

Drive-in Prayer
a
Lenten Practice



2024

Drive-in Prayer was written for Lent 2024 by Deb Lockhart,
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Drive-in Prayer, A Lenten Practice

What is Lent? It the 40 days preceding Easter. Traditionally, it has been a time for prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Surprisingly, Lent is not Biblically based—there is nowhere in the Bible that asks us to give up something such as chocolate, wine or TV during this time. The idea of fasting came from Biblical references as in the 40-days of fasting by Jesus in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11). Fasting is one way that people have found themselves drawn closer to God through an intentional practice. While many still fast during Lent, each person has a unique relationship with God and fasting is not for everyone, nor is it expected.

This booklet is an alternative discipline. I encourage you to be creative, stretch yourself out of your comfort zone and give it a try. As with any discipline or practice, there may come failure of completion or of giving up on the idea before even starting. Lent isn't about perfection, it is about going deep into that place within and knowing that without God's grace, we can do nothing on our own.

The season of Lent, 2024, offers us the opportunity of getting ourselves “right” with God through prayer. This little booklet is an exercise, taking you out of church and into the community, yours or someone else's, to view that place through the lens of seeing God in others. Drive-in Prayer, will physically take you to places where you can pray for others, ask God for strength in dealing with differences you may encounter along the way, and perhaps create new places you find needing prayer. The prayers and scriptures attached for each stop are only a starting place. Feel free to add your own comments/prayers/scripture on the back blank pages. Consider inviting others to go with you or arrange to meet up at a stop and pray together.

Fasten your seatbelts, don't read this while driving, and remember that God loves us all and delights in all the ways we connect with each other through His love.

“Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you” James 4:8

Let's begin with a Lenten reflection by Steve Garnaas-Holmes:

Lent is when we go downstairs,
down into the basement of our souls,
into the dark, dingy, dirty places,
and clear out the junk we need to get rid of.
In Lent we don't need to beat ourselves up.
We need to lighten our load,
bag up those fears and desires
that are leaking all over everything,
take our guilt and shame out to the curb.
It's not easy to lay our hands on broken things,
to look deep into the gummed up works.
That's why Jesus shines with his light,
shines so we can see our way down into the dark,
see to lift up the junk and hand it over,
so he can haul it out into the light
of the dumpster.
The light Jesus shines is good with dark places,
so we know even from the deepest hole down there
we'll come out. The light will lead us. We'll be OK.
Mucking around down there we get dirty,
and we come up with grime on our hands
and ashes on our foreheads for everybody to see.
But we're free of all that blame and disappointment.
And the darkest, deepest cellar hole
becomes an empty tomb.

Prayers for Farmers and those who feed us

*God of all Creation,
we give you thanks for those who cultivate the earth,
for those who wake before dawn and labor in the fields,
for those who care for livestock,
for those who plant and tend with care.
We pray they know they are appreciated beyond measure.*

*Too often, we overlook the gift of farmers
as we grow ever more distant from the processes
that bring food to our tables.
We pray that we see and know
those who do the planting, tending, and harvesting.
They are a community of sowers
on whom our survival and flourishing depend.*

*So for farmers who keep food on the shelves
and make plenty a possibility,
we give thanks.
Guide them and bless them, O God of Abundance.
We pray for favorable weather,
abundant crops,
communities of support,
fair economic practices,
and strength and perseverance
as they live into your calling that we tend to the gift of creation,
stewarding life in celebration of each new day.*

Amen.

Submitted by: Laurie Lyter Bright is pastor for mission and congregational life at First Congregational UCC Appleton, Wisconsin.

Farming is fueled by science, but it is rooted in faith.

As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” Genesis 8:22

The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land. – Deuteronomy 28:8

Hospital and Healthcare workers

Dear Lord,

Today, we pray for your peace. We pray that the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard the hearts and minds of all who work here. We also ask for courage. We remember that God did not give us a spirit of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind. Please, grant nurses and doctors your spirit of courage. Grant them a sound mind as they make decisions. We pray for all the physicians, nurses, lab techs, housekeeping, administration, and food service involved in this institution. May they be blessed with the wisdom and grace needed to provide the best care possible to all they serve.

We ask this of you precious Lord, the Divine Healer and Comforter of all who hurt, are sick or in need of medical care.

Amen

The burdens of being a healthcare worker are at times heavier than the average person can carry alone. We are instructed by the Apostle Paul to carry one another's burdens.

“Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2

What better way to carry another's burdens than through prayer?

Firefighters

Lord, this is a broken world and not every situation ends with what we consider a positive outcome. In the world of firefighters, there is often devastating loss of property, precious mementoes, and sometimes loss of health and life—both for those who experience the fire and those who fight to contain and stop it. At the end of the shift, give these men and women the peace of a job well done, no matter the outcome, and the confidence that he/she has done everything within her/his power to preserve and protect. Help them not to second-guess decisions or shoulder unjust blame. Be with them in the hours of work that require courage, quick decisions, and strength. Protect them each day and send them home for rest, nourishment and renewal in their faith in you, O Lord. Amen.

“Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”

Isaiah 41:10

Police & Sheriff's Officers

Blessed are you, Lord, God of mercy,
Send down your blessings on your servants of our law enforcement; Sheriff's
department and Police of our community (name where you are)
who so generously devote themselves to helping and protecting others.
Grant them courage when they are afraid,
wisdom when they must make quick decisions,
strength when they are weary,
and compassion in all their work.
When they are called to aid both friend and stranger,
let them faithfully serve you as a neighbor to neighbor.

We offer thanksgiving for their lives ask that you reunite them with their families when
the day is done. In Jesus name we offer this prayer. Amen.

“for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and
of love and of self-discipline”. 2 Timothy 1:7

Polling Place / Voter's Registration Office

In the season of another presidential election, let us pray for each and every person who enters this office to register or vote, that God's grace will prevail over unkind words, thoughts and behaviors

To each person you see:

May we recognize in your life the presence, power, and light of your soul.

May we realize that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May we have respect for your individuality and difference.

May we realize that the shape of your soul is unique,
that you have a special destiny,

In your life there is the wonder of beauty, goodness and eternity.

May we see you with the same delight, pride, and expectation with which
God sees you in every moment.

(Adapted from a blessing by John O'Donohue)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. Ephesians 4:32

Schools & Students

Pick different schools or find a bus stop as you travel during Lent.

God, there is a reason You tell us to have faith like that of a child. They are bursting with curiosity and full of love. Protect their innocence and preserve the spark in their eyes from the darkness of the world. Let them be little lights to their teachers. Allow them to grow and have a fair opportunity to learn, free from bullying and bias.

Bless these children and keep them safe from the dangers within and outside their places of education. Help us not to hang on too tightly each day as we see these young ones go off to school—ease our own fear so that as we watch our (or our community's) children hop on and off the bus, we can be comforted knowing they are in the love and safety of Your hands.

In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.

Train children in the right way,
and when old, they will not stray. Proverbs 22:6

Schools & Teachers

God, we are overwhelmed with the gratitude we have for those who teach. We thank you for those people who claim the title “teacher” for they have taken on a big job that most of us cannot fathom. Help them to enter the classroom each day with the strength and the energy to help shape and form the next generation of this community, nation and world. Remind them that no moment is insignificant but is a gift given from the heart to each and every student, no matter how difficult that student may be. Give them grace, dear God, and teach them grace when days are tough and the learning is slow. Let us be the ones who openly cheer on those who teach our children, grandchildren, or neighbor’s children. Let us be there when they feel invisible and overworked. Show us our work to do in this, O God, for we are part of this community of faith and it is through our faith we can make a difference in our schools, in the lives of the children and in the lives of the school’s gift, our teachers. Amen.

I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Psalm 32:8

Coffee shop or places of gathering

The drive-thru lane at MacDonalds, an area coffee shop or your own kitchen table?

God gives us places for renewal, to slow down, or recharge—is yours a coffee shop, a quick trip through the drive-thru so you can enjoy your delicious hot beverage in the quiet of your car or with your favorite playlist, or is it at your kitchen table or near a window where you can feel the closeness of God?

We know coffee can't fix everything but some days it comes close.....Let us thank God for coffee shops (or your home Mister Coffee or Keurig)

Let us pray:
Loving Savior,
I drink this cup in solidarity
with one who planted the seedlings,
who nurtured the soil,
who watered the trees,
who harvested the beans,
who brought the harvest to market.

It has been a long time brewing this cup
With each sip, I pray for solidarity and justice for everyone in the chain of this of
production.

But the one thing I have learned from you, Lord,
Is that small cups can contain great miracles
And we can all find
oneness there.
Amen.

(Adaption from Coffee Prayer, Catholic Relief Services)

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. Romans 12:4-6

Public park or playground

Father,

We thank you for everything - especially for parks and playgrounds, and places we can experience the magnificence of your creation in nature. Help us to remember how to play. Let our minds wander to times of joy in climbing and running. Help us remember our times in the swings, where we learned to push higher and higher into the sky with the freedom of being part of all you have given us. Let us look around today with the same awe and appreciation of days gone by. Help us turn these moments of remembrances into moments of worship, praise, and thanksgiving for today and for the tomorrows we have.

Thank you for the many creations you have given us. Let us look at these places with new eyes for those who continue to play, young and old, and if need be, let us find a bench to watch, to pray and to praise. Amen.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Grocery & Farm Stands

Creator of Sustenance,

We praise you for providing the provisions we need to live and we honor and give glory for our grocery stores, large and small, where your bounty is made available. We thank all who work to be sure there are groceries on the shelves day after day after day. We give thanksgiving for those drive the trucks, who unload the trucks, stock the shelves, bag the groceries, work the deli, run the check out and keep the stores clean and ready at all hours.

Help me to show my gratitude, to those who work on my behalf, with kindness and respect. May I share your Light, dear God, with each and every person I meet in Tri-Star, Food Lion, or any grocery I am in today. Amen.

For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

—Psalm 107:9

Retirement Centers

Father, we pray for those in nursing homes, convalescent homes and retirement centers. Be the strength of their lives and breathe your joy into their very souls. Let them know your presence through your care, comfort, and love. Give them remembrances of days, now gone, that offer a sense of well being. Let them wake each day knowing you are there protecting them and providing new mercies each and every day. Help these residents to be treated as someone's parent, sibling or child by those in charge of their care. In this chapter of life, may there be a sense of love, humor and acceptance for all. Amen.

Isaiah 46:4 offers words of comfort: "even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.

This is but a sampling of places to go and prayers to say. Use this booklet not as penitence, ~~but~~ as a place of hope for the future of living in constancy with God. *Our souls, like our bodies, get run down. Lent is a time for spiritual training: for raising ideals and for practicing virtues in hopes they become permanent in our daily lives.* (Borrowed from Consecrations Blessings & Prayers, Canterbury Publishing)

We are reminded in James 5:16 that “The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” May you be blessed as you intercede on behalf of those who God loves.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out.

– John 1:5

