



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

**A Collection of Prayers for This Time in Our Country
especially for the Day of Inauguration of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris
January 20, 2021**

Prayer Resources from Office of Government Relations -The Episcopal Church

The above [website](#) contains resources and prayers of intercession and thanksgiving for our nation, for our government, for peace, for civic duty, and for healing. Included in this website are:

- Article: [4 Prayers for Justice](#) from Building Faith, a ministry of Virginia Theological Seminary
- Video: [Epiphany 2021: A Call to Prayer for our Nation from Presiding Bishop Curry](#)
- Video: [The Beatitudes](#), a beautiful reading of the gospel through multiple voices
- [Good News of Lament](#), a collection of resources around trauma and healing as well as support for grief
- [A Reflection on the nonviolent legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.](#)
- [Prayers for Justice and Reconciliation](#), a collection from the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

Prayers

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being, we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive. We love our friends and hate our enemies. We go the first mile but dare not travel the second. We forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves, we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against you. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know your will. Give us the courage to do your will. Give us the devotion to love your will. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Howard Thurman

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy Peace.” Teach me how to order my days that with sure touch I may say the right word at the right time and in the right way — lest I betray the spirit of peace. Let me not be deceived by my own insecurity and weakness which would make me hurt another as I try desperately to help myself. Keep watch with me, O my Father, over the days of my life, that with abiding enthusiasm I may be in such possession of myself that each day I may offer to Thee the full, unhampered use of me in all my parts as “an instrument of Thy Peace.” Amen.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu*Peace for the Children of God*

O God, all holy one, you are our Mother and Father, and we are your children. Open our eyes and our hearts so that we may be able to discern Your work in the universe and be able to see your features in every one of your children.

May we learn that there are many paths but all lead to you. Help us to know that you have created us for family, for togetherness, for peace, for gentleness, for compassion, for caring, for sharing.

May we know that you want us to care for one another as those who know that they are sisters and brothers, members of the same family, your family, the human family.

Help us to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, so that we may be able to live in peace and harmony, wiping away the tears from the eyes of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. And may we know war no more, as we strive to be what you want us to be: your children. Amen.

Presidential Prayers and Reflections**Abraham Lincoln**—Excerpt from *A Prayer for Peace*

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and for his orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

George Herbert Walker Bush_(1989)

My first act as President is a prayer. I ask you to bow your heads.

Heavenly Father, we bow our heads and thank You for Your love. Accept our thanks for the peace that yields this day and the shared faith that makes its continuance likely. Make us strong

to do Your work, willing to heed and hear Your will, and write on our hearts these words: "Use power to help people."

For we are given power not to advance our own purposes, nor to make a great show in the world, nor a name. There is but one just use of power, and it is to serve people. Help us to remember it, Lord.

The Lord our God be with us, as He was with our fathers; may He not leave us or forsake us; so that He may incline our hearts to Him, to walk in all His ways... that all peoples of the earth may know that the Lord is God; there is no other.

Barack Obama—National Day of Prayer (2016)

In times of steady calm and extraordinary change alike, Americans of all walks of life have long turned to prayer to seek refuge, demonstrate gratitude, and discover peace. Sustaining us through great uncertainty and moments of sorrow, prayer allows us an outlet for introspection, and for expressing our hopes, desires, and fears. It offers strength in the face of hardship, and redemption when we falter.

Every day, women and men use the wisdom gained from humble prayer to spread kindness and to make our world a better place. Faith communities at home and abroad have helped feed the hungry, heal the sick, and protect innocents from violence. Nurturing communities with love and understanding, their prayer inspires their work, which embodies a timeless notion that has kept humanity going through the ages — that one of our most sacred responsibilities is to give of ourselves in service to others.

The threats of poverty, violence, and war around the world are all too real. Our faith and our earnest prayers can be cures for the fear we feel as we confront these realities. Helping us resist despair, paralysis, or cynicism, prayer offers a powerful alternative to pessimism. Through prayer, we often gain the insight to learn from our mistakes, the motivation to always be better, and the courage to stand up for what is right, even when it is not popular. . . .

On this day, may our faiths enable us to sow the seeds of progress in our ever-changing world. Let us resolve to guide our children and grandchildren to embrace freedom for all, to see God in everyone, and to remember that no matter what differences they may have, they, just like we, will always be united by their common humanity.

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Prayers for Our Times

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For Order in the Liturgies of our Lives

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, your Word brought order out of chaos and orders our life in a sabbatical rhythm of day and night, work and rest. The liturgies of life have been disrupted by the urgencies of the moment. We are enveloped by a flood of formlessness and emptiness. Speak your Word into this present chaos and bring order to our lives. Let your Spirit blow across the face of the Deep and renew the face of the earth. Instill in us the rhythms of Word and prayer, work and rest, singing and stillness. Restore the liturgy of our lives and return us to the holy Liturgy of your gathered people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For our Church or Community

Loving God we pray for this church/community in this time of crisis. Deliver us from simply desiring to go “back to normal,” and give us grace instead to be open to the opportunities that your Spirit brings in this time of separation. Grant that we may come out of this crisis with open eyes, more fully available to the needs of those most vulnerable and those whose labor we have always depended upon. Give us creative hearts to embrace and carry forward the new ways we have found to connect with one another; and in your good time bring us safely back together as a people renewed in the knowledge of your faithfulness and abiding love, and strengthened for the work ahead. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. (BCP, p. 833)