

Our Faith Our Vote

Trusting in the Source

Service Prayers for the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Psalm 119: 1-8

Mark 12:28-34

CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Hear, O people of God:
our God is one.

Hear the commandments of our God.
**All: First, love your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul,
and with all your mind,
and with all your strength.**

Leader: Hear, O people of God:
our God is one.
Recite the commandments to your children
and hold them in your hearts.

**All: Second, love your neighbor as yourself.
There is no commandment greater than these calls to love. Amen.**

INVOCATION

O Holy One, Source of all life and Ground of all love,
we thank you for your love that never lets us go.
Thank you for the privilege of gathering in this space
with these your people – our neighbors – to worship you.
We do not come merely to open the doors of the church,
but we come that our hearts might be opened to you and to one another.
As we worship you today, help us to respond to the call of love
– to love you, our neighbors, and ourselves.
May we be transformed from individuals to members of your one body.
We pray for our nation that we be united as a people tied to a single garment of destiny.
We pray for those who we elect to serve all citizens
that they may be guided not by ego, politics or money,
but by compassion for all people.
Guide us as families, as a community of faith, as a nation
to follow the path of love. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Again and again you call us
to care for widows and orphans,
to advocate for those in prison,
to welcome the strangers.
**God, we hear your call,
but all around us we hear the cry
that there is not enough for all, and that some are undeserving.**

Again and again you call us
to love you with our whole heart, understanding, and strength;
such love demands that we seek justice
for those who are oppressed, poor, and forgotten.
**God, we hear your call,
But all around us are competing calls
of worldly loyalties, political parties, and public acclaim.**

Again and again, you urge us to seek you first.
We long to trust the path of love for you and our neighbors as ourselves.
**Yet we fear that our “land of milk and honey”
Has become a land of moral famine and economic hardship,
And we wonder at times if you have abandoned us.**

Again and again throughout this election season,
we have seen the divisions in this nation become great.
At times, we have been more inclined to debate than pray.

Again and again you urge us not to lean on our own understanding
but in all our ways to acknowledge you, and yet
we are often distracted by the clamor of fear dressed up as reason.

As we prepare our hearts and minds for the upcoming elections,
at times we forget to observe
your statutes of compassion and your ordinances of justice.
**Again, you remind us to follow you
so that it may go well for us, our neighbors, our nation, and our world.**

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Sisters and brothers, God is at work in us and with us!
We know that you are the one who lifts up those who are bowed down.
We know that you promise to uphold us, and yet,
**again and again, we get caught up in the ways of those
who put their trust in politicians, power-brokers and pundits
instead of the Ruler of Peace.**

Hear the word of God for this season and all seasons:
“Do not be afraid! I will never leave you or forsake you.”
Know that our God who began a good work in us is able to complete it.
As we open ourselves to the Spirit of God,
may we see more fully the wonder of God already at work in us.
And so it is. **Amen.**

OFFERING INVITATION

Brothers and sisters, Dr. Martin Luther King reminds us:
“I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be.

You can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”
The invitation to bring our tithes, pledges, and offerings is an invitation
to support one another, those within this community and beyond,
to become all of what we are called to be.
Our tithes, pledges, and offerings—both monetary and other—
enable us to give thanks to God for the resources we have been given
and enable us to be resources for others.
As we give to this ministry,
we help others become what they can be and we become more of what we can be.
Give generously and watch the miracles of God
unfold in our lives and our ministry together.

DEDICATION

**Thank you, O God, for the gifts of your people.
Help us that we rely not on our own understanding in the use of these gifts,
but to seek your wisdom.
Knowing that as we do,
your will be revealed and your people near and far will be blessed. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Go forth, following as the Holy Spirit leads you,
moving in love and compassion, pursuing justice and mercy,
and trusting in the God of peace.
For the Source of all life and love is as close as your very breath.
Breathe deeply.
Amen.

Our Faith Our Vote: Trusting in the Source. Service Prayers for the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost was written by the Rev. Dr. Cari Jackson, founder and director of the Center for Spiritual Light, New York City.

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