

Providence Forge Presbyterian Church

Prayer Vigil Guide

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for participating in our 24-hour Holy Week prayer vigil. You've signed up to pray for an hour, and this guide is meant to help you know what to do with that time!

First, you may wonder **WHERE** to pray. You can pray anywhere! But you might give some forethought to this question so you can help yourself be in a place where there are few distractions during your prayer time. If you have a normal place to pray, then you are set. You are also welcome to come to the church to pray up on Wednesday, April 5 from 5-7pm and Thursday, April 6 from 3-5pm. Our vigil will end with the Maundy Thursday service at 7pm. There will be a prayer station set up in the parlor. You might also think of a place where you feel very connected to God, but can be apart from distractions or the temptation to sleep, a place where you can be comfortable and engaged at the same time.

Next think about your body and what to do with it while you pray. Sometimes the **POSITION** in which we pray makes a lot of difference. You might have a favorite that works for you or a place to lay down (but stay awake) or a place to walk and pray. I encourage you to think about this in advance so that it doesn't become a distraction when you pray.

If you are not familiar with praying for an extended time, you can start thinking about **HOW TO PRAY**. There are a few suggestions of different prayer methods and some "prayer classics" which come to us through the traditions of the church. There are some meditations which you can read and let guide your reflections. There are prayers of intercession. And there are prayers meant particularly for Lenten reflection.

The **GOAL** of this prayer vigil time is to collectively enter into prayer during this holiest time of year. As a church family we are joining together from wherever we are- it's a way of joining together even when we are apart. It's a way of trusting that we are partnering together, taking turns to cover our church, our community and our world with prayer. It's an opportunity to be filled by a closeness to God and create a culture in which prayer is woven into the fabric of our daily lives and our relationships with each other.

Grace and peace as you pray,

Pastor Cindy

The Great Litany (Book of Common Worship)

The Great Litany is appropriate for times of special petition or supplication. It may be sung or said. In daily prayer, there is a tradition that it is to be used on all Wednesdays and Fridays of Lent beginning the Friday after Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday. There is a long tradition of singing the Great Litany in procession on Sundays of Advent and Lent, and at penitential times.

Prayer of Approach to God

O God the Father, creator of heaven and earth,
Have mercy on us.

O God the Son, redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.

O God the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide,
Have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God,
Have mercy on us.

Prayers for Deliverance

Remember not, Lord Christ, our offenses, nor the offenses of our forebears. Spare us, good Lord, spare your people whom you have redeemed with your precious blood.
Spare us, good Lord.

From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all want of charity,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From all deadly sin; and from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and contempt for your Word and commandments,
Good Lord, deliver us.

From earthquake and tempest; from drought, fire, and flood; from civil strife and violence; from war and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared,
Good Lord, deliver us.

Prayer Recalling Christ's Saving Work

By the mystery of your holy incarnation, by your baptism, fasting, and temptation; and by your proclamation of the kingdom, **Good Lord, deliver us.**

By your bloody sweat and bitter grief; by your cross and suffering; and by your precious death and burial, **Good Lord, deliver us.**

By your mighty resurrection; by your glorious ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, **Good Lord, deliver us.**

In our times of trouble; in our times of prosperity; in the hour of death, and on the day of judgment, **Good Lord, deliver us.**

Prayers of Intercession

Receive our prayers, O Lord our God.

Hear us, good Lord.

For the church

Govern and direct your holy church; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.

Hear us, good Lord.

Enlighten all ministers with true knowledge and understanding of your Word, that by their preaching and living they may declare it clearly and show its truth.

Hear us, good Lord.

Encourage and prosper your servants who spread the gospel in all the world, and send out laborers into the harvest.

Hear us, good Lord.

Bless and keep your people, that all may find and follow their true vocation and ministry.

Hear us, good Lord.

Give us a heart to love and reverence you, that we may diligently live according to your commandments. Hear us, good Lord.

To all your people give grace to hear and receive your Word, and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit.

Hear us, good Lord.

Strengthen those who stand firm in the faith, encourage the fainthearted, raise up those who fall, and finally give us the victory. Hear us, good Lord.

For our country

Rule the hearts of your servants, the President of the United States, and all others in authority, that they may do justice, and love mercy, and walk in the ways of truth.

Hear us, good Lord.

Bless and defend all who strive for our safety and protection, and shield them in all dangers and adversities.

Hear us, good Lord.

Grant wisdom and insight to those who govern us, and to judges and magistrates the grace to execute justice with mercy.

Hear us, good Lord.

For all people

To all nations grant unity, peace, and concord, and to all people give dignity, food, and shelter.

Hear us, good Lord.

Grant us abundant harvests, strength and skill to conserve the resources of the earth, and wisdom to use them well.

Hear us, good Lord.

Enlighten with your Spirit all who teach and all who learn.

Hear us, good Lord.

Come to the help of all who are in danger, necessity, and trouble; protect all who travel by land, air, or water; and show your pity on all prisoners and captives.

Hear us, good Lord.

Strengthen and preserve all women who are in childbirth, and all young children, and comfort the aged, the bereaved, and the lonely.

Hear us, good Lord.

Defend and provide for the widowed and the orphaned, the refugees and the homeless, the unemployed, and all who are desolate and oppressed. Hear us, good Lord.

Heal those who are sick in body or mind, and give skill and compassion to all who care for them.

Hear us, good Lord.

Grant us true repentance, forgive our sins, and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your Holy Word.

Hear us, good Lord.

Concluding Prayers

Son of God, we ask you to hear us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his name you will be in the midst of them. Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of Peace and Surrender

O God of peace, You have taught us that in returning and rest, we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength. By the might of your spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where we may be still and know that you are God. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, forever and ever, Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you. And then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people. Through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen. (Book of Common Prayer)

Celtic prayer

I weave a silence onto my lips
I weave a silence into my mind
I weave a silence within my heart
I close my ears to distractions I close my eyes to attractions
I close my heart to temptation.
Calm me, O God, as you stilled the storm.
Still me, O God, keep me from harm. Let all tumult within me cease;
Enfold me, O God, in your peace. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (The Prayer Book of the New Zealand Anglican Church)

*Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver, Source of all that is and that shall be, Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven: The hallowing of your name echo through the universe! The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world! Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever. Amen.*

Carrying the Cross Prayer

- On those days when life seems too demanding with all its cares, burdens, and concerns . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we experience great loneliness deep inside and the pain of separation fills our spirits . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we feel the pain of our world and unite in compassion with the Earth's suffering people . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we struggle with decision-making and the time comes to make good choices about our lives . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we are with others in their physical pain or when we vigil with one who has a terminal illness . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we are asked to go the extra mile, to be generous with our time and our presence . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we feel weary and worn out, when it seems like all of our energy has been drained away . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we are challenged to risk our security and to accept new growth in our relationship with you . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we experience the effects of aging or extended illness on our bodies or our minds . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we feel discouraged, desolate, and depressed and want to withdraw from others . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When worries and concerns choke our peacefulness and leave us with anxiety and fear . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.
- When we harbor old wounds and are called to offer or to receive forgiveness . . . Jesus grant us strength to carry our cross.

Crucified Jesus, help us to take up our cross day by day. Through these crosses we can grow closer to you. Help us to lean on you and to learn from you. May we not give in to self-pity or self-doubt. Rather, let us trust in your presence which strengthens us. Encourage us on our tomb-like days. Remind us of your resurrection. Help us to keep our vision focused on life and growth. Amen.

- Joyce Rupp. "Out of the Ordinary: Prayers, Poems, and Reflections for every Season" (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 2000), 117.

Suggested Intercessory Prayers

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Almighty God, in Christ you taught us to pray,
and promised that we would receive all that we ask in his name.

Hear now our prayers:
for the church universal ...
for this congregation, its mission and ministry ...
for the healing of the earth ...
for peace and justice in the world ...
for nations and leaders ...
for our local community ...
for the poor and oppressed ...
for the bereaved and lonely ...
for all who need healing ...

For (special needs that you identify)

For those who have died and their families....

Guide us, O God, by your Holy Spirit,
that all of our prayers and all of our lives
may serve your will and show your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Methods for Prayer

Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina or divine reading is a historic, Christian practice that is based on the understanding that the Bible was never meant to be 'read' as one reads a newspaper or other books. This practice 'prays' the Word of God, meditating on the words as nourishment meant to strengthen us. Christians have prayed the Bible in this way throughout the centuries. Begin this practice by selecting a biblical passage of two-three verses. Some of my favorites are: John 10:2-4; verses from Psalm 23 or 103 (or any Psalm); Ecclesiastes 3
Lectio Divina has four spiritual movements or steps: reading, reflection, response and contemplation.

- Step 1: Read the Scripture passage either silently or aloud. Pay attention to the words.
- Step 2: Read the passage again, reflecting on the question: What touches my life in this passage today?
- Step 3: After reading the passage a third time, respond by putting your thoughts into a prayer, writing or drawing about them.
- Step 4: During the fourth and final reading, ask nothing; simply rest in the presence of God and experience God's guidance through the Word.

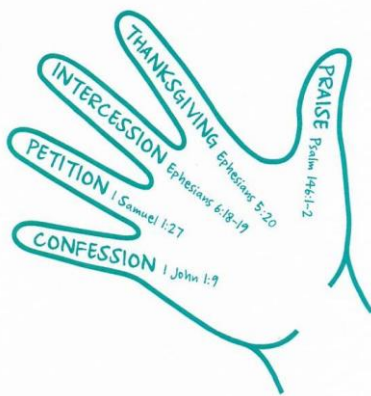
Breath prayer

Choose a phrase which most closely reflects your address for God, such as “loving Father”, “heavenly Savior”, “divine wisdom”, etc. Then choose a short phrase which is your petition to God at this time – fill me, guide me, give me peace, etc. Then close your eyes and focus on your breath. Breathe slowly and deeply. On your inhale, repeat your name for God in your mind, and on the exhale, repeat your petition. If your thoughts wander, simply release them and return to your breath prayer. Try this for about five minutes.

Jesus prayer

This prayer has been used from the time of the early church and is often cited as the means by which we might “pray without ceasing.” It is a simple repetition of “**Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.**” This prayer can be used throughout the day and often instills a sense of peace, helping one who prays it stay centered in God.

aspect of prayer:



Prayer Hand

The Prayer Hand is an easy way to remember the five essential aspects of prayer that Jesus taught in the Lord’s

Prayer: confession, petition, intercession, thanksgiving, praise. Each finger provides a focus for a particular aspect of prayer.

1. Praise (thumb): Begin with praise for God. Use words that convey your relationship with God, such as Loving Father, Gracious Lord, Guiding Shepherd.
2. Thanksgiving (first finger): Thank God for the ways God is present and active in our lives.
3. Intercession (second finger): Pray for the needs of others.
4. Petition (ring finger): Share particular concerns in your own life.
5. Confession (pinky): Ask for forgiveness for things you have done or said that you know are against God’s will and commit to changing those things.

Body prayer

Try various prayer postures if you feel comfortable doing so. This might include kneeling, bowing, lying face down on the floor, raising your arms in a posture of praise, holding your palms face up on your lap as a symbol of receptivity to God, etc. The Catholic tradition of crossing themselves is another kind of body prayer. If you like, try this while reciting the Great Commandment “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”

The Daily Examen

The **Daily Examen** is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience. The method presented here is adapted from a technique described by Ignatius Loyola in his [*Spiritual Exercises*](#). St. Ignatius thought that the Examen was a gift that came directly from God, and that God wanted it to be shared as widely as possible. One of the few rules of prayer that Ignatius made for the Jesuit order was the requirement that Jesuits practice the Examen twice daily—at noon and at the end of the day. It's a habit that Jesuits, and many other Christians, practice to this day. It has five steps, which most people take more or less in order, and it usually takes 15 to 20 minutes per day.

1. Become aware of God's presence.
2. Review the day with gratitude.
3. Pay attention to your emotions.
4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it. Our Lenten devotions suggest an area of focus each day.
5. Look toward tomorrow.

Pray Scripture

Pick up a Bible and start reading. Select a verse such as, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me," (Matthew 25:40) and turn it into a prayer. "God help me to reach out to the least of these in the world and treat them as your beloved children." Or, select a psalm as an inspiration for prayer. Another idea is to take the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) and write your own translation in a way that reflects your life and needs.

Praying with Music

<https://www.prayerandpossibilities.com/sing-to-the-lord-music-as-prayer/>

- *Let the song be your prayer.* Sing along and allow the words of the song to be your prayer. Sing it. Listen to it. Let the song permeate your heart. Allow the song to open your heart and mind to conversations with God. If a verse or a few words tug at your heart, enter the conversation with God. Try putting a single song on repeat. Start off by listening to the words and allowing the music to move my soul. Begin to sing along, singing heartfelt words of prayer to God.
- *Pray the lyrics.* Hymns and worship songs are based on prayer and Scripture. Try using just the lyrics for your prayer. Don't sing along. Instead, simply read the words, taking time to consider what they mean and how they can be your prayer. Traditional hymns work well for this approach. Slowing down and reading the words brings deeper understanding to these beautiful hymns.
- *Use music to help you focus.* Do you listen to music when you study or work? Music has a profound ability to drown out distractions and help us focus. Music can do the same for your prayers. Try putting some soft music on in the background for your prayers to help you focus.