

**For People Who Hunger
for a World that is
Open, Inclusive, Just, and
Compassionate**



**40 Days of Prayer
Before the Election**

Compiled by Rev. David Bahr, Pastor

**Mission Hills United Church of Christ
San Diego, California**



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Friends of Faith and Conscience

As we move closer to yet another of the most consequential elections in our lifetimes, we join with Christians who see our faith in radically different ways than those who often speak the loudest. This is not advocacy for any particular candidate but a vision: not of power over others but power with – hands joined together in cooperation to love and serve the most vulnerable of our neighbors. We seek to follow Jesus who models a life of sacrifice and the Kingdom of God, of which Jesus spoke so often, as a world that is open, inclusive, just and compassionate.

In response, I have compiled this resource with prayers from famous theologians and friends as well as the inspired writings of poets – along with my photos. I was first inspired to do so in 2020 and it as important today as ever.

These prayers and poems are presented with the hope – and belief – that prayer changes things: the people for whom we pray and the world. *But especially, prayer changes us.* So, along with organizing and voting, pray like the fate of the world depends on it.

Rev. David Bahr, Pastor of Mission Hills UCC, San Diego, California



Day 40 – September 26, 2024

On Lost Sheep and Rejoicing – Peter Bolland

Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Southwestern College, and
author of *The Seven Stone Path: An Everyday Journey to Wisdom*

“Don’t get political,” they say, “just preach God’s word.”

“Don’t get political,” they say, “just sing your little songs.”

“Don’t get political,” they say, “take down those rainbow flags.”

But what are politics but the enactment of our values?

What are politics but actions that bring our vision to life, the way
lifting a sculpture out of a bath of water reveals its beauty?

Is our sacred call to universal, unconditional loving-kindness political?

Is our natural impulse to stand between harm and its victims political?

Is our bottomless longing for freedom—our own and everyone else’s—political?

Truth is the what, politics is the how.

Love is the mission, politics is the means.

Justice is the journey, politics is the road, and the wagon.

Without politics, truth, love, and justice are just dots on a map.

We get the society we deserve—and we deserve better,
which means we have work to do.

Suffering in silence isn’t enough. Shaking your head isn’t enough.

Disgust that does not move you to act is self-indulgence, arrogance even.

What if feeling hopeless is a way of hiding from responsibility?

What if giving up is a luxury we cannot afford?

Is longing for less gun violence divisive?

Is naming and calling out racism, anti-Semitism, and all othering divisive?

Is the comfort of those inside the circle more important than the suffering of
those cast out?

Whom shall we serve? Those already safe, or those still in danger?

Who among you would not leave the ninety-nine and go after the one lost
sheep?

Is rescuing the lost sheep, and carrying her home on your shoulders political?

Are the tears of joy at your reunion political? Amen



Day 39 – September 27

Amanda Gorman, excerpt from *The Hill We Climb*

When day comes we ask ourselves,
where can we find light in this never-ending shade?
The loss we carry,
a sea we must wade

We've braved the belly of the beast
We've learned that quiet isn't always peace
And the norms and notions of what just is
Isn't always just-ice

And yet the dawn is ours
before we knew it
Somehow we do it
Somehow we've weathered and witnessed
a nation that isn't broken but simply unfinished

And yes we are far from polished
far from pristine
but that doesn't mean we are striving to form a union that is perfect
We are striving to forge a union with purpose
To compose a country committed to all cultures, colors, characters and
conditions of man

And so we lift our gazes not to what stands between us
but what stands before us
We close the divide because we know, to put our future first,
we must first put our differences aside
We lay down our arms so we can reach out our arms to one another
We seek harm to none and harmony for all

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true:
That even as we grieved, we grew
That even as we hurt, we hoped
That even as we tired, we tried
That we'll forever be tied together, victorious
Not because we will never again know defeat
but because we will never again sow division



Day 38 – Sept 28

Rev. Reinhold Niebuhr, UCC pastor/theologian (1892–1971)

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

Day 37 – Sept 29

Prayer from Valarie Kaur, *Sikh activist, documentary film maker, lawyer, founder of Groundswell Movement, America’s largest multi-faith online organizing network, and author of SEE NO STRANGER.*

May we sit in stillness and be present to this bright pain.

May we let our tears flow.

May we awaken to the truth — that we are only as strong or safe or well as the most vulnerable among us.

May we look upon the faces of others as sisters, brothers, and siblings, and say: You are a part of me that I do not yet know.

May we begin to reimagine a world where we see no stranger, where no person is disposable.

May we make revolutionary love a conscious practice in our homes and hearts and in the streets.

May we breathe and push and begin to birth the world we dream.





Day 36 – Sept 30

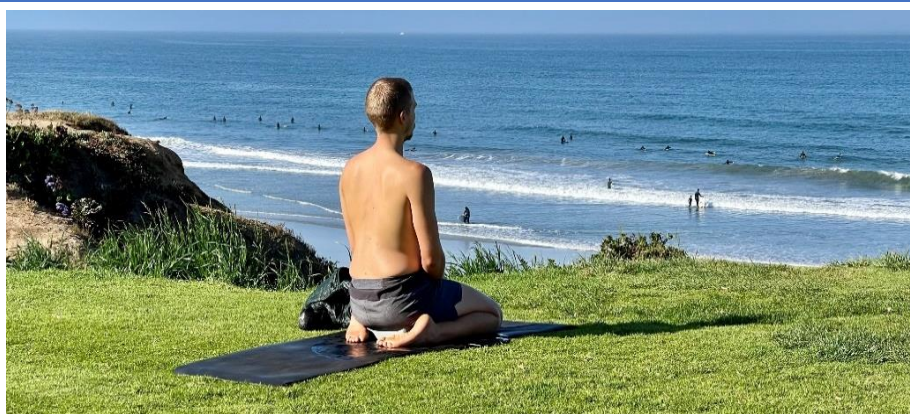
Thank you, God, Part 1 – Rev. Art Cribbs, *Christian Fellowship UCC San Diego*

Thank you, O God, for the rising Sun and each new day. Thank you for last night that allows us to rest and be renewed so we can face whatever today may bring.

Thank you for creating humanity in your Image and demonstrating your Divine Affection through your Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is a reflection of you, O God, and a reflection of us who you have made in Your Image. Help us to see each other through your lens. Help us to love one another in ways that remind us You reside in every person. Thank you for reviving and renewing our spirits and lives.

Thank you, O God, for creating and shaping every person from your Divine Imagination. Remind us of your intention for us to love one another and to encourage each other to overcome any obstacle that slows our progress and our ability to do great work. Help us to believe in you just as you believe in us. Help us to believe in each other and give us clear vision to see how you intentionally designed every person to be loved, encouraged, and inspired to do what has never been done before and to go to new and unfamiliar places.

Thank you, O God, for sustaining us. Amen



Day 35 – October 1

A Liturgy for Those Overwhelmed by the News - *From Liturgies for Wholeness by Audrey Elledge and Elizabeth Moore, Waterbrook, 2024*

Oh God of all knowledge,
I am overwhelmed.
In the parade of headlines and consumption of events,
I feel anxious, angered, and awed,
all within a single blink.

Overstimulated to the point of numbness,
I can forget the good worth working for.
When news stops breaking my heart
and no longer makes me tender,
I know I am consuming it too quickly
and too often.

Turn me from screens to windows,
from paper to people.
May I look at the earth
and not just read about it.
Draw my attention to the miracles not documented in print,
the stories not captured in sound bites.

Equip me to be unflinching in naming evil,
and quick to choose the side of those who suffer.
Grant me a preference for service over despair.

Teach me, Jesus, how to bear witness
to the pain and beauty of living
amongst other flawed human participants,
just as You did.

Thank You, oh Emmanuel, that You came to save the world
and not condemn it,
for I see so much to condemn.
The cross is evidence that You can bear it.
I am overwhelmed,
but You are not. Amen

Day 34 – Oct 2

Mother Teresa, *attributed*

I used to pray that God would
feed the hungry, or do this or
that, but now I pray that God will
guide me to do whatever I'm
supposed to do, what I can do.

I used to pray for answers, but
now I'm praying for strength.

I used to believe that prayer
changes things, but now I know
that prayer changes *us*
and we change things.



Day 33 – Oct 3

Mennonite Central Committee

O God of life and love and peace,
We witness the violence and injustice in your Holy Land
And our hearts break.

Our hearts break for Palestinians—
For the victims of violent attacks by the Israeli military
For those being denied water, electricity and medical care
For those who are refugees, long displaced from their homes.

Our hearts break for the people of Israel—
For the victims of violent attacks by Hamas
For those who live with fear and insecurity
For those who suffer from the inter-generational trauma of violence.

We especially pray—
That weapons of war be laid down
That walls of separation be dismantled
That prisoners be released
That demonizing of “the other” cease
That political leaders seek the good of all people in Palestine and Israel.

O God, whose heart breaks for the world,
May your justice dwell in the land
May your righteousness abide in fruitful fields
May the effect of righteousness be quietness and trust forever
May the effect of justice be peace—enduring peace. Amen

Day 32 – Oct 4

Psalm 46: 10 Be still and know that I am God

Be still and know that I am

Be still and know that I

Be still and know that

Be still and know

Be still and

Be still

Be

(reverse and repeat)

Day 31 – Oct 5

St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,
Grant that I 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



Day 30 – Oct 6

Desmond Tutu and Mpho Tutu – *Prayer Before the Prayer*

I want to be willing to let go, to forgive.
But I dare not ask for the will to forgive,
in case you give it to me. And I am not yet ready.

I am not yet ready for my heart to soften.
I am not yet ready to be vulnerable again.
Not yet ready to see that there is humanity in my tormentor's eyes
Or that the one who hurt me may also have cried
I am not yet ready for the journey.

I am not yet interested in the path
I am at the prayer before the prayer of forgiveness
Grant me the will to want to forgive.
Grant it to me not yet but soon
Can I even form the words? Forgive me? Dare I even look?

Do I dare to see the hurt I have caused:
I can glimpse all the shattered pieces of that fragile thing
That soul trying to rise on the broken wings of hope
But only out of the corner of my eye.
I am afraid of it.
And if I am afraid to see
How can I not be afraid to say: Forgive me?
Is there a place where we can meet?

You and me
The place in the middle where we straddle the lines
Where you are right and I am right too.
And both of us are wrong and wronged. Can we meet there?

And look for the place where the path begins
The path that ends when we forgive.

Day 29 – Oct 7

Father Thomas Keating, *Trappist (1923-1918)*

Welcome, welcome, welcome.

I welcome everything that comes to me today, because I know it's for my healing. I welcome all thoughts, feelings, emotions, persons, situations, and conditions.

I let go of my desire for power and control. I let go of my desire for affection, esteem, approval, and pleasure. I let go of my desire for survival and security. I let go of my desire to change any situation, condition, person or myself.

I am open to the love and presence of God and God's action within.
Amen



Day 28 – Oct 8

Sister Mary Lou Kownacki, *Benedictine Sisters of Erie (1941-2023)*

I bow to the one who signs the cross.
I bow to the one who sits with the Buddha.
I bow to the one who wails at the wall.
I bow to the OM flowing in the Ganges.
I bow to the one who faces Mecca,
whose forehead touches holy ground.
I bow to dervishes whirling in mystical wind.



I bow to the north,
to the south
to the east,
to the west.
I bow to the God within each
heart
I bow to epiphany,
to God's face revealed.
I bow. I bow. I bow.

Day 27 – Oct 9

Rev. Dick Kozelka, *UCC Clergy, (1939-2020)*

Almighty God, whose kingdom is our hope and goal,
Illumine those who in days to come will give particular shape to our
vocation as citizens.
Speak a word to those who will speak many words.
Redeem the fanfare and folly.
Judge swiftly the evil and careless.
Hold us above the level of our prides or pettiness.
Thou are the truth
Help us to serve thee,
However we may name thee.

Day 26 – Oct 10

Lakota Prayer

Wakan Tanka, Great Mystery,
teach me how to trust
my heart,
my mind,
my intuition,
my inner knowing,
the senses of my body,
the blessings of my spirit.

Teach me to trust these things
so that I may enter my Sacred Space
and love beyond my fear,
and thus Walk in Balance
with the passing of each glorious Sun.



Day 25 – Oct 11

Four-Fold Blessing – Sister Ruth Fox, OSB, (1936-2023)

May God bless you with a **restless discomfort** about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships, so that you may seek truth boldly and love deep within your heart.

May God bless you with **holy anger** at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless you with the **gift of tears** with those who suffer from pain, rejection, or the loss of all that they cherish, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and transform their pain into joy.

May God bless you with enough **foolishness** to believe that you really CAN make a difference in this world, so that you are able, with God's grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.



Day 24 – Oct 12

Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)

Holy Spirit,
Comforting fire,
Life of all creation.
Anointing the sick, cleansing body and soul,
Fill this body!

Holy Spirit,
Sacred breath, Fire of love,
Sweetest taste, Beautiful aroma,
Fill this heart!



Holy Spirit,
Filling the world,
from the heights to the deep,
Raining from clouds, filling
rivers and sea,
Fill this mind!

Holy Spirit,
Forgiving and giving,
uniting strangers, reconciling
enemies,
Seeking the lost, and
enfolding us together,
Fill these gathered here!

Holy Spirit,
Bringing light into dark
places, igniting praise,
Greatest gift, our Hope and
Encourager,
Holy Spirit of Christ,
I praise you! Amen

Day 23 – Oct 13

Sister Joan Chittister, *Benedictine Sisters of Erie*

Great God, who has told us “Vengeance is mine,”
save us from ourselves,
save us from the vengeance in our hearts and the acid in our souls.

Save us from our desire to hurt as we have been hurt,
to punish as we have been punished,
to terrorize as we have been terrorized.

Give us the strength it takes to listen rather than to judge,
to trust rather than to fear,
to try again and again to make peace even when peace eludes us.

We ask, O God, for the grace to be our best selves.

We ask for the vision to be builders of the human community
rather than its destroyers.

We ask for the humility as a people to understand the fears and hopes of
other peoples.

We ask for the love it takes to bequeath to the children of the world to come
more than the failures of our own making.

We ask for the heart it takes to care for all the peoples
of Afghanistan and Iraq, of Palestine and Israel as well as for ourselves.

Give us the depth of soul, O God, to constrain our might,
to resist the temptations of power, to refuse to attack the attackable,
to understand that vengeance begets violence,
and to bring peace—not war—wherever we go.

For You, O God, have been merciful to us.

For You, O God, have been patient with us.

For You, O God, have been gracious to us.

And so may we be merciful and patient and gracious and trusting
with these others whom you also love.

This we ask through Jesus,
the one without vengeance in his heart.

This we ask forever and ever. Amen

Day 22 – Oct 14

Amanda Gorman, *excerpt from The Hill We Climb*

We will not be turned around
or interrupted by intimidation
because we know our inaction and inertia
will be the inheritance of the next generation
Our blunders become their burdens
But one thing is certain:
If we merge mercy with might,
and might with right,
then love becomes our legacy
and change our children's birthright
So let us leave behind a country
better than the one we were left with

We will rebuild, reconcile and recover
and every known nook of our nation and
every corner called our country,
our people diverse and beautiful will emerge,
battered and beautiful
When day comes we step out of the shade,
afire and unafraid
The new dawn blooms as we free it
For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it
If only we're brave enough to be it





Day 21 – Oct 15

Rev. Loey Powell, *friend and former UCC executive*

Gracious and Loving Creator,

The world can spin like a wild ride at the amusement park sometimes and we get dizzy, wondering which way is home and where is the safe place. And then something happens and we open our eyes and see that distant horizon with the sun rising fresh on a new day. You are beckoning us to hold fast, to have hope, to feel the glow of the increasing light on our faces. And the wild ride stops, and we get off and plant ourselves solidly on the ground.

Holy One, now help us to keep moving in your love as we make decisions that will affect women, immigrants, lgbtq+ folx, those caught in war zones, those seeking jobs, those desperate for housing, those buried under medical debt, those who seek to lead our nation with compassion and promise for the future.

We rejoice in the taste of hope, O God, so strengthen our resolve to bend that moral arc of the universe closer to our lives and the lives of everyone. Bend it towards peace. Bend it towards this precious earth. Bend it towards justice. In the name of the one who challenged oppressive systems, Jesus, we pray justice. Amen



Day 20 – Oct 16

Langston Hughes, excerpt from *Let America Be America Again*

Let America be America again.
Let it be the dream it used to be.
Let it be the pioneer on the plain
Seeking a home where he himself is
free.

(America never was America to me.)

Let America be the dream the
dreamers dreamed—
Let it be that great strong land of love

Where never kings connive nor tyrants scheme
That any man be crushed by one above.

(It never was America to me.)

O, let my land be a land where Liberty
Is crowned with no false patriotic wreath,
But opportunity is real, and life is free,
Equality is in the air we breathe.

(There's never been equality for me,
Nor freedom in this "homeland of the free.")

O, yes, I say it plain,
America never was America to me,
And yet I swear this oath—America will be!

Out of the rack and ruin of our gangster death,
The rape and rot of graft, and stealth, and lies,
We, the people, must redeem
The land, the mines, the plants, the rivers.
The mountains and the endless plain—
All, all the stretch of these great green states—

And make America again!

Day 19 – Oct 17

Credited to Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered.
Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.
Be kind anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you.
Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.
Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.
Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.
Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.
Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.
It was never between you and them anyway.

Day 18 – Oct 18

Claudio Carvalhaes, from *Liturgies from Below: Praying with People at the End of the World, Abingdon, 2020*

Jesus said: when they bring you in
front of the judges
do not try to find out in
advance, what you are going
to say. It will be given to you
in the right moment.



So God, we come to you as we are—
not always very strong and courageous.

We pray: give us a clear understanding of what is going on,
give us the strength
to fight for justice. Let us hear
your call so that we can follow
in your footsteps and speak out
for those who have been made speechless.

You said one hundred times: Be not
Afraid. So let all fear vanish
Like the dust that is blown away
In the wind, and let us know
“deep in our hearts,” that “we shall overcome.”



Day 17 – Oct 19

Michele Elise

I am not a liberal snowflake. My feelings aren't fragile. My heart isn't bleeding. I am a believer in human rights. My toughness is in tenderness. My strength is in the service of others. There is nothing more fierce than formidable, unconditional love. There is not a thing more courageous than compassion. But if my belief in equity, empathy, goodness and love indeed makes me or people like me snowflakes, let it snow, let it snow, let it snow.

Day 16 – Oct 20

Edwina Gateley, *Let Your God Love You*

Be silent.
Be still.
Alone.
Empty before your God.

Say nothing.
Be silent.
Be still.

Let your God look upon you.
That is all.

God knows.
God understands.
God loves you
With an enormous love.
God only wants
To look upon you
With love.

Quiet.
Still.
Be.

Let your God
Love you.





Day 15 – Oct 21

Dr. Walter Brueggemann, *When the World Spins Crazy*

When the world spins crazy,
spins wild and out of control
spins toward rage and hate and violence,
spins beyond our wisdom and nearly beyond our faith,
When the world spins in chaos as it does now among us...We are
glad for sobering roots that provide ballast in the storm.

So we thank you for our rootage in communities of faith,
for our many fathers and mothers who have believed and trusted as
firm witnesses to us,
for their many stories of wonder, awe, and healing.

And when we meet you hiddenly,
we find the spin not so unnerving,
because from you the world again has a chance
for life and sense and wholeness.

We pray midst the spinning, not yet unnerved,
but waiting and watching and listening,
for you are the truth that contains all our spin. Amen
From *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth: Prayers of Walter Brueggemann*

Day 14 – Oct 22

Stephen Colón, *pastor of Kensington UCC in San Diego*

God whose image we bear:

You accompany us through life like our very shadows.

Cast in the summer sun,

Cast in the rays of the moon;

Seen on the playground blacktop,

Seen on the snowy mountain;

Sometimes large and easy to spot,

Sometimes known only up close;

Sometimes stretching far beyond our height,

Always connected to our feet.

You are always more eager to listen than we are to pray,

and always more ready to speak than we are to hear.

In our moments of despair, God, teach us to pray and to hear you.

Reveal yourself to us in the shadows.

Amen.



Day 13 – Oct 23

Rev. Art Cribbs, *Thank you, God (Part 2)*

Thank you, God, for giving us life and breath.

Thank you for your mercy and for renewing our strength.

Remind us of your direct instruction for us to love one another. Remind us of the high premium you have put on every human life.

Help us to remember every person is

intentionally formed in your Divine Image. Help us to love one another and to accept every person just as we are even as we strive to improve ourselves. Remind us again that when we see another person we are looking at Your Divine Image.

Thank you, O God, for believing in us and lifting our spirits when we feel low or exhausted.

Thank you for your healing power and renewing presence. Thank you for forming humanity with a desire for each other and to love, care, and attend to each other's needs.

Thank you for your mercy, goodness, and renewing power that elevates our souls, inspires our hearts, and motivates us to knock down walls, overcome barriers, and extend our reach to help one another.

Thank you for never giving up on us.

Thank you for loving and accepting us just as we are.

Thank you for Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen



Day 12 – Oct 24

Rev. Karen Winkel, *friend and UCC clergy*

I credit Karen with the initial inspiration to create this resource in 2020

“Be still and know that I am God.”

Holy One, the words of the psalmist indict me. With an election on the horizon – the most important in my lifetime, perhaps in the history of the United States — my mind races, my heart breaks, my body quakes as I consider all that is at stake and all that could go wrong. Still me, God. Let me find myself in you, not in the latest polls, not in the most astute political commentary, not in the memes and tweets and confounding content I find on social media every time I go online. Still me, God; let me find myself enveloped and claimed by you.

As I sink into your peaceful presence, as I welcome your gift of stillness, minister to my depths. Shore me up. Restore me. Fill me with whatever you filled Jesus—confidence in you, hope, a vision of shalom manifest here on earth. Whatever it was that enabled Jesus to meet the world head on and offer love and healing when so many were hard and heartless, whatever that was, bless me with a portion of that. I ask this not simply so that I can step into today and then tomorrow with a surer, steadier faith but so that I might, in some small way, offer a bit of light, love, and life to those around me, people who are right now as uncertain and concerned as I have been.

With Election Day on the horizon, help me be still, O Perfect Stillness. Help me, Gracious One, be of use in this season and in the season to come. Amen





Day 11 – Oct 25

Julian of Norwich (1343-1416 approximately)

All shall be well
And all shall be well
And all manner of things shall be
well

Repeat

Day 10 – Oct 26

Rev. Michelle Andrews, *Pastor, Mission Hills United Methodist Church*

God of love, God of wisdom, God of mercy,

In our most humble of moments, we remember to turn our attention to you. It occurs to us in those times to listen for your voice, because we believe that you speak in ways that we need to hear. We confess that we often choose to keep on our own path, doing and saying what makes us feel powerful and right. Forgive us.

Out of love your Spirit moves around and in us calling us to draw near and be filled so that we may go out and reflect your love to all around us. Help us to listen with compassion, to ponder with wisdom, to speak with mercy, and in all things to love you and each other.

You have given all of your people a presence in the world. May we use it to build up your kingdom, to share the table with those whose perspectives about life, love, politics, and religion are different from ours, and to see the other as you see us - with love.

Lead us, Holy God, that we might be bearers of love, wisdom, mercy, and humility in all things. Amen



Day 9 – Oct 27

Peter Bolland, *We Are Always Praying*

Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Southwestern College, and
author of *The Seven Stone Path: An Everyday Journey to Wisdom*

Something is living through us, the Great Mystery.
Every breath is a blessing given, whether we know it or not.

We do not breathe—we are breathed.
We do not live—we are lived.
We do not know—we are known.
Just by being, we bless the whole world.

Even though it seems we are marching into the future,
every step is a deepening into the here and now.
There is no past, no future—both are thought-events
existing only in the present moment.
This is it. This is where we must gather
our scattered lives into integrity and wholeness.

When we realize that we cannot sever our tie with the Inseverable,

when we embody without artifice our own authenticity,
when we allow our soul to catch up with our body,
then we will know that we are always praying, always blessing,
always sanctifying the ground with our meandering.

When we know that we are sacred
we sanctify whatever we are doing.
Our conversations, liturgy;
our gestures, genuflection,
even if we are only—especially when we are only—
doing the dishes, cleaning up after the dog, weeding the garden,
or bringing basil and lemons to the neighbors.

And when we vote we are praying into being
our values—truth, love, and justice.
We are casting the boats of our hopes and dreams
upon the waters of our belonging,
trusting that the pull of the moon and the light of the stars
will guide them over the horizons of our knowing
toward safe harbors where they will be
realized by wiser souls, and built upon, and celebrated in song.

Interfere with injustice. Interrupt cruelty. Take a chance on trust.
Let other people be as free as you want to be.

Assume that within all of us, even the lost and afraid,
there is a core of wisdom longing to well up to the surface
when the invitation is strong enough,
when judgments abate, when we are a good home to one another,
when love in-forms the motions of our circling.

The long walk has begun. We are all walking.
We don't know where we are going.
It is enough to walk with hearts and minds and eyes wide open,
every step a prayer, every breath a blessing.
Amen



Day 8 – Oct 28

Bernadette Farrell, from the song *Longing for Light*

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

*Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.*

Day 7 – Oct 29

Thomas Merton

My Lord God,
I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.
But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.

And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Day 6 – Oct 30

Rev. Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, *The Resistance Prays*

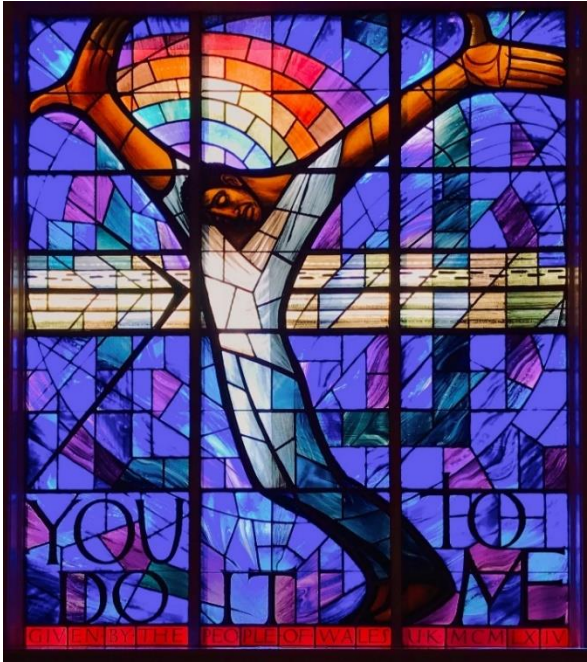
God, give us hearts for the most vulnerable,
strength to act for the common good,
peace that comes with justice,
freedom for the oppressed,
and courage for the days ahead.

Trusting in your word,
in solidarity with people of all faiths,
hopeful for a better future,
respecting the dignity and worth of all,
caring for creation,
may we do our part to bring about
the world you desire for humanity. Amen

Day 5 – Oct 31

Pope Francis, World Communications Day 2018

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.
Where there is **shouting**, let us practice **listening**.
Where there is **confusion**, let us inspire **harmony**.
Where there is **ambiguity**, let us bring **clarity**.
Where there is **exclusion**, let us offer **solidarity**.
Where there is **sensationalism**, let us use **sobriety**.
Where there is **superficiality**, let us raise **real questions**.
Where there is **prejudice**, let us awaken **trust**.
Where there is **hostility**, let us bring **respect**.
Where there is **falsehood**, let us bring **truth**.
Lord, make us instruments of your peace.



Stained glass window in Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama, where four little girls were murdered by white supremacists. Photo by David Bahr

Day 4 – November 1

Matthew 25: 31-46, *First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the New Testament*, IntersVarsity Press, 2021

When the True Human Being comes in all of his power and shining-greatness, along with all of his spirit-messengers, he will sit down in his seat of honor. All nations will be gathered and come before him. He will choose between them like a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right side and the goats to his left

Then the Chief will say to the sheep on his right, “The blessing of my Father rests upon you. Come into the Land of Creator’s good road that has been prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was hungry and you fed me. I was a stranger and you gave me lodging. When I needed clothes, you gave me something to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in prison, you visited me.”

“When did we do all these things for you?” the good-hearted ones asked. “I speak from the heart,” he answered them, “whatever you did for the least important of my fellow human beings who needed help, you did for me.”

Then the Chief will say to the goats on his left, “Go away from me, you who have bad hearts, into the fire that burns everything up, made for the evil trickster snake and his messengers. For when I was hungry, you gave me nothing to eat. When I was thirsty, you gave me no drink, and when I was a stranger, you turned me away. When I needed clothes, you gave me nothing to wear, and when I was sick and in prison, you failed to visit me.”

“Honored One,” they questioned, “when was it that we saw you like this and did nothing?” “I speak from my heart,” he answered back, “when you did not help the ones who needed it most, you failed to help me.”

Then the goats will go away to the punishment of the world to come that never fades away, and the sheep will enter the life of the world to come that never fades away, full of beauty and harmony.

Day 3 – Nov 2

Rev. John Dorhauer, *former UCC General Minister and President*

Holy Spirit of the Living God and the risen Christ, we seek the hope and vision, the wisdom and commitment to a love for all that your word inspires. As your beloved children, we carry with us - everywhere we go and in all that we do - a responsibility to embody love. May that love reside in our hearts as we prepare ourselves as citizens to vote.

Our country today is torn apart by fierce divisions and fiercely held perspectives on what makes for good government. We ask for us all that you help us set aside personal conviction and contempt for those who see things differently. Help us to use our vote in a way that serves the common good and builds the beloved community. And help us to accept and understand those whose vision for a just world leads them down a different pathway.

We pray for all candidates, who are asking us to trust them to serve the common good. We give thanks for their commitment to put themselves forward in service to their community. Keep them safe throughout the voting season. May the results of our elections lead to peaceful transitions of power, the promotion of peace and justice, and the propagation of a love that overcomes the lingering contempt we often have for those whose vision for a better world does not align with ours. Amen



Day 2 – November 3

Kelly Ann Hall, *May Peace Become You*

In the cross-fire,
In the cross-contamination,
At the cross-roads that call you forward but give you no sign,

May peace become you.

In the seemingly impossible
In the human tragedy
In the unworkable situation of division and strife,

May peace become you.

May peace become you, Beloved,
and courage carry you
when you cannot see your way forward
But, nevertheless, take one more step in the direction of love.



Day 1 – Nov 4

Amanda Gorman, excerpt from *New Day's Lyric*

Tomorrow ye will find.
Know what we've fought
Need not be forgot nor for none.
It defines us, binds us as one,
Come over, join this day just begun.
For wherever we come together,
We will forever overcome.

Prayer for Election Day – November 5, 2024

James Weldon Johnson – *Lift Every Voice*

Lift ev'ry voice and sing
'Til earth and heaven ring
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on 'til victory is won

Stony the road we trod
Bitter the chastening rod
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died
Yet with a steady beat
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered
Out from the gloomy past
'Til now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast

God of our weary years
God of our silent tears
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light
Keep us forever in the path, we pray
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee
Shadowed beneath Thy hand
May we forever stand
True to our God. True to our native land

Day After the Election – November 6, 2024

Rev. Jane Vennard, renowned author, UCC spiritual director

Gracious God, Spirit of life.....
We pause in your presence.....
We breathe deeply.....

The day we have been waiting for has come and gone.
Some of us are celebrating, grace us with humility in our victory.
Some of us are mourning, grace us with compassion in our loss.

Grant all of us the courage to go forward into the unknown future
With hands out stretched in kindness,
With hearts overflowing with empathy,
With our minds set on justice and peace.

Help us be patient.
Help us stand strong in the midst of chaos.
Help us see to all of creation through your eyes of love.

Be with us as we work to create harmony in this divided world.
Be with us as we struggle and fall and rise again.

Shower us with your mercy opening our hearts to receive your blessing.

We ask this in the name of all that is Holy. Amen

*In Response to God's Love,
We Seek to BE God's Love in the World*



Mission Hills United Church of Christ
4070 Jackdaw Street
San Diego, California 92103
missionhillsucc.org

Contact:
david.bahr@missionhillsucc.org