

## Prayer service in unsettled times

*We gather tonight in anxious times, after a particularly unsettling day in our nation. We gather around scripture, to remind ourselves of God's unchanging faithfulness in the midst of the whiplash of history and our own lives. In times like these when our own words so easily fail us, or our feelings come out sideways, we rely on liturgical prayers and on songs - all written in other places and times. I need that - we all do - to place a check on our pride and our certainty that we are the center of everything, and to anchor our hopes in God alone.*

*God gets plenty of prayers from me in fragments, with all my grief and frustration in full flower - and I hope you pray freely like that as well. But tonight, together, we'll have some silence, some song, some scripture, and some words that others have given to help us all to pray.*

*(silence - candle)*

### Invocation

In the name of the Father,  
And of the + Son,  
And of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

### **ACS 1015 As a mother comforts her child**

*As a mother comforts her child, so God will comfort you.*

*As a hen gathers her brood, so Christ will gather you.*

*As a wise one counsels her friend, so the Spirit will counsel you.*

*The Trinity of love will be with you.*

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Show us your mercy, O God,  
**and grant us your salvation.**  
Give us the joy of your saving help again,  
**and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.**  
Give peace in all the world;  
**for only in you can we live in safety.**

Keep the nations under your care,  
**and guide us in the way of justice and truth.**

Let your way be known upon earth;  
**your saving health among all nations.**

Let not the needy be forgotten,  
**nor the hope of the poor be taken away.**

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
**and sustain me with your Holy Spirit.**

Lord, hear my prayer,  
**and let my cry come before you.**

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**

Let us pray.

Gracious God, the news of this day has torn at our hearts. We are walking through the valley of shadow. In our anxiety we gather before you, O God, our rock and refuge. You are our comfort. You are our hope. You know the sorrow of our hearts - tend to our hearts now with your mercy, and open them to your loving presence. We pray in the name of Jesus, Amen.

### **Psalm 90**

Lord, you have been our dwelling place  
in all generations.

Before the mountains were brought forth,  
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turn us back to dust,  
and say, "Turn back, you mortals."

For a thousand years in your sight  
are like yesterday when it is past,  
or like a watch in the night.

You sweep them away; they are like a dream,  
like grass that is renewed in the morning;  
in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;  
in the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger;  
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.  
You have set our iniquities before you,  
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.  
For all our days pass away under your wrath;  
our years come to an end like a sigh.  
The days of our life are seventy years,  
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;  
even then their span is only toil and trouble;  
they are soon gone, and we fly away.  
Who considers the power of your anger?  
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.  
So teach us to count our days  
that we may gain a wise heart.  
Turn, O LORD! How long?  
Have compassion on your servants!  
Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,  
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.  
Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us,  
and as many years as we have seen evil.  
Let your work be manifest to your servants,  
and your glorious power to their children.  
Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,  
and prosper for us the work of our hands—  
O prosper the work of our hands!

*(silence - candle)*

### **ELW 632 O God our Help in Ages Past**

*O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home:*

*Under the shadow of your throne your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone, and our defense is sure.*

*Before the hills in order stood or earth received its frame,  
from everlasting you are God, to endless years the same.*

*A thousand ages in your sight are like an evening gone,  
short as the watch that ends the night before the rising sun.*

*Time, like an ever-rolling stream, bears all our years away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream dies at the op'ning day.*

*O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come,  
still be our guard while troubles last and our eternal home.*

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

## **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.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy habitation of the Most High.

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;  
he utters his voice, the earth melts.

The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge. *Selah*

Come, behold the works of the LORD;  
see what desolations he has brought on the earth.

He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;  
he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.

“Be still, and know that I am God!  
I am exalted among the nations,  
I am exalted in the earth.”

The LORD of hosts is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our refuge.

*(silence - candle)*

### **1035 Though the Earth Shall Change**

*Though the earth shall change, though the mountains tremble,  
Though the waters rage, you, God, are here,  
Though the nations war, though the peoples battle,  
Though the empire falters, we will not fear.*

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### **Matthew 5:13-16**

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

*(silence - candle)*

### **ACS 1023 God alone be praised**

*Oceans rise, the coastland trembles; mountains melt and dry earth  
crumbles.*

*All the world with longing groans.*

*Love abides, this gracious promise is our help, our hope and solace.*

*God's strong word is solid ground.*

*Nations rage, the empire falters; seeking refuge, exiles wander.*

*Walls and weapons rise from fear.*

*Through this wilderness a river flows to heal and bless us ever.*

*God the crucified dwells here.*

*Come and see; God's mercy gathers all that sin and grief have shattered.*

*Life from fields of death is raised.'*

*Peace, be still; lewt prideful thunder yield to songs of joy and wonder.*

*God and God alone be praised.*

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**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

### **ACS 1083 Be still and know**

*Be still, and know that I am God.*

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### **Prayers**

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of trouble, be to us a sure guardian and rock. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage. Make us always remember your generosity and constantly do your will. Bless our land with honesty in the workplace, truth in education, and honor in daily life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance; and from every evil course of action. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance.

Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

O God, give us grace to set a good example to all among whom we live, to be just and true in all our dealings, to be strict and conscientious in the discharge of every duty; pure and temperate in all enjoyment, gracious and generous and courteous toward all; so that the mind of Jesus Christ may be formed in us and all may know that we are his disciples; in whose name we pray.

**Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us.

**Amen.**

*(silence - candle)*

### **ELW 629 Abide With Me**

*Abide with me, fast falls the eventide.  
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.  
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,  
help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.*

*Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;*



*earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
change and decay in all around I see;  
O thou who changest not, abide with me.*

*I need thy presence ev'ry passing hour;  
what but thy grace can foil the tempter's pow'r?  
Who like thyself my guide and stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.*

*I fear no foe, with thee at hand to bless;  
ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?  
I triumph still, if thou abide with me!*

*Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes,  
shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies;  
heav'n's morning breaks,  
and earth's vain shadows flee;  
in life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.*

Text: Henry F. Lyte, 1793-1847

### **Charge and Blessing**

Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return no one evil for evil; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; love and serve the Lord; rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The lord's face shine on you with Grace and Mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

Amen