

ELECTION SEASON PRAYER GUIDE

Episcopal High School - FALL 2020

The Rev. Arthur A. Callaham
Chaplain

“And to make a right beginning . . .”

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

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 well-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.*

BCP 102

This prayer, which has been a part of the Book of Common Prayer since 1662, is borrowed from medieval manuscripts of the Eastern Orthodox liturgies of [St. John Crystostom](#) and [St. Basil](#). The present copy has been revised and updated to bring the current translation more in line with common parlance.
[130]

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INTRODUCTION

As a resource for this election season, we offer the following collection of Prayers from the *Book of Common Prayer* and other Episcopal Church resources for use in your daily devotions. Each of these prayers will be included in the daily chapel liturgies here at Episcopal High School and we hope that you will join with us as you prepare to exercise your right to participate in our local, city, state and national government.

The tradition of offering prayer for the civic order and those who govern likely has its roots in the Christendom of late antiquity and the medieval west. Though both Jesus and St. Paul commend the practice of praying for those in authority, neither is very clear about how, exactly, the faithful are to pray. Not to worry, though. By the dawn of the modern era, western traditions, both Catholic and Protestant, had fully clarified the process into a well-defined body of prayers related both to earlier notions of “the divine right of kings” and to later ideas about the “established” (i.e. state-sponsored) church.

While the American commitments to democracy (i.e. the selection of leaders by humans rather than God) and freedom of religious expression (n.b. the “Establishment Clause” of the First Amendment to the Constitution) may have challenged some of the foundations for the whole exercise of praying for civic leaders, the momentum of tradition coupled with a deepening,

incarnational sense of the God's participation in all human affairs led the newly formed Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America to continue praying for our leaders even as we rejected despotism. Such prayers remain common practice to this day.

The prayers that follow are drawn from the traditions of The Episcopal Church and the broader Anglican Communion. As you will see, many have roots that run much deeper into the past than either the most recent revision of The Book of Common Prayer (1979) or even the founding of the Episcopal Church in this country (1789). We've intentionally chosen older prayers so as to highlight the fact that the topics addressed are broader and more timeless than any current attempts to use similar language to polarize the contemporary electorate. When William Temple speaks of "the welfare of [God's] people" (pg. 6) or George Zebreskie asks God to "fill [our leaders] with the love of truth and righteousness" (p. 11), neither had specific Twenty-first Century candidates, programs, or policies in mind. Rather they were seeking God in their own day and trusting God to be continually present through the ages to come.

So, we find ourselves in league with these authors and with the generations of faithful women and men who have prayed these same prayers throughout the years. Though each of us has our own rational thoughts, beliefs and opinions about which policies and candidates will best help God in bringing about the divine kingdom "on earth as it is in heaven," and these ideas often put us in tension with one another, we trust that God will hear us

most clearly when we pray simply for divine presence in the midst of it all. For, only through God's presence and the community built through such shared exercises of prayer and worship can we hope to share the Good News of hope and healing that Jesus, himself, gave his life for.

Please join the entire Episcopal High School community in offering your prayers and intercessions for leaders, voters and candidates. Use the prayers in this volume as your piety permits, or simply commit to bringing these issues to mind as you spend time in relationship with the divine. We are thankful for you all as you make time for this discipline of unity.

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EARLY VOTING

A Prayer of Self-Dedication

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to *thee*, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly *thine*, utterly dedicated *unto thee*; and then use us, we pray *thee*, as *thou wilt*, and always to *thy* glory and the welfare of *thy* people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

BCP 832

This collect was written by Archbishop of Canterbury [William Temple](#). Temple became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1942, when a German invasion seemed likely. He worked for the relief of Jewish refugees from Naziism, and publicly supported a negotiated peace, as opposed to the unconditional surrender that the Allied leaders were demanding. According to hagiographer James Keifer, “Temple’s admirers have called him ‘a philosopher, theologian, social teacher, educational reformer, and the leader of the ecumenical movement of his generation,’ ‘the most significant Anglican churchman of the twentieth century,’ ‘the most renowned Primate in the Church of England since the English Reformation,’ ‘Anglican’s most creative and comprehensive contribution to the theological enterprise of the West.’” [568]

WEDNESDAY,
21,2020

OCTOBER

For Elections and Public Service

We remember today before God candidates for public office and all those who are and will be voting in elections this fall. We remember the men and women who have gone out from this school to serve God's people in government and public service. Help us, God, to be a people mindful of your presence. You stand over history and are present in the midst of us in the form of the poor and the powerless. Help us to do what is right and just using the tools of reason, compassion, and wisdom. Help us to be good citizens, to work for the common good, to be willing to sacrifice whatever it takes to work with you to restore your creation. Help us make your world the place where your will is done. We pray this in the name of Jesus who suffered injustice and rose to new life. *Amen*

NAES 6

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020

For those who Influence Public Opinion

Almighty God, you proclaim your truth in every age by many voices: Direct, in our time, we pray, those who speak where many listen and write what many read; that they may do their part in making the heart of this people wise, its mind sound, and its will righteous; to the honor of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 827

This collect was added to the Book of Common Prayer in 1972. It is a slightly revised version of a prayer attributed E. Milner-White (1884-1963) that had already appeared in Rodenmayer's (ed.) 1960 volume The Pastor's Prayer Book. [564]

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2020

On the Feast of St. James of Jerusalem

Grant, O God, that, following the example of your servant James the Just, brother of our Lord, your Church may give itself continually to prayer and to the reconciliation of all who are at variance and enmity; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and ever. *Amen.*

BCP 245

The Feast Day of [St. James of Jerusalem](#), often called “Brother of our Lord,” or “James the Just” to distinguish him from at least two other prominent Jameses, was new to the Episcopal Church in 1979. The associated collect was written by the Rev. Dr. Massey H. Sullivan, Jr.. Of the prayer, Marion Hatchette notes that, “the petition calls to our minds the ministry of reconciliation performed by James in his position as head of the church in Jerusalem and he labored to reconcile Jewish and Gentile Christians in one body.” [206]

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2020

For Sound Government

O Lord our Governor, bless the leaders of our land, that we may be a people at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth.

To the President and members of the Cabinet, to Governors of States, Mayors of Cities, and to all in administrative authority, grant wisdom and grace in the exercise of their duties.

To Senators and Representatives, and those who make our laws in States, Cities, and Towns, give courage, wisdom, and foresight to provide for the needs of all our people, and to fulfill our obligations in the community of nations.

To the Judges and officers of our Courts give understanding and integrity, that human rights may be safeguarded and justice served.

And finally, teach our people to rely on your strength and to accept their responsibilities to their fellow citizens, that they may elect trustworthy leaders and make wise decisions for the well-being of our society; that we may serve you faithfully in our generation and honor your holy Name. *Amen*

BCP 821

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2020

For the President of the United States and all in Civil Authority

O Lord our Governor, whose glory is in all the world: We commend this nation to *thy* merciful care, that, being guided by *thy* Providence, we may dwell secure in *thy* peace. Grant to the President of the United States, the Governor of this State, and to all in authority, wisdom and strength to know and to do *thy* will. Fill them with the love of truth and righteousness, and make them ever mindful of their calling to serve this people in *thy* fear; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who *liveth* and *reigneth* with *thee* and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. *Amen*

BCP 820.

“This [prayer] was added to the Prayer Book in 1928 as an alternative to the Prayer for the President in Morning Prayer (a revised of that for the Sovereign in English Books). It has been attributed to Mr. George Zabriskie of the [1928] revision commission’s Committee on Morning Prayer. It contains allusions to Psalm 8:1 and Isaiah 11:2.” [560]

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020

For the Congress

O God, the fountain of wisdom, whose will is good and gracious, and whose law is truth: We beseech *thee* so to guide and bless our Senators and Representatives in Congress Assembled that they may enact such laws as shall please *thee*, to the glory of *thy* Name and the welfare of this people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BCP 821

This prayer was also penned by Mr. George Zebriskie for the 1928 Prayer Book. [560]

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2020

For Courts of Justice

Almighty God, *who sittest* in the throne judging right: We humbly beseech *thee* to bless the courts of justice and the magistrates in all this land; and give unto them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, that they may discern the truth, and impartially administer the law in the fear of *thee* alone; through him who shall come to be our Judge, *thy* Son our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

BCP 821

This collect was written by committee in 1928 and was edited by the same Mr. George Zebriskie who was responsible for the two preceding prayers. It calls to mind [Psalm 9:4](#), [Isaiah 11:1-5](#) and the [Te Deum](#). [561]

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2020

For Local Government

Almighty God our heavenly Father, send down upon those who hold office in this State the spirit of wisdom, charity, and justice; that with steadfast purpose they may faithfully serve in their offices to promote the well-being of all people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 821

This collect is a revised form of a prayer from the Canadian Prayer Book of 1959. [561]

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2020

For our Country

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage: We humbly beseech thee that we may always prove ourselves a people mindful of thy favor and glad to do thy will. Bless our land with honorable industry, sound learning, and pure manners. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion; from pride and arrogance, and from every evil way. Defend our liberties, and fashion into one united people the multitudes brought hither out of many kindreds and tongues. Endue with the spirit of wisdom those to whom in thy Name we entrust the authority of government, that there may be justice and peace at home, and that, through obedience to thy law, we may show forth thy praise among the nations of the earth. In the time of prosperity, fill our hearts with thankfulness, and in the day of trouble, suffer not our trust in thee to fail; all which we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 820

“Though this prayer has sometimes been attributed to George Washington, it was written in 1882 by the Rev. George Lyman Locke during a visit at the home of [William Reed Hunting](#), the most active member of the commission for Prayer Book revision which issued the Book of 1882.” [560]

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2020

For Cities

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City to which the nations of the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of the earth. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 825

The Prayer for Cities was written in 1972 by the Rev. J. Robert Zimmerman. It calls to mind 'Day of the Lord' images of Jerusalem from the Old Testament and descriptions of the New Jerusalem from the Revelation to St. John in the New Testament. [563]

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2020

For Towns and Rural Areas

Lord Christ, when you came among us, you proclaimed the kingdom of God in villages, towns, and lonely places: Grant that your presence and power may be known throughout this land. Have mercy upon all who live and work in rural areas and grant that all the people of our nation may give thanks to you for food and drink and all other bodily necessities of life, respect those who labor to produce them, and honor the land and the water from which these good things come. All this we ask in your holy Name. *Amen.*

BCP 825

This prayer, written by the Rev. Dr. H. Boone Porter was created specifically for the 1972 Prayer Book. [563]

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2020

For the Nation

Lord God Almighty, you have made all the peoples of the earth for your glory, to serve you in freedom and in peace: Give to the people of our country a zeal for justice and the strength of forbearance, that we may use our liberty in accordance with your gracious will; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

BCP 258

Adapted from a prayer by Henry Scott Holland of the Church of England to fit the context of The Episcopal Church, this prayer dates to the middle of the 20th century and was included for the first time in the 1979 Prayer Book. [214]

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020

For the Human Family

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 815

The Rev. Dr. Charles P. Price wrote this prayer specifically for the 1979 prayer book. Price was an episcopal priest and a professor at both the Virginia Theological Seminary and at Harvard University [557]

ELECTION DAY

For Guidance

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with *thy* most gracious favor, and further us with *thy* continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in *thee*, we may glorify *thy* holy Name, and finally, by *thy* mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 832

This collect for Guidance, one of two in the 1979 Prayer Book, dates back to the Gregorian Sacramentary of the 10th Century. It has been included in the Prayer Books of both the Church of England and, later, The Episcopal Church since 1549. [567]

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2020

For an Election

Almighty God, to whom we must account for all our powers and privileges: Guide the people of the United States in the election of officials and representatives; that, by faithful administration and wise laws, the rights of all may be protected and our nation be enabled to fulfill your purposes; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BCP 822

This collect was originally developed for Prayers New and Old, a 1960 publication of the [Forward Movement](#). The Forward Movement was established by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1934. Originally charged to “reinvigorate the life of the church and to rehabilitate its general, diocesan, and parochial work,” Forward movement is now one of the oldest and largest publishers of devotional and educational materials in the Episcopal Church. [561]

RESULTS

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. *Amen.*

BCP 832

The provenance of this prayer is unclear. It first appeared in French in 1912 in a magazine published by a small Parisian fraternity within the catholic church. The prayer became very popular during the war years of the 20th century and has been set to several beautiful musical settings. Unfortunately, it cannot be definitively linked to Francis of Assisi, though it is consistent with his theology and teachings about service.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2020

For Guidance

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light *riseth* up in darkness for the godly: Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what *thou wouldst* have us to do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in *thy* light we may see light, and in *thy* straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP 832

Appearing first, for The Episcopal Church, in the 1928 Prayer Book, it is first referenced in the appendix of William Bright's Ancient Collects. It draws imagery from several biblical passages including [Psalm 25:8](#), [Isaiah 11:2](#), [Psalm 36:9](#), and [Jeremiah 31:9](#). [568]

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2020

For those who suffer for the sake of Conscience

O God our Father, whose Son forgave his enemies while he was suffering shame and death: Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience; when they are accused, save them from speaking in hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; when they are imprisoned, save them from despair; and to us your servants, give grace to respect their witness and to discern the truth, that our society may be cleansed and strengthened. This we ask for the sake of Jesus Christ, our merciful and righteous Judge. *Amen.*

BCP 823

The Rev. Dr. Charles P. Price drafted this prayer in the mid 1970s specifically for the 1979 Prayer Book. [561]

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2020

In Times of Conflict

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

BCP 824

Developed originally as a proposal for the early twentieth century revision of the English Prayer Book, this collect was new to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer [561]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2020

For Peace

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. *Amen.*

BCP 815

This prayer for peace originally appeared in the 1930 volume, Occasional Prayers Reconsidered, published by the [Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge](#) (SPCK). The London based SPCK, is the oldest mission society in the Anglican tradition, founded in 1698 by [Thomas Bray](#) [557]

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2020

For Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly City, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and for ever. *Amen.*

BCP 395

This collect, drawn from the prayers which bring the weekly Prayers of the People to a close during the celebration of Holy Communion, appears first in several medieval missals (instructions for leading worship services). The prayer invokes the words of Jesus, himself, as recorded in [John 16:27](#). The current form of the prayer was first used in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer. [408]

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2020

For Peace

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, that in tranquility your dominion may increase until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

BCP 258

“This collect is based on a prayer by Francis Paget, bishop of Oxford (1902-1911); it is included in the English revision of 1928, the South African, the Indian, and the Canadian Prayer Books [214]

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2020

In Thanksgiving For the Nation

Almighty God, giver of all good things: We thank you for the natural majesty and beauty of this land. They restore us, though we often destroy them.

We thank you for the great resources of this nation. They make us rich, though we often exploit them.

We thank you for the men and women who have made this country strong. They are models for us, though we often fall short of them.

We thank you for the torch of liberty which has been lit in this land. It has drawn people from every nation, though we have often hidden from its light.

We thank you for the faith we have inherited in all its rich variety. It sustains our life, though we have been faithless again and again.

Help us, O Lord, to finish the good work here begun. Strengthen our efforts to blot out ignorance and prejudice, and to abolish poverty and crime. And hasten the day when all our people, with many voices in one united chorus, will glorify your holy Name. *Amen.*

BCP 838

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020

A Collect for Independence Day

Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

BCP 242

“This is a revised version of a collect, first included in the Prayer Book of 1928, composed by Bishop Edward Lambe Parsons of California. [202]”

REFERENCES

- Prayer texts are from the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer* and are referenced, in the traditional style (BCP ____).
- Commentary is largely taken from Marion J. Hachette's masterwork, *Commentary on the America Prayer Book* (1980, Seabury Press). Quotations are Hachett's own words. All references are given by page number only.
- The Prayer *For Elections and Public Service* on Wednesday, November 21, 2020, is taken from John F. Smith's *Cycle of Prayer for Episcopal Schools, 2nd Edition* which is published by the National Association of Episcopal Schools.