failed to occupy that space responsibly, leading to actions that harm rather than heal.*

Call to Confession:

Victor Frankl once said the following: "*Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.*"³ Let us confess before God and one another the times when we have chosen to ignore our responsibility to inhabit that space between stimulus and response so that our actions do no harm. Let us pray...

Prayer of Confession:

² <https://brenebrown.com/articles/2022/05/09/creating-space/>

³ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/viktor_e_frankl_160380

Gracious God,
when we're tempted to lash out and add to the woundedness of the world,
there is so much that we can do:
**we can water a plant, do a guided meditation, go on a walk with a friend;
we can volunteer at a non-profit, donate to a cause that resonates with our faith;
we can see a therapist, practice playfulness, mindfulness, and rest;
we can read scripture, listen to music, recite a poem, or spend time with our family.**

Forgive us when we tell ourselves the lie
that we're incapable of choosing nonviolence.

**May we learn from the courage of Shiprah and Puah,
and know that standing up to bullies is sacred, dangerous work.
May we practice the wisdom of Jesus to know that caring for ourselves
is one of the ways we care for our neighbor.**

Exo. 1

It's so very hard, Prince of Peace. We need your help.
We need your forgiveness. We need your strength. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

[water may be poured into the font if it is your practice to do so]

Friends, scripture tells us that when Shiprah and Puah turned from violence and refused the orders of Pharaoh, "God dealt well with them." So, too, does God "deal well" with us when we acknowledge our faults and seek a better way. And so, hear the Good News of the Gospel: through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. **Alleluia! Amen.**

H

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *Desmond Tutu once said the following: "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."⁴ This confession reminds us that avoiding hard conversations for the sake of "keeping the peace" is a form of privilege that must be confessed and abandoned if we are truly to be repairers of the breach.*

**Gracious and Merciful God,
forgive us for the moments when we've mistaken neutrality for peace:
for times we've stayed silent when we should have spoken out,
as well as for the times we spoke out when we should have listened.
Forgive us for the moments when we've chosen apathy amid the mess:
for times we've washed our hands of responsibility,**

⁴ <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191843730.001.0001/q-oro-ed5-00016497#:~:text=Desmond%20Tutu%201931-&text=If%20you%20are%20neutral%20in,will%20not%20appreciate%20your%20neutrality.>

⁵ For the Rush fans among us: "If you choose not to decide / you still have made a choice" ("Freewill")

as well as for the times we've tried to control more than is ours to control.
Forgive us for the moments when we've chosen to hide from the work:
for times we've avoided hard conversations to "keep the peace,"
as well as for those times when we've had those conversations poorly.
Hold us in your mercy, Forgiving God, and turn not your face from us.
May your face shine upon us that we may be saved! Amen.

Ps. 80

Assurance of Pardon

The prophet Isaiah reminds us that God's guidance shall make us like watered gardens,
like a spring of water whose waters never fail.
Through the waters of our baptism, we have been washed cleaned and forgiven our sins,
that we might live a new life in the name of the Resurrected Christ. **Alleluia! Amen.**

Isa. 58:11

I

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *As we enter this election season, we are called to reflect on the profound words of Corinthians 13, which remind us that without love, our voices can become mere noise in a world already filled with division. This prayer invites us to pause and confess the instances when we have contributed to that noise, choosing words that deepen wounds rather than heal. In the wake of a contentious presidential election, we acknowledge our shortcomings—those moments when we have failed to embody the love and curiosity that reflects God's image in others. This is a time to embrace the difficult, vulnerable work of reconciliation and to seek true repentance.*

Call to Confession

Corinthians 13 states: "If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels,
but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."
Let us confess those times when we've added to the din of division,
choosing not to speak the truth in love, but in ways that add to the woundedness of the world.

Prayer of Confession

Holy and Merciful God,
the book of our life is filled with promises broken and promises kept;
angry words that were spoken when we should have wept.⁶
As we emerge from yet another divisive presidential election,
we tenderly lift up the moments when we've fallen short of your glory
and chosen to disparage our neighbor instead of practicing holy curiosity
of how your holy image is reflected in their being.
It's hard work, vulnerable work, and messy work;
and we regret the moments when we've chosen what is easy instead of what is right.
Hear our confession and lead our hearts to repentance,
that we might move mountains by sharing the grace you have given us.
Help us practice not a lip-service love, but an "I've got your back" love!

⁶ With much gratitude for this particular line from Sting's song "The Book of My Life" from his album "Inside."

**Meet us as we are, but never leave us as we were,
for we, your children, are ready to follow you, to pick up our cross,
and get back to the work of being repairers of the breach.
This we pray in your holy and strong name. Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

Neighbors, the abundant love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13 is available for us to share with others only because it has first been so graciously shared with us. If you think that what you've done or what you've left undone is so great as to sever you from God's mercy, I have news for you: "You, friend, are *not* that powerful!" The single most powerful force in all of creation is the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And nothing – no, *nothing* – can ever separate us from it. Hear the Good News of the Gospel: our sins are forgiven. **Alleluia! Amen.**

PRAYERS FOR ILLUMINATION

A

REV. KRYSTAL LEEDY

PASTORAL FELLOW

TEXAS INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Note: *In this season of discernment and reflection, we turn to the Holy Spirit, our guiding light, as we seek understanding and transformation through God's Word. May we be reminded of the grace that sustains our land and our lives, and may this prayer illuminate our hearts as we recognize the divine presence in each other and in the Scriptures.*

Holy Spirit, lamp for all people,
guide our way as we open ourselves to be changed by your Word.
As we dwell in the majesty of the purple mountains,
or our hand grazes through the amber grain,
and each time we take fruit from the plain,
may we never forget that the land which we inhabit,
is only available by your grace.
Extend that grace to us today,
even if the skies seems less spacious
and the sea less shiny,
hold up your lamp for all people,
that we may see you in the faces of one another,
and the voices that come from Scripture,
that our pilgrim-feet may find their way back to you. **Amen.**

B

REV. NICOLE PICKENS

Note: *As we navigate the complexities of this election season, we turn to our Gracious God, who calls us to embody love, justice, and mercy in our lives. Let us seek inspiration to actively participate in God's transformative work, being mindful of our responsibilities as citizens and members of the greater human family.*

Gracious God, whose steadfast love endures forever,
inspire us to recognize your passion, justice, and mercy for all,
so that we might follow your example
and be part of your transformative work
as citizens and as kinfolk to all humanity.
We pray in the name of Jesus the Redeemer
and by the power of your vibrantly moving Spirit. **Amen.**

Ps. 107:1-7, 33-37

C

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In a time when truth feels increasingly elusive, we turn to the God of Eternal Wisdom, seeking clarity and stillness in our hearts and minds. May the reading of Scripture enrich us with the Holy Spirit's guidance, leading us to the liberating truth that brings freedom and understanding.*

God of Eternal Wisdom,
in this time when there are such assaults on the truth,
clear our minds of all the clutter and clatter of falsehoods
and still our hearts that we might receive the wisdom of your Word.
Through the reading of scripture,
bless us with a double portion of your Holy Spirit
that She may guide us to the Truth that will set us free. **Amen.**

John 8:32

D

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *We ask God for wisdom and calm as we receive the message, reminding us of God's constancy as our refuge and help in troubling times.*

God of Wisdom,
though everything seems to change around us, so fast and without warning,
calm our hearts that they may receive this good news:
that you are our help and refuge, a very present help in trouble.
Shelter us in your word, O God,
that we might receive both its comfort and its challenge. **Amen.**

Ps. 46:1-3

E

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer seeks God's wisdom and guidance amidst the overwhelming noise of election season, asking the Spirit to help us discern and embody the truth, justice, and kindness found in God's Word.*

There is so much noise, God of all Wisdom:
so much shouting, so much posting and retweeting, so many attack ads.

It can be difficult to sift through the cacophony
and hear your still small voice encouraging us
to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.
May your Spirit open our hearts to the truth we can only find in you.
May your Living Word inspire us to stand for the truth that is you.
And may your Presence today transform us
into vessels courageously proclaiming that Truth. **Amen.**

Micah 6:8

F

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer invites us to embrace the sacred art of listening, as exemplified by Lydia. During this election season, it challenges us to bear witness to the testimonies of others, especially those with whom we may disagree, and to recognize the divine image in every person. By choosing to see each neighbor as a beloved child of God, we open our hearts to the transformative power of God's word.*

Holy God, Lydia is introduced to us as a person who knew the sacred art of listening.
Help us to bear witness to the testimony of others, especially those with whom we differ.
Though we may not agree, help us to see your image in their likeness,
Choosing to see first and foremost the beloved child of God in every neighbor.
May your word speak to your Church this day, for we wait in wonder for its wisdom. **Amen.**

Acts 16

G

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In this Prayer for Illumination, we acknowledge the overwhelming noise that often drowns out meaningful dialogue and connection. In 1 Corinthians 13:1, we are reminded that it is all too easy to become a "noisy gong or a clanging cymbal," succumbing to the temptation to shout, disparage, and dehumanize one another. Yet, we stand firm in the belief that while listening, loving unconditionally, and learning may be more challenging, they are far from impossible—especially with God's guidance.*

God of All Wisdom,
it's easy to be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
It's easy to disparage, dehumanize, and devalue.
It's easy to give in to the violence of war and words, of lies and labeling.
It's harder to listen. It's harder to love unconditionally. It's harder to learn.
Harder...but far from impossible.
If it is true that nothing is impossible with you, God,
then send your Holy Spirit to this place
that we may be transformed by your Living Word into new creations,
living and loving in your mighty and reconciling name. **Amen.**

1 Cor. 13:1

Luke 1:37

AFFIRMATIONS OF FAITH

A

SLATS TOOLE

Note: *In a world filled with uncertainty and division, we gather to affirm our faith in the goodness of God's creation and the enduring presence of love amidst adversity. Together, we commit to embodying God's care for all, following the example of Christ, and embracing the Spirit's guidance as we navigate the challenges ahead.*

In a time when it is hard to know who to trust and what to believe, we believe:

that God created this world:

landscapes,
plants,
animals,
humanity,
and called it good.

that God came to be with us:

to live with us,
laugh with us,
break bread with us,
cry with us,
and become one of us.

that God is still working within and among us:

to comfort us,
inspire us,
challenge us,
and strengthen us,
as we face the days ahead.

In a time when it is easy to be overwhelmed by evil and fall into despair, we believe:

that God cares about creation:

God weeps for the rising oceans
calls for justice for the abused earth
mourns every lost species,
and stands with those who are oppressed
by sinful human systems.

that God did not shy away from the evil we can do:

God decided to suffer at our hands
to be betrayed and denied,
scorned and mocked,

and even be killed,
to show that our very worst
cannot separate us from God's love.

that God is still present in our world:
God did not leave us orphaned,
but continues to work alongside us,
using our triumphs and joys,
as well as our failures and faults,
to shape this world back towards goodness.

In a time when we are tempted towards fear and inaction, we promise:

that we will share the cares of our Creator:
We will seek to be true stewards of this world and each other.
We will recognize the image of God in all people,
and stand with those who are being dismissed, ignored, and harmed,
whatever the future may hold.

that we will follow the example of our Savior:
We will share our time, our energy, and our resources with each other.
We will root out evil in our own souls,
and work to dismantle systems that keep people from living into their sacred possibilities,
whatever the future may hold.

that we will be led by the presence of the Spirit:
We will not give in to forces that isolate us from God and each other.
We will recognize the work of God in ourselves and in our community,
continuing to move forward in our faith that this is not how the world has to be,
whatever the future may hold.

B

REV. MELODIE LONG
WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *As we gather in this election season, we reflect on the beauty of God's creation and the challenges that have marred our community. With a commitment to hope, love, and justice, we affirm our faith in the transformative power of grace as we strive to live fully into the vision God has for us all.*

In the beginning with a sacred breath of grace God created the world.
Designed to be a place of infinite beauty, the world shimmered with possibilities.
Surrounded by the gift of that creation,
humanity with all its intricate diversity became God's beloved community.
And all was good.

But greed, power, the lust for more, rampant individualism tore the very fabric of that community. We watched in horror as governments and corporations were crafted to protect the rich and powerful while discarding the poor and hurting. Determined to survive, even the Church fell prey to relentless competition and false standards of faith, perverting Jesus' good news to a selfish agenda. But we believe that hope comes even when all seems so bleak, that light will overcome the darkness. We believe in a gospel of particular care for the vulnerable, of a radical love that welcomes and embraces all, of a grace that always creates new life. So we commit ourselves to life in community, to hold the treasure of one another with reverence, to carry the ones who are tired and broken, to grasp God's hope of new life and pull it deep into our hearts, and then to walk together as we seek God's living justice. Filled with love, filled with grace, filled with hope, we promise to God and to one another to live fully into God's good and beautiful creation. This we believe. **Amen.**

C

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In this election season, we gather to affirm our faith in the God who creates, redeems, and sustains us, reminding us of our call to stewardship and justice. With a deep commitment to uphold the dignity of all people, we embrace the transformative love of Christ as we seek to embody God's teachings in our lives and communities.*

We believe in God the Creator,
 who breathed life into creation and filled this blue sphere with creatures great and small, *Gen. 1*
 who called humanity to be stewards of the earth
 and to care for it and its inhabitants with righteousness; *Gen. 1:28*
 who opposed Pharaoh's economy of greed and violence
 and liberated God's people from an oppressive political regime; *Exod. 2:23-25*
 who led God's people through the wilderness
 and provided them with manna to sustain them on their journey; *Exod. 16*
 who gave us the prophets to steer us back to justice when we strayed
 and said: "woe unto you who legislate evil;" *Isa. 10:1*
 who continues to create even to this day
 and brings forth new possibilities when we think all is over. *Isa. 43:19*

We believe in God the Redeemer,
 who was born into this world as a brown, Middle Eastern Jewish boy,

and on the run from a cruel politician;	<i>Matt. 2:13-18</i>
who is no stranger to wilderness	
and walks with us as a friend when temptations abound;	<i>Luke 4:1-13</i>
who fed the masses simply because they were hungry	<i>Mark 6:30-44</i>
and provided free healthcare to the injured and infirm;	<i>Mark 6:53-56</i>
who is the way, the truth, and the life, when other voices claim to be the same;	<i>John 14:6</i>
who calls us to be neighborly to one another	
and to be relentless advocates for the oppressed and vulnerable;	<i>Luke 6:20-26</i>
who was unjustly and violently executed by the empire	
and resurrected by God, defeating death once and for all.	<i>John 20</i>

We believe in God the Sustainer,	
who advocates for us in our times of need	
and binds us to one another to cultivate the Beloved Community;	<i>John 14:25</i>
who helps us in our times of weakness	
and intercedes on our behalf with sighs too deep for words:	<i>Rom. 8:26</i>
who comes in tongues of flame to bind together God's disciples	
and equips us for the work we are called to do;	<i>Acts 2</i>
who brings us to the Table to eat the bread and drink the cup	
and renews us to defiantly proclaim Jesus' resurrection in word and deed;	
who hovers over the waters of our baptism	
and seals us into the eternal kingdom that supersedes any human administration;	
who knits us together with those who are different than us	
to heal this world by being neighborly to one another.	<i>Acts 10</i>

D

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *As we enter this election season, we unite in the spirit of Mary, proclaiming our joy and gratitude to God for uplifting the marginalized and championing the cause of the poor. Together, we affirm our commitment to embody God's mercy and justice, recognizing our role in fostering a community where all are valued and cared for.*

With Mary, we will glorify God with all that is within us.
 From the depths of our souls and the movements of our bodies we will rejoice in God our savior.
 For God has looked with favor on those whom the world says are worthless. *Luke 1:46-55*
 We believe that God highly favors the marginalized and shows bias towards the poor.
 We are called to do the same, in God's holy name.
 God shows mercy from generation to generation of believers.
 God's strong arms cradle the weak and scatter away arrogant thoughts and proud inclinations.
 God has pulled down the powerful and uplifted the lowly.
 God fills the hungry with goodness and sends away those who are full of themselves.

God will come to the aid of the faithful, remembering the ways of mercy,
just as was promised to our ancestors, to Abraham and Sarah, and to their descendants forever. Amen.

E

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This affirmation challenges us to recognize and embrace as neighbors those we may not agree with, including those with differing political views, difficult family members, and others we find challenging. It calls us to practice neighborliness, even when it is hard.*

We, the people of God, who are the recipients of grace and mercy through no merit of our own, choose to respond to that grace and mercy by reminding ourselves of our neighbors.

Therefore:

- **We believe the person who votes the other way is our neighbor.**
- **We believe the politician who stands for everything we're against is our neighbor.**
- **We believe the family member who we're not looking forward to talking with over the thanksgiving table in a few weeks is our neighbor.**
- **We believe the person who lives next door whose yard signs make us sick to our stomach is our neighbor.**
- **We believe the people the attack ads say we should fear are our neighbors.**
- **We believe the church member whose online posts make us roll our eyes is our neighbor.**

We believe that neighborliness might be the hardest thing we're called to do, but we do it nonetheless - at times messily, imperfectly, and awkwardly - because God calls it good and pleasant. Amen.

Ps. 133

F

FROM THE THEOLOGICAL DECLARATION OF BARMEN

Note: *We choose nonviolence because we are, first and foremost, rooted in our identities as belonging solely to Jesus Christ. This excerpt from the Theological Declaration of Barmen proclaims this truth boldly and was written in a context when the Church was being coopted by a political ideology of violence, military might, and fear of neighbor.⁷*

As Jesus Christ is God's assurance of the forgiveness of all our sins, so in the same way and with the same seriousness is he also God's mighty claim upon our whole life. Through him befalls us a joyful deliverance from the godless fetters of this world for a free, grateful service to his creatures.

⁷ Theological Declaration of Barmen (8.14-15)

We reject the false doctrine, as though there were areas of our life in which we would not belong to Jesus Christ, but to other lords—areas in which we would not need justification and sanctification through him.

G

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *As we enter this election season, we are reminded of our sacred responsibility to reflect on the values that guide our actions and decisions. In a time marked by division and uncertainty, this prayer calls us to a transformative fast — one that challenges us to move beyond dehumanization and fear towards hope, truth, and compassion. Rooted in scripture, it invites us to engage in the profound work of justice, mercy, and community-building, emphasizing our collective calling as a Church to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable among us.*

We believe that God, the Creator, calls us to a particular fast:

**a fast from dehumanizing our neighbor,
a fast from weaponizing fear instead of inspiring hope,
and a fast from accepting easy lies instead of difficult truths.**

We believe that God, the Redeemer, leads the Church to sacred work:

Isa. 58:6-12

**the work of loosing the bonds of injustice and freeing the oppressed,
the work of sharing our bread with the hungry,
and housing our neighbors who are homeless,
and the work of clothing the naked and satisfying the needs of the afflicted.**

We believe that God, the Sustainer, energizes our souls in difficult days:

Acts 16:14

**to open our hearts to listen to our neighbors' stories,
to remove the yoke of all that burdens the least of these,
and to be repairers of the breach,
healing as Christ heals,
teaching as Christ teaches,
and feeding as he first fed us.**

This we affirm;

this we believe;

and to this we hold ourselves accountable. Amen.

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This affirmation of faith calls us to embrace love—not as a weakness, but as our greatest strength. In a time often marked by division, we recommit ourselves to the qualities of patience, kindness, and truth that unite us as Christ's disciples.*

**We believe that love is patient and kind;
that it is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude,
that it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth;
that it bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
And though we live in a political environment that often tells us
that these attributes are weakness, we refute that lie.**

1 Cor. 13:1-13

**For these things are indeed the source of our greatest strength as God's people.
We believe that in Christ's name, faith, hope, and love abide;
and the greatest of these is love.
That love is made manifest in our work not through our doing, but God's alone.
It is the foundation of our calling as Christ's disciples in a weary world.
We recommit ourselves to this ministry.
And though it is hard, we remind ourselves that nothing is impossible with God.
This we believe in the name of the Triune God. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

A

REV. KRYSTAL LEEDY

PASTORAL FELLOW

TEXAS INTERFAITH CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY

Note: *As we gather our hearts in this season of uncertainty and decision-making, we turn to God, who invites us to embrace the values of the Kin-dom rather than the fleeting power of earthly empires. In our prayers, may we seek strength in our interconnectedness, patience in the face of division, and a commitment to love that transcends the challenges before us.*

God,
we heard it was said that America is the greatest, the best, the most,
but you say to us, the Kin-dom of God is a seed, a pearl, a pinch of yeast.
We heard it was said that America is the superpower,
but you say to us, you are strong when you are weak.
We heard it was said that America is known by our might, our flag, our pride,
but you say to us that they will know who we are by our love.

The world is not ending this election season, O God, but it certainly feels like it might.
I wonder how many times you have met your people at these types of crossroads,
teaching us how we might learn how to hope again.
Wise Parent, you remind us that we always have a seat at the Table, and are each a part of a body, a
loaf of bread where each crumb is interconnected with another,
of one substance but distinguishable in flavor.
Raise your banner of love over us, God,
that we might not serve the Empire but rather the Kin-dom of God where race is celebrated,
economic status is leveled, and gender fluidity is accepted as the new normal.

And yes, as we go to the ballot boxes, you teach us in what powers our values lie.
And, we will watch the votes come in, and you will teach us patience.
As the red and blue chips are counted,
we know that people will walk away from this election devastated and elated.
And you will teach us forbearance.
It seems as if the very ideals upon which our country was founded are on the ballot, God,
and losing or keeping those ideals are worthy of your attention, God.

Because it's all been an experiment on how we might govern ourselves.
And for the past 200 years,
you have blasted through barriers that we have placed on who is a person and who is not.
Praise you, Holy Spirit,
for reminding us who we are and more importantly, reminding us who others are.
For we find our identity, yes, in our country, but more importantly, in you.

And by your grace, your faithful people have existed long before America,
and we will remain the faithful remnant.

Whether we are in power or in exile, God,
we ask that in certain spaces you temper us for the sake of our neighbor
and in other spaces you let us dance with abandon.

Because, God, though the dumpster-fire of this year,
we ask that you refine us.

Remind us who we are in you.

That we are a people that embrace the ideals of love,
of taking care of the poor, of setting captives free,
of binding up the brokenhearted.

God in our isolation, refine us to be your faithful people,
who love first and amplify your voice in the world,
even if it goes against the values of the country that we love.

May we stand with the oppressed,
with the people who are being trampled and put in cages,
whether metaphorical or literal, and amplify their voices.

Because that's where you are.

And if being where you are means that some people are angry,
then we know we are right where we need to be.

We've read the Scriptures. We know where you are.

Turn our eyes toward the places where blood runs in the streets,
where people are literally starving,
where mental illness is written off in silence and stigma,
where the virus is hitting harder,
where passion and grief are thick in the air.

Turn our eyes to communities labeled dangerous and impoverished,
because that's where the good news is about to break through.
And that's whose voices must be amplified this season, every season.
Use our privilege for good.

No matter what happens this week, God, teach us to be gracious.

And not just like that "Oh I'm sorry," kind of gracious,
but the kind of grace that can multiply a poor boy's lunch,
the kind of grace that makes strangers into friends,
the kind of grace that requires us to forgive as we have been forgiven,
and teaches over and over and over for us to be able to identify our enemy
in order to have an object of our love.

God may we build your Kin-dom this coming year,
Because you have leveled the earth and given us a strong foundation.
God bring us together at Table once again, we beg of you,

that we may hold one another in our humanity,
through the very rites that make us human.

In the name of the one whose empathy is realized in the incarnation,
whose Kin-dom has no end, who taught us to pray saying,
Our Father/Mother/Parent, who art in heaven...

B

SLATS TOOLE

Note: *In this pivotal moment of our nation's journey, we turn to God, seeking comfort and guidance as we navigate the uncertainty of election day and its aftermath. With heavy hearts and hopeful spirits, we lift our prayers for those most affected by the decisions of leaders, trusting in God's unwavering presence to sustain us through the trials ahead.*

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, hear us and be near us.

We come to you on a day that should feel like a beginning, or an end, but is really one deeply important day in a long, hard season. Our anxiety has been high for weeks, months, even years. We look to this day for answers, for a sense of what the next four years will look like, but we know that the results of this election will continue to be counted for days and weeks. We look for relief and know it probably will not come.

But you are our relief. You are our shelter from the stormy blast and our eternal throne. Refocus us. Remind us of your presence. Help us, even now, to be still and know that you are our God.

We pray for the next four years of the life of our country. Whatever the results of this election may be, real people are affected by the decisions of those who hold office. We pray for those who are most affected: for children held in cages at the border, for immigrants for whom the threat of ICE raids is far too real, for Black people facing police violence, for Indigenous Peoples whose traditions and land have been disrespected and stolen for centuries, for all who feel the sting of racism, for LGBTQIA2S+ people whose rights either at risk of being taken away or have never been protected at all, for disabled people who are devalued by our capitalistic society, for the millions in our country who cannot afford healthcare in the middle of a global pandemic, for future generations who will have to pay for the havoc we have wreaked upon this world, for all whose intersecting identities put them more and more at risk. We know that we cannot even name all of those who are suffering. Our understanding of the horrors faced by those like and unlike us is incomplete. Intercede for us and complete our prayer, holding all of those who need to be held close in this time.

In the immediate coming days, give us safety and strength. The tension in our society is palpable and we know how easy it would be for violence to erupt. Help us to care for our communities, to support one another, to de-escalate and diffuse, so that none of your beloved children might be senselessly lost in this time of confusion, anger, and fear.

More than anything, keep us moving forward. Tear down the idols we are so fond of trusting--no politician will save us. Salvation comes from you alone, so work through us to bring about your kin-

dom. Compel us to action, to keep going on, to continue to work toward the wholeness and thriving of all people. Help us shed the privileges that keep us comfortable while others are in danger, as you invite us to join you in serving those the world despises. Make us so vibrantly and viscerally aware of you, your goodness, your grace, your love, and your passion for our lives, that we have no choice but to follow you, our guide while troubles last, and our eternal home. Amen.

C

REV. MELODIE LONG
WATERFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *As we find ourselves at the conclusion of a tumultuous election season, we come before God with heavy hearts, seeking solace and strength amidst the turmoil that has shaken our spirits. In this moment of vulnerability, we lift our voices in prayer, yearning for healing, justice, and peace, trusting that God's love will guide us through the uncertainties that lie ahead.*

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever? As this election season comes to a clashing close, its angry noise has pounded our souls. We are wounded from the violence – physically, emotionally, spiritually. And it has been an arduous struggle, one that appears to have no end even as the voting concludes. For we know that, no matter the outcome of this election, there is much ahead as we seek healing for a shattered world, hope in the midst of despair, justice that has been horribly derailed, and peace for our rattled hearts. The enormity of it all threatens to swallow us whole, Holy One.

Yet you reach out to us with a gentle reminder of who you are. You pull us out of paralyzing fear, out of an endless wheel of anger, out of ourselves breathing hope and life into our war-torn souls. Even in this time of uncertainty as history dangles at a precipice, you speak that you are still God and we are still your beloved. So we pause, we breathe, and we pray. For our world that is like a whirling dervish of anger and hatred, we seek a deep peace. We seek a peace that goes beyond the lack of violence but one that is borne out of mutual love and respect for all. For this country, this exhausted and fragile country, this wondrous and beautiful country, show us how we each can become healers, repairers, peacemakers. For it is only together that we can be the change that is so desperately needed. Even as we pray for the larger structures of society, we remember the people, the ones you so lovingly and hopefully created. As we take our voices and feet to the polls, make us mindful of the ones who are being discarded, the ones who hunger physically and spiritually, the ones for whom poverty has become a cage, the ones who have been forgotten and dismissed as less-than, the ones who have been ravaged by a relentless pandemic. And as we vote, remind us who we are to be. Let us vote for leaders of wisdom and grace, who remember the least of these, who inspire us to be the best of ourselves as you created us to be.

Give us courage, God of all creation, God of each and every one of us, to be people of both passionate courage and gentle strength as was your Son Jesus Christ. May his life, his message, his mission be our model for all of living. When this election is over, may we never forget that the call continues. Help us dare to love and to live with joyful and hopeful abandon as your beloved creation. Because our words are never adequate, hear the prayers of our hearts..... (a time of silence)

Hold us lovingly as we go forth, O God. Hear us now as we pray as your Son continues to teach us saying.....

Note: *As we gather in this sacred moment, we come before God, the Giver of Every Mercy, with hearts open to intercede for our neighbors and to cultivate the Beloved Community our Savior called us to create. In the spirit of the Beatitudes, we lift our prayers for those who are struggling, marginalized, and oppressed, trusting that our collective faith can bring forth healing and hope in these challenging times.*

Giver of Every Mercy,
 we gather this [evening, day, morning] to intercede on behalf of our neighbors,
 that we might live as the Beloved Community your Son gifted us the capacity to create.

You said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." *Matt. 5:3*
We pray for those who feel discouraged, disillusioned, and disgusted.
Gift them courage and energy
that they may continue to fight the good fight of faith.

You said, "Blessed are those who mourn." *Matt. 5:4*
We pray for those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19 and other causes.
Gift them with comfort and peace
that they may find hope for the future.

You said, "Blessed are the meek." *Matt. 5:5*
We pray for those whose gentle voices of love are drowned out by hate.
Gift us the ability to hear their message of compassion
that we may be transformed by subversive love.

You said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst." *Matt. 5:6*
We pray for those who are hungry while we spent \$732 billion on the military last year.
Gift them with food and clean water in abundance
that they may live healthy and fruitful lives.

You said, "Blessed are the merciful." *Matt. 5:7*
We pray for those who show mercy when it's not fashionable or profitable.
Gift them the strength to continue their work
that we might learn from them and share their vision.

You said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." *Matt. 5:8*
We pray for those who show integrity in the midst of blatant assaults on truth and dignity.
Gift them the resilience it takes to remain steadfast in these times
that they may continue to resist powers of tyranny and oppression.

You said, “Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Matt. 5:9

We pray for those who have peacefully protested these past six months.

Gift them with holy impatience and determination

that our message of justice and righteousness may ring out.

You said, “Blessed are those who are persecuted.”

Matt. 5:10

We pray for our BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) siblings.

Gift them with justice, freedom, and equality,

that may have their due life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

You said, “Blessed are you when people utter all kinds of evil against you.”

Matt. 5:11

We pray for those who have endured racist, sexist, and xenophobic rhetoric and actions.

Gift them with a sure sense of your love for them

that they may rest in the truth they they are beloved.

We lift these prayers to you,

knowing that there is a special place in your heart for those who endure injustice and oppression.

Lead us to a place of rejoicing through these difficult times,

Matt. 5:12

and gather us together as your Beloved Community.

This we pray as you taught us to pray saying,

Our Father/Mother/Parent, who are in heaven...

E

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON

PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *As we come together in prayer, let us take a moment to breathe deeply and center our hearts, focusing not on our own needs, but on the well-being of our neighbors and community. In this sacred space, we invite the words of the Beatitudes to wash over us, allowing Jesus' blessings to inspire us to embody love, peace, and justice in all that we do.*

As we pray together, I will pause for a moment of silence between phrases. In this space, I invite you to breathe deeply and hold those dear to you in prayer. And as we pray together, let us put aside the thoughts about what is good for us as individuals and pray for what is good for our neighbors. As I read the version of the beatitudes found in The Message, imagine Jesus speaking these words to you and you speaking these words to your neighbors. Let us allow these blessings to wash over us and those for whom we pray.

Holy God, we lift up our hearts to you that you may enter in and refine our desires and thoughts so that they are directed towards you and to that which you have called us to do, love our neighbors. We pray for peace, justice, and mercy, and most of all, we pray that love guides all that we say and do. Help us to be a blessing in your world.

“You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope.

Matt. 5:3

With less of you there is more of God and his rule.

[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you feel you’ve lost what is most dear to you. *Matt. 5:4*
Only then can you be embraced by the One most dear to you.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you’re content with just who you are—no more, no less. *Matt. 5:5*
That’s the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can’t be bought.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you’ve worked up a good appetite for God. *Matt. 5:6*
God’s food and drink in the best meal you’ll ever eat.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you care. At the moment of being ‘care-full,’ *Matt. 5:7*
you find yourselves cared for.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. *Matt. 5:8*
Then you can see God in the outside world.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. *Matt. 5:9*
That’s when you discover who you really are, and your place in God’s family.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“You’re blessed when your commitment to God provokes persecution. *Matt. 5:10*
The persecution drives you even deeper into God’s kingdom.
[allow for meaningful silence]

“Not only that – count yourselves blessed every time people put you down *Matt. 5:11-12*
or throw you out or speak lies about you to discredit me.
What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and they are uncomfortable.
You can be glad when that happens—give a cheer, even!—for though they don’t like it, I do!
And all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company.
My prophets and witnesses have always gotten into this kind of trouble.
[allow for meaningful silence]

Holy God, we lift up all of the prayers we prayed in the silence along with the prayer
that Jesus taught us to pray, Our Father/Mother/Parent who art in heaven...

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
 GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *We pray for the strength to practice true neighborliness, which involves sacrifice and intentionality, non-violence and vulnerability. We seek guidance to act justly and love mercy, especially when it comes to voting and engaging in civic life.*

Gracious and merciful God,
 neighborliness is hard; it requires practice, sacrifice, and intentionality.
 Help us break beyond simplistic understandings of neighborliness, as if it's nothing more than the ability to have "polite" conversations without devolving into argument.

We give thanks for those who have gone before us who reminded us what *true* neighborliness looks like:

- The neighborliness of walking across a bridge, arm in arm, with the national guard, dogs, batons, and fire hoses on the opposite side...
- The neighborliness of stepping between a woman accused of adultery and a hateful crowd with stones in hand...
- The neighborliness of voting not only in our own best interests, but in the interests of the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed...
- The neighborliness of choosing non-violence when our gut instinct is to lash out in hate...
- And the neighborliness of picking up our cross and walking the messy, painful path of discipleship...

We try, and we fail. But you can work with that. You can work with us, and through us.

As dual citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven and United States of America, we seek your guidance for the living of these days, and the voting of these elections. Give us a double portion of your wisdom to do the next right thing. Because we can't control what our neighbor chooses, but we *can* control how we *choose* to respond.

- When our blood pressure rises and the adrenaline courses through our veins, help us to rest.
- When we blink our eyes only to realize we've been doomscrolling for forty-five minutes, help us put down the phone.
- When self-righteousness hardens our hearts, help us practice vulnerability (with healthy boundaries!).
- When it is all too easy to give into despair, remind us that to do so never helps those who need justice.

As a faith community, hold us in your care as we seek to be faithful to you, our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our communities.

[Here may be included joys and concerns specific to your context]

We lift these prayers to you, knowing that when we don't know how to pray,
your Spirit intercedes on our behalf with sighs too deep for words.
Receive them in your mercy and hear us as we pray the prayer your Son taught us to pray,
saying: **"Our Father..."**

Rom. 8:26

G

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *This prayer calls upon God to guide us away from tendencies toward violence, just as God reminded Cain of his choices. It seeks forgiveness and the strength to forgive, while lifting up prayers for the safety of all involved in the electoral process, gratitude for those who have fought for our voting rights, and hope for a peaceful and just outcome.*

God of Every Nation,
when Cain fumed at your acceptance of his brother's offering over his own,
you intervened and reminded Cain that he had a choice in his response.
"Sin is lurking at the door," you said, "But you must master it."
Help us, Gracious God, to be aware of our tendencies towards violence,
and empower us to do no harm in the name of your Resurrected Son,
who bore the burden and terror of political violence,
and chose to forgive, even upon death on a cross.
Help us to forgive those who have harmed us and our neighbors,
and forgive us when we have done that harm ourselves,
through what we've done and what we've left undone.

We pray this day for safety:

for the safety of all those who seek elected office,
for poll workers, civil servants, delegates, and law enforcement,
and for those who are tasked with making sure our elections
are free and fair exercises of democracy.

We pray especially this day for the safety of:

[insert prayers for the safety of local candidates for political office on both sides of the aisle].

We pray this day in gratitude:

for those who have died for our right to vote,
for those who sat at lunch counters, and refused to move to the back of the bus,
for those who lobbied, advocated, organized, and refused to give up,
for those who chose nonviolence to enact positive social change,
and for those who continue that sacred work to this day.

We pray this day in hope:

hope that all elected officials will accept the outcome of the results,
hope that those who lose will be peaceful in their response,

hope that those who win will be gracious in their victories,
hope that all elected officials would prioritize the wellbeing of
their constituents over and above party loyalty,
and hope that all will be well and all manner of things shall be well.⁸

We pray this day for *[insert personal/local petitions here]*

In all things, Gracious God, we give you thanks for calling us your servants, and calling us together as neighbors in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying: **Our Father...**

H

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In this election season, we find ourselves navigating a landscape filled with division and differing perspectives. This prayer invites us to seek God's guidance in becoming a vibrant and vital family, committed to holy risk-taking, sacred discernment, and surprising grace. Together, we acknowledge the challenges of loving our neighbors in a complex world and the necessity of taking risks for the sake of justice and compassion. We ask for the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to help us discern the steps we must take in repairing the breaches that separate us. In doing so, we embrace the promise of grace that allows us to grow and transform, both individually and collectively, into a reflection of God's kingdom.*

Let us pray to God, that we might be a vibrant and vital faith family that is a place of holy risk-taking, sacred discernment, and surprising grace.⁹ Let us pray...

God of Holy Risk-taking, nowhere in scripture do you tell your people: "Go love everyone; it'll be easy!" Instead you say: "Go love your neighbor; and pick up your cross." Help us to be a place of holy risk-taking; for you are a God who has taken a risk with us. You came in the flesh, born into a messy world that's been fighting with itself for so very long. Your son ministered in places where neighbor had been turned against neighbor; and he rejected the false doctrine of the zero-sum game where one has to lose in order for another to win. Help us, your Church, do the risky thing instead of the safe thing; and challenge the status quo that only benefits the privileged among us. Remind us that love without risk isn't really love at all.

God of Sacred Discernment, bless us with a double portion of your Holy Spirit that we may be guided in wisdom for the living of these days. We know that we're called to be repairers of the breach but we just don't know how to get there sometimes. We're tempted to be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief, and sometimes it all feels like so much. Help us to take the next right step; to do the next right thing. Wherever we are in our spiritual journeys, help us display Lydia's courage to dare to discern how you are moving in our world and how we are called in the name of your Son to be healers of the divide and good news to those who are oppressed and marginalized.

⁸ Julian of Norwich

⁹ With much gratitude to Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade for this triple description of "Purple Zone" church in "Preaching in the Purple Zone: Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide" (p. 75)

God of Surprising Grace, your resurrection promises us that if all is not well then all is not over. Help us to forgive one another when we mess up, while holding ourselves accountable for our actions. Grant us the holy work of showing mercy as you have shown mercy to us and our neighbor. May the messy, imperfect, and life-giving discipleship ahead of us transform us ever more into your likeness, that we may be – in ways both great and small – a vision of your coming kingdom, here and now. This we lift up to you, as we pray the prayer your Son taught us to pray, saying: **“Our Father, who art in heaven...”**

I

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *In the aftermath of the presidential election, we come together as a community, acknowledging the mixed emotions that accompany the results. This moment calls us to unity in our shared mission to serve God and God’s kingdom, regardless of political outcomes. We pray for President-elect _____, asking for wisdom and compassion in leadership, and for all newly elected officials to build up rather than tear down. In this interregnum period, we seek peace and respectful discourse, embracing our role as the Church in promoting reconciliation and healing.*

God of Every Nation, our nation has decided on its next president,
and there are those among us both pleased and disappointed at the results.
Unite us this day in our common calling to serve you and your kingdom,
a calling that does not change depending on any election or power or principality.
When one side wins, we’re called to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. *Mic. 6:8*
When the other wins, we’re still called to do the same.
We pray this day for President-elect _____,
and that [his/her] heart would be grounded in the search for the common good,
the protection of human dignity, and in the welfare of the vulnerable. *1 Cor. 13:1-13*
We pray for all newly elected officials,
that they likewise will use their leadership positions to build up instead of tear down.
As we enter this interregnum period between election day and inauguration day,
we pray for peace and that all would accept the results of a free and fair election.
We pray that any demonstrations, protests, and discourse will be peaceful;
for we’ve already seen too much violence in this country,
and we, your Church, are called by the Resurrected Christ to put down our swords.
And be with *this* church, that we may be voices of reconciliation and healing,
treating each other with respect and dignity
while advocating tirelessly for the most vulnerable among us.
May the scriptures that we’ve explored these past four weeks be written upon our hearts,
that we may take their wisdom from this place into the neighborhoods
where you call us to be your hands and feet.
[prayers specific to your context may be included here]
This we pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, saying:
Our Father, who art in heaven...

CHARGES & BENEDICTIONS

A

REV. DR. ROCHELLE A. STACKHOUSE
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *As we conclude our time together, let us embrace the transformative power of Christ, who beckons us to rise above our challenges and walk boldly into the future. May we carry forth God's peace, energy, and love, igniting hope and purpose in our hearts as we seek to serve our neighbors and community in the days ahead.*

May the power of Christ lift us above despair.
May the energy of Christ move through our weariness.
May the peace of Christ settle our anxiety.
May the challenge of Christ raise our expectations.
May the grace of Christ assure us of forgiveness when we fall short.
May the love of Christ, greater than we could ask or imagine, set us dancing into the future. **Amen.**

B

REV. BETH M. WOODARD
ST. MICHAEL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *As we prepare to leave this sacred gathering, let us reflect on the words of Saint Paul, who reminds us of our unity in Christ and the peace that transcends all divisions. With this call to love and serve one another, may we carry forth the blessing of God, embracing our shared mission to foster harmony and compassion in our communities.*

Beloved of God, as we go from this time together,
hear the words of Saint Paul in his letter to the followers of Christ in Ephesus: *Eph. 2:13-14*
“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.
For he is our peace;
in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall,
that is, the hostility between us.”
I charge you, as followers of Christ Jesus,
to love one another and to live in his name, today and always. Amen.

Hear now the good word, the benediction:
May the Lord bless you and keep you from all harm, *Ps. 99:1; Eph. 2:19*
in the name of God the Creator, who sits enthroned upon the cherubim;
Jesus the Son, (*sign of the cross can be made*)

who makes us no longer strangers and aliens but citizens with the saints;
and the Holy Spirit, which enters into every human heart. **Amen.**

C

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *As we prepare to depart from this sacred moment, let us embrace our calling as Saints of God, committed to sharing forgiveness and love with all we encounter. With hearts open to unity and compassion, may we uplift the meek and marginalized, carrying forth God's blessing in every action we take.*

Saints of God, go out into the world offering forgiveness and love with generous hearts.
Remember that we are all one in Christ and seek unity with your brothers and sisters.
Seek out the meek and marginalized and lift them up with joy
and work to restore them to their rightful place as children of the living God.
And in all you do, go with the blessing of God. **Amen.**

D

REV. LUCY YOUNGBLOOD

Note: *As we conclude our worship, let us carry the spirit of our gathering into the world, embodying love, justice, and kindness in all our interactions. With Christ's gentle yoke guiding us, may we walk together in unity, uplifted by the grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit.*

Brothers and Sisters,
We've worshiped in this place and in this way.
It's now time to worship God in the world.
Pick up love for those we've lost.
Pick up justice, kindness, and humility.
Pick up love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness,
goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and (dare I say it) self control.
Let us take Christ's yoke upon us.
It fits easy.
It is gentle and light for the long haul.
Let us walk together, with heads up and side by side,
Looking, not only to Our Devine Creator, but looking ahead and to one another.

Gal. 5:22-26

May the Grace of Jesus Christ, the Love of God,
and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all. **Amen**

E

REV. NICOLE PICKENS

Note: *As we prepare to go forth, let us commit ourselves to living out the teachings of our faith, driven by love and compassion for those who are vulnerable and oppressed. With the assurance that our Divine Parent, the inspiring Spirit, and the guiding Messiah empower us, may we embrace this sacred work with courage and conviction.*

And now, may you put the teachings of your faith into practice –
not for glory, but for love of your neighbors who are vulnerable and oppressed – *Matt. 23:1-12*
finding strength for this work in knowing that
your Divine Parent who created you,
the Spirit who would inspire you,
and the Messiah who teaches you
will empower you for all your life. **Amen.**

F

THE TALMUD

Note: *As we reflect on the profound wisdom of the Talmud, let us find strength in our shared responsibility to address the world's grief with justice, mercy, and humility. While we may not be called to complete the work, we are reminded to engage in it wholeheartedly and steadfastly, embodying our commitment to a just and compassionate world.*

Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief.
Do justice, now.
Love mercy, now.
Walk humbly, now.
You are not obligated to complete the work
but neither are you free to abandon it.

G

JOHN LEWIS

Note: *Representative John Lewis was a prominent civil rights leader and U.S. Congressman who dedicated his life to advocating for justice and equality. As a key figure in the Civil Rights Movement, he played a vital role in organizing the 1963 March on Washington and was one of the leaders of the Selma to Montgomery marches, where he faced brutal opposition for his activism. Serving Georgia's 5th congressional district from 1987 until his passing in 2020, Lewis was known for his unwavering commitment to nonviolence, social justice, and the belief that "good trouble" is necessary for progress.*

Do not get lost in a sea of despair.
Be hopeful, be optimistic.
Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month, or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime.
Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.

H

REV. STEPHEN M. FEARING
GUILFORD PARK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

Note: *The service concludes with a charge and benediction that sends us forth with a song of peace, the love of Christ, and the fellowship of the Spirit, empowering us to be vessels of healing and hope in our communities.*

May the God of all the nations
 bring a song of peace to your lips
 to share with a weary world and neighbors near and far.
May the love of Christ
 flow forth from your hands
 to be vessels of healing
 where the wounds run so deep.
And may the fellowship of the Spirit
 guide the direction of your feet
 and remind you that you are not alone.
Go in peace, neighbors. **Amen.**

HYMNS

“In Times of Great Decision” Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6 D (“The Church’s One Foundation”)

In times of great decision, be with us, God, we pray!
Give each of us a vision of Jesus' loving way.
When louder words seem endless and other voices sure,
Remind us of your promise: your love and truth endure.

O God, whose gifts are countless, you send us bearing peace.
You fill our dreams with justice for all communities.
You give us global neighbors, that all may justly live.
May those we choose as leaders reflect the life you give.

O God, you bridged the distance; you opened wide your door.
You call us by our presence to reach to serve the poor.
You teach us: Welcome strangers! Seek justice on the earth!
May those we choose as leaders see every person's worth.

You call on every nation to put aside all greed,
To care for your creation and for your ones in need,
To care for those in prison, for children, for the ill.
In times of great decision, may we choose leaders well.

“God Help the Politicians”

Text: Stephen M. Fearing

Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6 D (“The Church’s One Foundation”)

God, help the politicians who govern far and near,
from small towns to the cities, may justice persevere.
May each speak words of kindness and have humility,
and do their work with honor and with civility.

May they make just decisions based off what’s true and right,
Let words of wisdom flow out of every bill they write.
And may they work together to serve the common good
to help us live together and do the things we should.

God, we are so frustrated with all that’s taken place,
We struggle to have hope when we see so much disgrace.
Help us to fix what’s broken; make us courageous, too.
And may your people trust in the truth we find in you.

Legality and justice are not always the same,
So help the politicians make righteousness their aim.
Renew our love for mercy; may truth inform our laws,
and help our public servants to serve the common cause.

“The Lord, the Stronghold of Our Life” (Psalm 27 Paraphrase)

Text: Stephen M. Fearing

Tune: ELLACOMBE 8.6.8.6 D (“I Sing the Mighty Power of God”)

The Lord, the stronghold of our life, removes our cause for fear.
God shelters us in troubled times and saves when strife is near.
When light is dim and hope is thin we listen for God’s Word.
Our trust is found, God’s grace is sound, we sing and praise the Lord!

One thing I ask, to seek your home and dwell forevermore.
There beauty lives and comfort gives; your temple I adore.
Upon this place you show your face and fill my heart with mirth.
This song I’ll sing as my God brings each day a new rebirth.

The reason for my strong desire to have you make me whole
Is all around me evil things that test this wearied soul.
The armies shout, their taunts cry out, their threats against me stand,
But by your word, my prayer you’ve heard, they fall at your command.

Be strong, take heart, for God is good and goodness shall prevail.
Our hope is in the Lord, our Light, and God will never fail.
God’s love is pure, our faith is sure, with courage we live on
For we will stand on living land with God, our hopeful song.

OTHER RESOURCES

RITUAL OF IMAGINING

REV. DR. ROCHELLE A. STACKHOUSE
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT

Note: *In this ritual of imagining, we focus on the direction of our hopes for the future, inspired by the principle that where we look influences our path. Participants begin by selecting a single word that encapsulates their vision for the next decade, then creatively exploring it through drawing and reflection, guided by the Holy Spirit. The ritual culminates in a prayerful offering to God, seeking guidance and companionship as we embark on the journey toward realizing our collective hopes.*

When we teach a child to ride a bike, we tell them that the direction they look is the direction the bike will go. In this ritual, we call on one another to attend to the direction we are looking as we imagine the future, knowing that, with the help of God, we will move our bodies, brains, hearts, and spirits, to flow in that direction.

1. Choose one word that encompasses what you hope the world is like in the next 10 years. It might be a word about your life, your church's life, your family's life, your country's life, or about the whole world. Be as specific as possible.
2. Write that word in the center of a piece of paper. Now draw 5-8 circles on the page, like thought bubbles, around the word.
3. Seek first the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then, inside the circles, write or draw what you imagine will lead to that hope becoming reality. Again, be as specific as possible.
4. Now start with any circle and place your hand on the word or picture you chose to represent an imagined step on the way to your hope. Repeat the word to yourself, or trace the drawing with your fingers, three times. Then be silent for a moment to listen for God's leading as you discern your part in moving to your hope.
5. When you have gone around to each circle, then place your hand in the middle, on the word that represents your hope, and do the same thing.
6. Finally, hold the paper in your hands and offer it to God with these words: *God of hope, lead me on the right path, find me the fitting task, give me the willing spirit, draw me to the right companions, no matter what tomorrow brings. Amen.*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

Note: *In this invitation to communion, we gather as a diverse community, united with all believers—past, present, and future—who share in the grace of Christ. As we prepare to partake in this sacred meal, we are reminded of the presence of both saints and sinners at the table, acknowledging our shared humanity and the journey towards healing and reconciliation. This meal serves as a powerful symbol of love and unity, offering a glimpse of the coming kingdom of God, where justice and compassion reign among all of God's children.*

Today, as we gather around this table, we are united with all who believe in Christ,
with all of the saints and sinners who have gone before us,
and with all of the saints and sinners we will not meet in this lifetime.
We are united with all believers in every time and place.
Christ welcomes all of us.

As we prepare to celebrate this meal, let us take a moment to remember who is here with us.
There is a short tax collector at this table and a woman singled out for a partnered crime.
And with them are all of those who shunned and scorned them to hide their own sins.
At the table are all of us who have clenched rocks in our fists
and finally decided to drop them instead hurling more injury and injustice into the world.
Around this table are holy people who were imperfect and made mistakes
and yet found in Christ freedom from sin and death
and went on to do God's work in the world.

At this table we are surrounded by our enemies and our loved ones.
And as we look into the face of each child of God,
we realize that the things that divided us on this earthly world do not matter,
there are no barriers between us,
there are no harsh words or hatefulness,
but only love and unity among the children of God.
This meal is a foretaste of the coming kingdom of God,
where true justice restores us to one another, and where love unites us.

Note: This "Psalm for Election" invites us into a heartfelt dialogue with God amidst the turmoil and conflict of our current times. As we reflect on the disarray and uncertainty that surrounds us, we seek the divine presence that has guided us through darkness and despair. In our yearning for connection, guidance, and hope, we echo the call for God's creative power to renew our spirits and restore harmony, ready to respond with songs of joy and praise when we hear God's voice once more.

God who created all things, out of no thing,
who created order and connection
Where is your word and your creative power now, when we are so conflicted?
Everything now is overturned, everything is out of place, unstable, lost.
My ears are filled with my own thoughts with the sounds of self drowning the voice of God.
Where is the music of other songs, the songs of other people?
Where is the music of God?
Where are the voices we have let be silenced, the voices we have silenced?
Have we lost our way? Have we lost your grace?
We feel like boats unmoored in a raging flood,
like birds blown into the ocean by a mighty storm.
Bereft, lost, anxious and frightened,
we turn and turn in circles, seeking you, seeking guidance seeking solace and hope.
For you, and you alone, have always been with us,
you, and you alone, have walked the road of darkness with us.
You, and you alone, have made whole things broken,
you, and you alone have made and remade creation.
When your Spirit moved over the face of the waters, and life, life, life took first breath.
You, and you alone, are the One we need now,
Come, Lord, come to your people,
We who cry now for your presence, we who seek your voice.
And when we hear it, we will praise you, we will sing songs of joy and deliverance.
We will sing songs of new creation, songs of healing and renewal.
Yea, come Lord, come. And we will sing our alleluias.

Introduction: *The following is a Prayer of Great Thanksgiving that can be used or adapted for the celebration of the Lord's Supper at your community during election season.*

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We praise you, God of Every Nation, for your wondrous deeds.

From nothing, you created all that is and called it good.

You call us good. You call our neighbor good.

You call our friend good. And you call our enemy good.

We do the hard, messy work of reconciliation because you first reconciled yourself to us, authoring all of creation and delighting in the work of your hands and your breath.

We stand in awe of all that you have done, and are doing, in your world, and we gather at your Table to lift up in gratitude our praise and wonder.

You called your people to be repairers of the breach.

Isa. 58:12

You called them to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you.

Mic. 6:8

You called forth a nation to live together in unity and fellowship.

Ps. 133:1

And likewise you call us to orient our worldview to our neighbor,

Matt. 22:34-40

To choose nonviolence when we're tempted to lash out,

Mark 6:29-31

And to welcome people from diverse places and ideologies to seek the common good.

Acts 16:11-15

As we gather at this Table to remember your love for us and neighbor,

We join the chorus of everlasting praise, [saying/singing]:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

As we gather in a time of particular division and discord,

we ask that your grace that finds us at this Table would be a grace that we share with our neighbor.

Your Resurrection is the single most powerful force in all of creation,

a force that demands of us our highest allegiance, our deepest trust, and our heartfelt longings.

Your Resurrection fills us with the joy of the truth that if all is not well, then all is not finished.

Ground that truth in our hearts, Gracious and Merciful Lord.

May it still our souls for the faithful living of these days.

Fill us with awe at the mystery of our faith, [saying/singing]:

**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

At this Table, God of Our Neighbors,
There is no Republican, there is no Democrat, there are only beloved Children of God.
Help us to receive the grace of this sacrament in gratitude,
and then go out into the world to share it in abundance.
For that is the fast that you choose:
that we would loose the bonds of injustice, undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free, to share our bread with the hungry,
and welcome the homeless poor into our house.
When the political atmosphere seeks to divide us,
May the grace found at your Table remind us that together, in your holy Name,
We can, and will, be repairers of the breach, not because it is easy, but because you demand it.
But you do leave us to this task alone, but walk alongside us as a friend.
And so may this holy meal, shared in thanksgiving,
remind us that we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
cheering us along as we run this race.
This we lift up to you, Gracious Lord.
Amen.

PSALM REFLECTIONS

REV. KARIE ANN CHARLTON
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Reflection on Psalm 100

We belong to God and to each other. We belong to something greater than ourselves, Love. Love calls all of us to live and worship as a community. This is relational work. Doing the work means we must examine all the ways that our community functions. Who are we leaving out of community? Who is being taken advantage of? Who is benefiting? When we see racism, sexism, classism, or any person or group being marginalized, we must correct our course, because none of us can freely praise God with joy until all of us are free.

Reflection on Psalm 148

For all are called to be friends, companions to the true Friend, giving their lives joyfully as co-creators and people of peace! Praises be to the Blessed One, the very Breath of our breath, the very Heart of our heart! (Nan C. Merrill Psalm 148)

The elements that we need to sustain life (air, water, food, shelter) can point us to something larger than our selves. The need for basic necessities can make them feel, well, more than basic; they become symbols that help us understand our relationship to the earth and to the divine and to each other. We are connected. We are connected by the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the earth on which we live.

In Psalm 148 all of creation is called to praise God, who is creator and life-giver. Elements and creatures praise God by holding their places, by being and doing what they are created to be. Nan Merrill captures in a more modern way what is meant by "raised up a horn for his people". People are invited to be in relationship with God, to be co-creators and people of peace.

When I think of creation, and co-creation, I think of the breath of God shared by God, by people, and by all of creation, for the purpose of simply being; being together; being in loving relationship; being one.

Prayer based on Psalm 148

Holy God, our Creator and ever-present companion, We thank you that you have provided the elements we need to sustain life: air, water, food, and shelter. Help us to see that we are connected to You and each other by the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the earth on which we live. We are called to share what we have of these valuable resources now and with future generations. Help us to be co-creators and people of peace. That our breath and our hearts be united in love for neighbors. Amen.

Prayer based on Psalm 118

We give thanks to You, O Holy One, for You are kind; your steadfast Love endures forever! We pray that you will unite us in your love. Help us find strength in You and each other as we continue Your work of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, visiting the prisoner, uplifting the oppressed, and giving good things to the poor.

We seek to join You, Holy God and our neighbors in co-creating a loving community aligned with Your work even when it puts us at odds with the powerful and upsets the status quo, and the systems set up to keep the rich in control. There will be times when we will want to give up and give in to the ways of patriarchy and capitalism, especially when we have the gender, sexual orientation, color, and economic status that benefit from the system that oppresses others. When we participate in systems that harm others, in truth, it hurts us all. We are all deeply connected. We are deeply connected in our pain and in our love. We pray and we hope all people can choose to connect with the Love that endures.

Holy God, we know there will be times when we feel alone in the work that we do to move towards a better world, but we are not alone. Your love reminds us that we are never alone. Help us to remember, when we are overwhelmed, tired, or frightened, we can find comfort, solidarity, and rest in our community. And we can trust your Love, O God and the love of your community. Love is stronger than death. Love is what will remain forever.

We give thanks to You, O Holy One, for You are kind; and your steadfast Love endures forever!

Prayer Based on Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord who made the heavens, earth, and sea. Lord, you made every creature from the cute to the terrifying and you delight in us all. Although, I know you don't see any of us as terrifying, even the Leviathan bring you delight as they play in the chaotic sea. Remember, O my soul, that God has defeated chaos by bringing order to creation. If the monsters of the deep are in God's hands so are the monsters in my head. God will surely calm the fears and anxiety in my mind too.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord who provides food abundantly for all to share. Lord, you have given us enough, more than enough and yet, we operate in scarcity. Ease our fears and free us from our anxiousness. In our fear, we tell each other scarcity lies that make us anti-neighbor. Help us to see your abundant creation and to live generously with our neighbors. When we share, we subvert the scarcity

mindset that compels us to hoard our resources. We receive from you, bread, oil, and wine. Let us prepare a table where there is always room for one more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. Bless the Lord who has breathed life into all living beings. Lord, you give us breath animating our life. We cannot hold it or create it on our own. We depend on each other and on plants to breathe clean air. We are all connected by the breath that we share. The righteous see this connection and honor it. The wicked refuse to adhere to community norms of taking care of one another. Let us rid ourselves of our wicked ways and live joyfully with one another. I will meditate on God's ways and live accordingly. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

OTHER RESOURCES

- [“The Time Is Now for an Election Sermon”](#) by Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
- [“The Sacred Right to Vote”](#) by Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
- [“Sacred Right to Vote” Resources](#)