

Morning Meditation – Prayer on Election Eve

I invite you this morning to take a deep breath. Breathe in so that the incoming oxygen reaches all the way to your pinkie toes. Exhale out the exhaustion we have all been carrying trying to keep on, keeping on. Breathe in again the strength of the One who promises to always be present. Exhale out the fear that has for far too long controlled the radio stations we listen to in our minds. Breathe in an unceasing grace and unconditional love that we need every day. Exhale the pain, trusting God to help us process all that is swirling in our minds, hearts, souls, lives, community, country, and world.

Please pray with me.

O God, You are our help in ages past. You are our hope for years to come. We inhabit a moment that can be so overwhelming. The news cycles of raising cases of coronavirus, polarization, pain, an earthquake in Turkey and a typhoon in the Philippines feels like too much. Sometimes, it is helpful for us to remember the past. We remember growing up hearing stories about living through the Depression, Dust Bowl, and World Wars. We heard stories or experienced ourselves ducking under desks for fear of missiles. We have heard stories and had experiences of jobs lost and careers began. We heard stories from family and friends about encounters with discrimination in all forms, some as recent as last week. We heard stories about and have experienced family members grieved and new babies welcomed. We have heard stories about and experienced transitions that were welcomed and ones that caused frustration. Through those stories, a thread that weaves our lives together is Your holy resilience and a reminder that Your presence is what gets us through day-in-and-day-out. Move in our midst of this weary year and too many tears. We have known well the cries of the Psalmist, “How long?” We need Your wisdom and guidance amid rising cases of coronavirus that are overwhelming hospitals. Be with our frontline workers who are doing everything possible to save lives. We need Your wisdom amid a polarized country captive by narratives that keep us distrusting each other. We need Your love to so take hold of our hearts that we cannot help but let that be the truth we share and shine forth. We pray for our country as the election winds down and counting begins. We pray for those who work at the polls. We pray for healing. There is so much we face and for too long we have put off dealing with the difficulty of racism and discrimination to economic inequalities to health care to our own brokenness. We need You, O God. Help open our hearts to Your creative and liberating love not just this week because of an election, but every week of our lives. Breathe on us, breath of God, fill us with life anew, that we may live faithfully until we’ve seen this journey through. Amen.

Morning Meditation – A Prayer for Election Day

I invite you this morning to take a deep breath. Breathe in so the oxygen reaches every single cell in your body. Exhale the ways that as the Body of Christ we too often want to discount and disconnect from those who are different from us. Breathe in the presence of the holy that hovers in the air. Breathe out the feelings that we are alone. Breathe in an openness, trusting

God to help us process all that is swirling in our minds, hearts, souls, lives, community, country, and world.

Please pray with me.

Holy God, some days just feel heavy, like the humidity of a summer day in Florida. Some days feel too much for our minds, hearts, and souls to hold. Some days leave us swimming in an emotional stew with an undercurrent, not knowing where to anchor. Amid the storms we sail, from pandemics to polarization to persistent discrimination to pain that we cannot process, we need You, O God. We know that sometimes You calm the storm and sometimes You calm the sailor. Honestly, today, O God, we would like both. We pray for scientists working on a vaccine and hospital workers caring for patients. We pray for people who will vote differently than we vote, even as we struggle to live Your call of love. We pray for those who are out of work right now and facing eviction. We pray for each of us who are exhausted financially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. We need a balm to heal our wounded souls. We need a strength that doesn't come from the news, what we can buy, or even what we do. Creating and liberating One, move in our midst this day. Call us to be in concert with Your holy symphony that sees all creation as, "Good". Challenge us to help where we can. Help us live this way today and every day in this dwindling year of 2020. Be now our vision every moment, taking our lives, blessing us to be a blessing that is so needed right now. Amen.

Morning Meditation – A Prayer as we wait

I invite you this morning to take a deep breath. Breathe in so the oxygen reaches all those places of frustration. Exhale the uncertainty we carry. Breathe in the presence of the holy that holds every waiting moment. Breathe out the feelings that we are alone. Breathe in an openness, trusting God to help us process all that is swirling in our minds, hearts, souls, lives, community, country, and world.

Please pray with me.

God, You know all about waiting. Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years from the moment You promised them a child to Isaac (meaning, "laughter") first hearing the cry of their son. Moses never set foot in the Promised Land after wandering for forty years, eating manna every day, and preaching countless sermons. Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah might never anticipated the ways their words would both inspire and challenge people of faith for centuries. Even Jesus waited thirty-some years from being born in a barn to the moment he waded in the water for baptism. Be with us as we wait right now. Remind us that there is holiness woven into every day if only we let Your grace and love get a word in edgewise. Help us direct our energy, use our words, and be Your presence. God, we need Your firm foundation of faithful living in these days. As the hymn we sing proclaims, "Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore; let the gift of your salvation be our glory evermore. Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving

you whom we adore, serving you whom we adore.” Let those words be embodied and embraced in every life who read these words. Amen.

Morning Meditation – A Prayer with Our Hymnals Open

O God, I woke up this morning with my mind, stay on Jesus. I woke up this morning knowing that I had to lean into Your everlasting arms. I woke up this morning knowing full-well that I need Thee every hour. I woke up this morning with the hymnal in my heart longing to be expressed in what I do and say and go about this day.

I pray this morning realizing that You are the God of all the nations, “This is my song, O God of all the nations, A song of peace for lands afar and mine. This is my home, the country where my heart is; Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy shrine; But other hearts in other lands are beating with hopes and dreams as true and high as mine.” Those words sing to my soul. Those words call out to my heart to realize that so often my focus can be too narrow only on me. I forget the pain of my brothers and sisters in other countries also struggling with coronavirus, economic hardships, polarization, and pain. I can be unaware of violence in Vienna or Ethiopia; storms in Central America and the Philippians. I can be so caught up in my own narrative that I don’t listen to other’s stories or am too quick to dismiss or disregard rather than letting another’s story disrupt my way or agenda for the day. You, O God, along with the Spirit/Sophia/Wisdom, crafted and created us – all of us – in Your image. You crafted and created us with all the colors of the crayon box, with all the beautiful diverse understandings, with a variety of ways we can encounter and experience Your holiness. You love creation, all of it, from the tiniest particle of soil to the star dust twinkling thousands of miles away. From Sarasota to Seattle to Sidney to Sicily to the person next door on our street. This meta-narrative seems too big sometimes to live our lives by. Yet, it is a powerful truth, You invite us to hear knowing we will never fully understand. In Your mystery, some how and in some way, let these words I written move my heart this day. Ground me in grace. Lead me with love. Trusting in the One whose presence compels my mind, heart, and soul so that my mind stays on Jesus. Amen.

Morning Meditation – A Prayer for this Past Week

O God, it has been a week. In the last five days, the earth has traveled 8.015 million miles. I wonder how many miles my mind, heart, soul has traveled without really changing scenery? Even as so many of us stay close to home, the universe continues to expand, embrace new parts of space. We know Your creation, O God, continues to move in mysterious ways that we hardly grasp. It has been a week of swimming in an emotional stew. A week when some celebrated and others were heartbroken with concern. A week when voices yelled and in the quiet of a poll booth or by mail we casted votes. A week when some are still trying to recover from illnesses, surgeries, communities hard hit by hurricanes, earthquakes, a family member dying, a baby being born, a job lost and one gained, a fight with a family member and a moment of reconciliation. So much fills one second/one hour/one day, let alone one week, we can

hardly comprehend all that is happening within us or around. 8.015 million miles the earth has journeyed. How far have I journeyed, I wonder, O God? What have I discovered anew along familiar pathways? What amazing encounters happened on my daily walks? What ordinary moments suddenly became holy only to go right back to this new normal in the blink of an eye? Because while my scenery might not have changed drastically, dramatically, I have travelled right along with the earth. I have been caught in its spinning and felt the sacred stirring. Now I pause where I began on Monday with this breath. Breathe in. Exhale slowly. Breathe in deep with peace. Exhale out all that I need to let go of. Breathe in Your presence in this present moment, exhale trusting that You will guide me through this day. Guide me, O my Great Compass toward Your faithful way this day. Amen.