

**Election  
Day  
2020  
Prayer  
Guide**

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First Presbyterian *Bend*

# Joining Together in Prayer

**On Election Day, First Presbyterian Church of Bend is inviting you to pray together as a community.** When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray he replied saying, "When you pray say this: Our Father, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." Prayer is our invitation to join God in bringing about a visible, tangible difference in the lives of real people and in the city and nation in which we live.

As followers of Jesus our ultimate identity is as God's beloved people. We are not Republican nor Democrat, but instead are called, "Friend" and "Beloved." This is a guide to praying for our country, the welfare of our neighbors, and the wisdom of our leaders. In this guide, you will find scriptures, written prayers, as well as creative, fun ideas to spark your imagination, move your body, and deepen your time of prayer.

In a world holding so much pain and need, may we join together in prayer that not only comforts, but also moves us to informed advocacy and action. And may we always know the God of Love hears us and promises to go with us.

**“History belongs to the intercessors, who believe the future into being. If this is so, then intercession, far from being an escape from action, is a means of focusing for action and of creating action. By means of our intercessions we veritably cast fire upon the earth and trumpet the future into being.”**

**-Walter Wink**

# 1

# “Be Still & Know That I am God”

From Psalm 46:

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change,  
Though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;  
Though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains tremble with its tumult.  
Selah.*

*God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;  
God will help it when the morning dawns.  
The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter;  
God utters a word, the earth melts.  
“Be still and know that I am God.”*

These words from Psalm 46 were written at a time when the author says, “the nations raged.” It seemed as if the whole world was at war. But God interrupts their anger, declaring, “Be still and KNOW that I am God!” This was not a call to inner peace. Instead this is God’s command to the people, maybe to us, to let go, to surrender. In Hebrew grammar the emphasis is on the part where God says, “and know.” In other words, we surrender so that we may know that God is in control. We let go of being “right” so that we can know God’s love.

The word “Selah” is an invitation to pause, to reflect on what was just said, and then to rejoice, to lift up your voice in praise. Try reading this psalm several times through, pausing to reflect on the words. When you’ve read through it several times, try to sit quietly, breathing deeply, hand on your heart, resting in the knowledge that God is in control and that God’s love always wins.

# 2

## Breath Prayer

You are invited to choose one or more of these breath prayers, inhaling and exhaling as you recite the scriptures several times through. You can practice these breath prayers sitting quietly or as you go about your day.

(From Romans 8:38-39)

Inhale: **Nothing can separate me,**  
Exhale: **from the love of God.**

(From Psalm 23)

Inhale: **I will not be afraid**  
Exhale: **for You are with me.**

(From Psalm 46:10)

Inhale: **Be still**  
Exhale: **and know you are God.**

(From Psalm 46:1)

Inhale: **You are our refuge**  
Exhale: **and our strength.**

(From Matt. 6:10)

Inhale: **On earth**  
Exhale: **as it is in heaven.**

(From Psalm 74:16)

Inhale: **Both day and night**  
Exhale: **belong to You.**

(From 1 John)

Inhale: **There is no fear**  
Exhale: **in your Love.**

(From Philippians 4:7)

Inhale: **Peace of Christ,**  
Exhale: **guard my heart and mind.**

(Scriptures from Sarah Bessey Prayers for Anxious Times [https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/breath-prayers-for-anxious-times.](https://sarahbessey.substack.com/p/breath-prayers-for-anxious-times))

# 3

## Using Music to Pray

**“I will sing of your love and justice;  
to you, Lord, I will sing praise.”**

Psalm 101:1

**“To sing is to pray twice”**

St. Augustine

**Find a playlist or a CD of hymns or other songs that speak the words of your soul.** If the other people in your house are amenable, turn the volume up and sing along, dancing and moving your body as you feel the music. If you need to keep the music quieter, sit quietly, focus on the words, breathe deeply as you listen.

# 4

## Use a Camera

**Taking photos captures the everyday beauty in the world.** Grab your camera and go for a prayer walk with the intention of taking photos of the beauty you see in people, buildings and nature. Please note, before you take a picture of a person it is always best to ask their permission. As you take pictures, pray this election brings healing and hope to those people and places in our community. Later in the day you can scroll through your pictures and pray for these people and places again.

**“In the Kingdom of God, we join with God in co-creation, in the work of the new earth. We love and we follow Jesus. We shape our lives into His life, to live here on earth as He would live among us. We weren’t called to follow political parties or ideology, nationalism, consumerism, or power. Instead, we were called to apprentice ourselves to Jesus’ way of life. We were called to be part of establishing the Kingdom of God here and now in our walking-around lives. Partnering with God to see the Kingdom come.”**

- Sarah Bessey  
Out of Sorts: Making Peace with an Evolving Faith

# 5

## Use Pen & Paper

- Write a letter to God expressing your thoughts, your hopes, your pain, your joy, your worries.
- Rewrite a Psalm in your own words.
- Experiment writing a short prayer poem or haiku.

# 6

## Use Your Phone

**Scroll through the contacts list on your phone,** praying for how this election might affect each person. You can also scroll through your Facebook or other social media friends.

If you want to take your prayer a step further, you can send a text or message to some of your contacts or Facebook friends asking how they are doing and how you might pray for them during this stressful season.

# 7

## Taste & See

**Try to engage all of your senses as you pray.**

Take a walk and listen to the birds, the wind in the trees, the cars whizzing by.

How do you hear God speaking?

Instead of closing your eyes in prayer, try opening them wide and noticing where you see evidence of God's spirit present or at work around you.

Practice looking for evidence of God's presence in the face of other people - what does that look like? How does it appear?

Notice the variety of fragrances as you take a walk in the woods or neighborhood. What scents distract you, trouble you, make you feel disconnected? What scents help you feel more closely attuned to God?

Each time you take a bite of food or a sip of drink, simply become aware that God is nourishing your body and soul. Offer a prayer of gratitude. Pray for those in our nation who struggle to put food on the table and how this election might affect them.

Wrap yourself in a prayer shawl to feel the warmth of an embrace by God and as a reminder to pray for others. Pray for those who are lonely.

Touch an object given to you as a gift, remember the love you felt when you received that gift. Pray that you might share this love with others during this tense election season.

# 8

## Lectio Divina

**Choose a reading from scripture;** the psalms or parts of the prophets or epistles are most useful for this style of prayer.

Read through the text very slowly.

When you are struck by a word or a phrase STOP.

Stay with the words that moved you, maybe repeating them slowly, allowing them to sink into your heart.

Only move on when you are quite ready.

# 9

## Draw or Doodle Your Prayer

**Use this link** <https://www.waterproofpaper.com/printable-maps/united-states-maps/printable-map-of-the-united-states.pdf> to print a copy of a map of the USA.

Let yourself simply draw your prayers on the map. Perhaps you'll pray for certain states or cities. Perhaps you'll pray for specific people. Perhaps different colors will represent your various emotions and prayers.

# 10 | Fasting

**The biblical principle of fasting** is a process of forgoing something (primarily food) in order that we might turn to God in a more intense and focused way.

While fasting implies abstaining from food, it more importantly means feasting on God - a complete dependence upon the presence of God beyond the sustenance of food. In doing so we live the words Jesus quoted during His own fast: "...humans do not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God..." Ironically, when we are weak in body, we are sometimes strongest in spirit.

You don't have to fast for an entire day(s). You can simply choose to fast for one meal using that time to intentionally seek God in prayer. If you choose to fast for a longer period of time please do so in a safe manner, drinking plenty of water and refraining from any strenuous work. Expect to feel some hunger pangs and discomfort - use those as a prompt to turn to God in prayer. Take time to remember those who regularly go without food, as a result of poverty.

Break your fast with a light, healthy meal and remember to drink plenty of water throughout the entire fast.

# 11 | Prayer Prompts for When You're Stuck

- Pray for candidates to seek God's guidance.
- Pray that candidates (and all of us!) would have listening ears and soft hearts.
- Pray for candidates to address poverty and justice issues.
- Pray for strength and encouragement for our leaders and election candidates.
- Pray that our leaders would commit to working together (and that we would too).
- Pray that we would see each other through Jesus' eyes.
- Pray using the prayer on the following page.

**Loving God,**

**You taught us to pray saying, “thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.” And so we find ourselves yearning, hoping, praying for your will to be done, here and now, today, on earth, just as it is in heaven. In this moment, Lord, we cry out for a government that will seek first your Kingdom, upholding the values of mercy, compassion and love. We pray for leadership that will work for justice, standing on the side of the oppressed, alleviating suffering, listening to and honoring the voice of the vulnerable. Help us to love our neighbors as ourselves and to work for reconciliation where divide is deep. Give us, your people, the ability to vote, not just with our ballot but with our lives, offering ourselves for the sake of the hurting. May we love mercy, act justly, and walk humbly with you. God, our hope is built on your love. Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory. May we pledge our allegiance to you. Amen.**

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