



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Worship Resources for a National Election

This resource is provided to assist congregations in this time surrounding a national election. The readings, prayers, and assembly song suggestions could be used in settings such as prayer vigils, as part of Morning or Evening Prayer, as part of regular weekly worship in the weeks preceding or following an election, or devotions at home or in other settings.

Readings

Below are several scripture suggestions that may guide your planning.

Psalm 46

Psalm 90

Isaiah 41:9b-10

Isaiah 58:6-10

Micah 6:1-8

Matthew 5:1-12

Matthew 20:23-28

Matthew 25:34-40

Luke 1:50-55

Luke 4:16-21

Luke 6:27-36

Romans 8:37-39

Ephesians 2:[1-10] 13-22

Ephesians 4:31-32

Philippians 2:1-13

Revelation 21:22-26

In addition to the psalms listed above, other psalms may be fitting depending upon your community and context.

Prayers

God of all people, your ways are higher than any earthly ruler and your righteousness is truer than any worldly judge. Align our hearts with your justice, that in this upcoming election we would commit to making decisions based on the needs of the poor and oppressed in our midst and our stewardship of all that you have made. Open the minds of our leaders, that they too will show concern for the needy and compassion towards those in distress. Unite us all around the cross, pledging our utmost allegiance to the slaughtered lamb, your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Everlasting God, source of all liberty,
before whom every earthly ruler must bow and bend the knee,
we lay our nation before you as we prepare for an election.
Breathe upon us your Spirit of wisdom and discernment.
Grant all who seek public office the mind of Christ,
who came not to be served but to serve,
and to give his life for the freedom of the oppressed.
Hold before us those who face uncertain futures,
or who have no voice in our political process.
Uphold and safeguard poll workers and election officials in their work.
Spare us from the crushing weight of cynicism.
Give us grace to speak courageously, but with love,
without which our words are noise and we are nothing.
Gather us together under the cross,
where, in all of our difference, we can stand as one people,
redeemed in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

O God, you crafted the universe as a divine tapestry in which the well-being of the entire cosmos is forever intertwined. In this election season, give us hearts and minds focused on nurturing all that you have made. Forgive us when we are unjust or accept unjust behavior in our leaders. Remind us of your call to not withdraw from the world, but to be in the world as your very own broken and beloved people. Ignite in us a passion for the welfare of those who are most vulnerable, and empower us to lead with a love that reflects your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Additional Prayers

Faithful living in society

Sovereign God, your Son Jesus lived within the structures of society even as he spoke truth to those in power and challenged systems of oppression. Empower us to be courageous disciples and responsible citizens. Grant that our life in the public realm be grounded in love for our neighbors, care for the most vulnerable in our midst, and respect for the common life we share, following the example of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*All Creation Sings, forthcoming*)

The nation

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. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 77*)

Holy Trinity, one God, you show us the splendor of diversity and the beauty of unity in your own divine life. Make us, who came from many nations with many languages, a united people that delights in our many different gifts. Defend our liberties, and give those whom we have entrusted with authority the spirit of wisdom, that there might be

justice and peace in our land. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our sovereign and our Savior. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 77)

Responsible citizenship

Lord God, you call your people to honor those in authority. Help us elect trustworthy leaders, participate in wise decisions for our common life, and serve our neighbors in local communities. Bless the leaders of our land, that we may be at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 77)

Conflict, crisis, disaster

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; in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 76; *ELW Prayer Book for the Armed Services*, p. 30)

Bitterness, anger

Lord God, when we are assaulted by the troubles of life, and the deep waters of anger threaten to overwhelm us, do not let us sink. In your great compassion, hear us and help us. Deliver us from anger's power over us. Lead us out of bitter silence and hurtful words so that we may speak the truth in love. Heal every heart set on vengeance, and show us the way to honesty and reconciliation; through the one who has shown us both impassioned zeal and forgiving love, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW Prayer Book for the Armed Service*, p. 29)

Guidance

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen. (*ELW*, p. 86)

Peace, reconciliation

Holy God,
out of your great love for the world,
your Word became flesh to live among us
and to reconcile us to you and to one another.
Rekindle among us the gift of your Spirit
that we might live as one new humanity in Christ,
dismantling the walls that divide,
ending the hostility between us,
and proclaiming peace those who are near
and to those who are far away;
through Christ Jesus, in whom we all have access,
in the one Spirit to you,
both now and forever. Amen.
(*Holden Prayer around the Cross*, p. 132-33)

A prayer attributed to Francis of Assisi

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. (*ELW*, p. 87)

A prayer from Kenya

From the cowardice that dare not face new truth,
from the laziness that is contented with half truth,
from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
good Lord, deliver us. Amen. (*ELW Prayer Book for the Armed Services*, p. 74)

The president and those in authority

Almighty and everlasting God, guide the president of the United States, *her/his* counselors, and all others in authority over us, that they may be just in purpose, wise in counsel, and unwavering in duty. In the administration of their solemn responsibilities, may they uphold the honor of our nation and secure the protection of our people. Hear us as we pray. Amen. (*ELW Prayer Book for the Armed Services*, p. 64)

See also the prayers included in This Far by Faith: #196 “Help Me”; #215 “Give Us Grace.”

Charges to the People

A charge (an exhortation to mission) such as those that follow may be used before the benediction/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.

Beloved in the Lord,
God has shown you what is good.
What does the Lord require of you
but to do justice,
and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
(*This Far By Faith*, p. 90)

Assembly Song Suggestions

from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*:

- 180 The Spirit Intercedes for Us
- 247 Come Now, O Prince of Peace
- 251 My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness
- 401 Gracious Spirit, Heed our Pleading / *Njoo kwetu, Roho mwema*
- 402 Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ
- 517 Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word
- 538 The Lord Now Sends Us Forth / *Enviado soy de Dios*
- 603 God, When Human Bonds Are Broken
- 614 There Is a Balm in Gilead
- 626 By Gracious Powers
- 632 O God, Our Help in Ages Past
- 633 We've Come This Far by Faith
- 655 Son of God, Eternal Savior
- 700 Bring Peace to Earth Again
- 705 God of Grace and God of Glory
- 706 The People Walk
- 710 Let Streams of Living Justice
- 711 O Day of Peace
- 713 O God of Every Nation
- 717 Let Justice Flow Like Streams
- 723 Canticle of the Turning
- 741 Your Will Be Done / *Mayenziwe*
- 749 O God of Love, O King of Peace
- 753 Dona nobis pacem
- 757 All My Hope on God Is Founded
- 784 Grant Peace, We Pray, in Mercy, Lord
- 841 Lift Every Voice and Sing
- 882 My Soul Does Magnify the Lord
- 887 This Is My Song

In addition to those suggested above, assembly song under the headings of "Sending"; "Hope, Assurance"; Lament"; "Justice, Peace"; "Prayer"; "Trust, Guidance"; and "National Songs" may be especially appropriate.

from *This Far by Faith*

- 103 Gracious Spirit, Heed our Pleading / *Njoo kwetu, Roho mwema*
- 147 I Shall Not Be Moved
- 149 Seek Ye First
- 153 Guide My Feet
- 168 My Soul Does Magnify the Lord
- 185 There Is a Balm in Gilead
- 197 We've Come This Far by Faith
- 198 When the Storms of Life are Raging / Stand by Me
- 212 Don't Be Worried
- 213 We Shall Overcome

243 Your Will Be Done / *Mayenziwe*
296 Lift Every Voice and Sing

In addition to those suggested above, assembly song under the headings of “Sending”; “Hope, Comfort”; “Struggle, Faith”; “Justice, Society”; “Prayer”

Other resources for assembly song, especially for “paperless” singing can be found at [Music That Makes Community](#) or in [Singing in Community](#) available from Augsburg Fortress.

Additional Resources

Materials from [The Episcopal Church](#)

Materials from the [Presbyterian Church \(U.S.A.\)](#)

Materials from the [United Church of Christ](#)

[The Hymn Society](#) is offering a 12-hour “[Election Day Concert](#).” This non-partisan event is designed to give your spirit a rest from the anxiety of waiting for election results.

For additional material related to election advocacy, see [ELCAvotes](#) and the ELCA’s social message, “[Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy](#).”

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