

PRAYER GUIDE FOR LIVING CHRIST'S KINGDOM IN THE BROKENNESS OF OUR WORLD

Trinity Presbyterian Church exists to honor God, welcome all, and embody Christ's reign. Therefore, we are called to pray for the glory of God in all things, the fellowship of our union with Christ, and the faithful presence of His church in the brokenness of this world. That brokenness is all around us: in our churches, our families, our workplaces, and our communities. As ambassadors of Christ's kingdom, we are called to enter that brokenness with the healing balm of His gospel, and through prayer, rest in complete dependence upon the redeeming power of His grace.

It is our hope that this prayer guide will assist the members of Trinity Presbyterian Church in praying for and living the restoration and reconciliation of Christ's kingdom.

PRAYING FOR THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST'S KINGDOM

The Gospel is the announcement that Christ has ushered his Kingdom into the world through His incarnation, life, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. By His work of substituting Himself in our place and absorbing the just wrath of God toward us, He has accomplished redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As those who are redeemed, our life bears witness that His kingdom has come, and we are called to live the forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration His new life brings.

- Pray that Trinity will grow as a church that calls all to repent and trust that Jesus has died for their sins.
- Pray that we are given redemptive words and actions as we personally encounter the brokenness that troubles and oppresses those in our circle of influence.
- Pray that we, as the body of Christ, live in this world as ambassadors of His kingdom, always seeking the forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration His kingdom brings.

PRAYING FOR OUR HUMILITY

Arguably, the most solemn and dangerous brokenness in all of scripture is the sin of self-righteousness. However, it may also be the hardest to recognize or deal with in ourselves. This is the sin of thinking our personal righteousness, instead of the imputed righteousness of Christ, makes us acceptable to God. (See Romans 3:21-22, II Corinthians 10:4) In its most extreme, it causes us to compare ourselves with others based upon our perceived personal ability to please God.

- Pray that we look at our own brokenness and need for Jesus before we focus on the brokenness and need that we, so easily, see in others. (See Matthew 7:3, Luke 8:9-14).
- Pray that we learn to deal graciously with others, viewing ourselves as fellow sinners, in even greater need of grace than they.
- Pray that we communicate to others that their acceptance, like ours, rests solely upon Christ and His righteousness.

PRAYING FOR A DESIRE TO NOT DIVIDE

God created all mankind in his image, and this was not changed by any future separation of people into various racial groups and tongues. Christ's work of redemption was also for all kinds of people throughout the world. Therefore, the church's love, care, and membership are to have no dividing walls of separation between ethnicities, sex, age, place in society, or any other man-made criteria. (Ephesians 2:14-18) (Galatians 3:28)

- Pray that we, as a church do not have a spirit of treating others differently because of their race, sex, age, or place in society.
- Pray that the gospel would soften the hearts of those that would desire to separate us into groups based upon any perceived prioritized value.
- Pray for our continual awareness that all people are our neighbors, and we are to love our neighbor as we love ourselves.
- Pray for peace in the strife that arise in societal tensions (both in Christ's kingdom and the kingdom of this world) and that such conflict can be settled without violence or intimidation.

PRAYING FOR SEEKING OUR IDENTITY ONLY IN CHRIST

The gospel teaches us that we are broken in all aspects of our being - including physical, mental, emotional, and sexual brokenness. (See Romans 3: 10-18) This brokenness leads to various kinds of addictions in our lives, including self-centered interests, drug and alcohol abuse, obsessive mental or physical aspirations, and unhealthy sexual addictions of many kinds. None of us are immune, for we are all broken images of God, in need of the compassion of Christ.

- Pray that the grace of God would open our eyes to our own brokenness, whether physical, mental, emotional, or sexual, and that we would place all our hope in Christ to be restored in the identity of His image.
- Pray that our self-gratifying culture would increasingly consider the gospel as the only solution to all personal brokenness.
- Pray that Trinity will provide a welcoming environment to all and be a place where God's grace brings restoration from their brokenness.
- Pray that we will forgive others their sins as we would want our own sins to be forgiven. (See Matthew 6:12)
- Pray that God's grace keeps us away from the excesses and aberrations of mind and heart and body which easily entangle us.

PRAYING FOR THE BROKENNESS OF PLACING OUR NEEDS BEFORE THE NEEDS OF OTHERS

We are to love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves, and even to love those who are our enemies. (See Matthew 5:43 - 48) We are also exhorted to place the needs of others before our own. (Philippians 2:4) John

tells us, "if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17)

Jesus speaks of caring for the needy and the poor, the sick, the stranger, the naked, and the prisoner. (See Matthew 25:31-46) This scripture teaches us that the way we nourish, welcome, clothe, visit, and care for the needs of the less fortunate is indicative of the nature of our relationship with him.

- Pray that we would welcome and love all with the same compassion that Jesus loved us with in our even greater spiritual poverty and weakness.
- Pray that as we recognize we are citizens of heaven still living in exile, we would be motivated to compassionate words and actions toward those who are strangers in our presence.
- Pray, that refugees, especially those fleeing persecution or dangers from other countries, would be welcomed and cared for and given opportunities of a fulfilled life in our country.
- Pray that the Missions Team, through our ELC program and other intentional efforts to love these as we would Jesus himself, would be a constructive example as to ways we can set ourselves apart as the church.

PRAYING FOR THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

The scriptures teach us that human life is precious and is to be preserved. We are never to end life unless this regards one of the limited allowances of God's law. (See Exodus 20:13) Human life starts at conception in the womb. (See Psalm 139: 13-16; Psalm 51:5) Abortion, therefore, like other acts of violence, is the ending of human life and is contrary to the purpose and will of God.

- Pray that we would increasingly cherish and advocate for all of life, born and unborn.
- Pray that the violence in our society which leads to the needless disrespect and taking of life is curbed by the life-giving power of the gospel.
- Pray that the sin and brokenness that leads to abortion, the sin and brokenness of abortion itself, and the sin and brokenness resulting from abortion will become more acutely serious to our church and nation.
- Pray that God gives us wisdom and charity in communicating our understanding of the value of unborn life.
- Pray that Trinity would have a gospel-centered compassion for those that have had or are considering abortion.
- Pray that the state, the church, and medical care would be compassionate and wise in dealing with the extreme and most difficult issues that those who love life sometimes encounter.
- Pray that, at all levels of our society, we would, through compassion, implement means of restoration that are consistent with the Word of God.

PRAYING FOR GIVING HEARTS

Our fallen condition promotes our own self-centeredness. This is as true in our finances as anywhere else. We are reluctant to give away what is ours. But God has a heart for the poor, the weak and the needy, for this it the spiritual condition of all humanity. (Luke 6:20. 14: 12-14 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Psalm 113:5-8) And He calls us to

imitate His benevolence toward those less fortunate. He instructs us to care for the poor and the needy. Proverbs 19:17 says, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed."

- Pray that God would help us exhibit the compassion evident in Jesus for those on the fringe - including those that are broken financially.
- Pray that God's Spirit would convince us that our richness only consists of our abiding with Christ no matter our wealth or status, and that we will all come to understand that we are only stewards of what God has given us and that everything we "own" is not our own but belongs to God's Kingdom.
- Pray that we would be wise in our stewardship, not hoarding and not giving foolishly.
- Pray that our nation would seek ways to provide opportunities and enable restoration that are consistent with the nation's wealth, unique abilities, understandings and callings.
- Pray, with Solomon, that our government would diligently seek paths that "defend the cause of the poor, give deliverance to the children of the needy, and crush the oppressors." (See Psalm 72: 1-4)
- Pray that the church would be a place of welcome, refuge, sanctuary, and restoration for those in need.

PRAYING FOR GOD'S CREATION

The earth became cursed and broken as a result of man's fall; for this earth, as the home prepared for man, has an intimate dependence upon man's condition (See Genesis 3: 17-19; Romans 8:18-22) Therefore, Paul tells us it "groans" awaiting its restoration at the completion of man's redemption. As the hymn writer says, "No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground; He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found,"

Christ's redemption extends "far as the curse is found", for as God fully restores mankind, He will restore the home He prepared for mankind. And New Creation, depicted in Revelation as the heavenly city which descends, will be the result of this completed earthly restoration. (See Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21)

As beautiful and perfect as Eden was, this New Creation will be even more beautiful. For its beauty, like ours will be a redemptive beauty flowing out of the work of Christ.

- Pray that we would love all that God has provided, both spiritual and physical,
- Pray that we would not neglect or abuse the astounding gift of God's beautiful creation and be motivated to preserve its beauty where we are able.
- Pray that we would faithfully steward, even as we would our own property, all to the glory of God.
- Pray that as we long for the greater beauty of New Creation, we respect and care for the brokenness we encounter in this creation, and that we encourage the same whether from science, industry, education, community, or government.

PRAYING FOR SEEKING OUR UNITY IN CHRIST

Our fallenness creates a natural inclination to value our own opinions higher than we ought. We therefore gravitate toward those who hold such like opinions and form a unity based upon those commonalities. This unity

exists in numerous arenas but is especially prevalent and acute in the social and political realms. We align ourselves with people in political or social movements who agree with us. Such factions tend to undermine the unity of the body of Christ by seeking unity in agreements instead of finding the unity of Christ amid our disagreements. This disunity can fester and cripple Christ's church.

But Christ's kingdom is above the conflict of this disunity. And we are called to live the unity of that higher kingdom life in the social and political conflicts of our world.

- Pray that, as the church, we will find our unity in Christ, instead of agreement on political or cultural issues.
- Pray that, despite significant differences of opinion, the fellowship of our church will flourish in its unity
- Pray that we do not cause unwarranted division within the body of Christ by exercising a strong desire to bring people into agreement with our political or social positions.
- Pray that as we live Christ's kingdom in the broken society of this world we are not motivated to enter unhealthy social and political conflict, but demonstrate the kingdom life perspective of peace, love, contentment, self-sacrifice, and lamentation over such conflict.
- Pray that Trinity, with the entire Body of Christ, would appropriately speak within these tensions as social conflicts arise.

PRAYING FOR EARTHLY GOVERNING AUTHORITIES

All governments and their authority are established by God, and we are instructed to submit to this authority, for they are established for our good. (See Romans 13: 1-7) We are likewise to pray for those in earthly authority over us (See 1 Timothy 2:2), realizing that even though we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, we are citizens of earthly kingdoms as well. These earthly kingdoms serve to govern a fallen society which has been broken by sin. And yet, like all of humanity, this authority is exercised by broken leaders who make mistakes and sometimes rule with misguided or malicious intent.

Therefore, as we are members of two kingdoms, our conscience, at times, leads us to disagree and even disobey our governmental leaders, "obeying God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). At those times, our disagreement and disobedience are not to be unduly disrespectful of that divinely appointed authority. We are to descend in a spirit of charity, seeking the welfare of all individually and the country generally, with our overriding motive being our submission to the authority of the will of God.

- Pray that we grow in our love for the country in which God has placed us and seek its welfare.
- Pray that we have a spirit of submission toward our rulers.
- Pray for wisdom, courage, and charity in the times we determine we must go against the authority of our rulers in obeying God instead on man.
- Pray for the leaders of our country, for the pressures they are under and the many issues they must weigh in the balance as they seek to make wise decisions.

- Pray for the prosperity of our country and its citizens, that through this prosperity our country can bless all those who come within its borders.
- Pray for our country to care for the less fortunate in society, who through providence are unable to care for themselves.
- Pray that our president, his cabinet and advisors, our senators and representatives, our governors, state legislatures, mayors, councilmen and all other leaders would increasingly understand and trust the scriptures and grow in their relationship to God, that these would more and more believe the gospel, be worshipers of our God, be increasingly under the council of those that know and love God and his Word, be willing to be instructed by it, and would increasingly become men and women that seek God in prayerful obedience.

CONCLUSION

As citizens of a heavenly country, where there is no brokenness, we are called to illuminate the glory of that unbroken kingdom in our world. Our prayers are to guide us in that path as we place our complete dependence upon God in our supplications. Pray that as God opens doors, we live that life of light which restores brokenness in our world, and in us; longing for the day in which He makes all things new.

AMEN