

Pray

GA 2021 Prayer Initiative
Week 3: May 24-30

As friends, members, adherents, elders and ministers in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, we are fervently praying for the 146th General Assembly, to be held online June 6-9, 2021. We are praying in advance for the commissioners, the moderator, the clerks, the General Assembly Office and all of those who have a role of some influence on the gathering. We are praying for God's Holy Hands to prepare us for something new. It might be something counter cultural. But we submit ourselves to something that is entirely in God's Holy Will, something that conforms to the authentic and timeless reading of scripture.

This prayer initiative is organized by The Renewal Fellowship within The Presbyterian Church in Canada in co-operation with Presbyterians Standing for Apostolic Love and Truth (PSALT) and others of like mind.

This is the third of four weekly prayer guides leading up to the gathering and we centre our thoughts around the word "Pray". We invite you to consider setting aside a designated time each day to pray. Feel free to share insights with others who are praying on our dedicated Facebook page, search "Pray for GA 2021." Scripture references this week are from the English Standard version, unless noted otherwise.

Let us pray: *Father, surround us now in the peace of Christ and in the powerful embrace of His Spirit, accept this time of devotion as a sacrifice of praise, offered by one who has been justified by faith. Come, Holy Spirit.*

Let us begin with a timeless ancient prayer:

The Lord's Prayer from the Book of Cerne
(Original in Latin, from *The prayer book of Aedeluald the bishop: commonly called the Book of Cerne*, ed. Arthur Benedict Kuypers. Early 9th Century, translated by Paul C. Stratman for *A Collection of Prayers*)

Father, in your tranquil world above,
may your kingdom come,
reveal your nourishing light.
Let your clear will be done
on earth and in heaven.
What is needed for life today,
the substance of holy bread,
provide to us soon.
Forgive countless debts of our wicked errors,
no different than we pardon our debtors.
Oh, keep temptation of the devil far away,
and likewise raise us up from evil
to light at your right hand.

The word of the Lord:

And Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not God in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. In your hand are power and might, so that none is able to withstand you... We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on you." (2 Chronicles 20:5-6, 12c, ESVUK, 2001)

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. (1Thessalonians 5:16-21, ESVUK, 2001)

It seems redundant I know to call us to prayer in a prayer guide. Yet, if you are like me a reminder to pray is always in order. I have this habit of reading something in a cursory fashion, and if there is a request to pray, I will give a quick prayer to the Almighty, then move on to something else that is pressing. Is this familiar to you?

Throughout the Bible God calls His people to prayer – in all situations. Think of Moses interceding on behalf of Israel after they messed up big time (Exodus 33:7-11), or Hanna praying her burden of childlessness (1 Samuel 2:1-10), or one of my favourite times of prayer, King Jehoshaphat with the people assembled in the face of a threatening enemy asking the Lord to deliver them (2 Chronicles 20). We read of Jesus getting up early in the morning to pray to the Father -is Jesus asking the Father for the day's agenda? (Mark 1:35), the early church gathering to pray that they might proclaim the Word with boldness (Acts 4:24-30), and Paul reminding the Thessalonian Christians that as they worship, they are to pray unceasingly (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

We are called to join with all the saints of the Scripture and from all ages of the church to pray...to give praise, to confess sin, to utter thanks, to intercede that the Lord would do the will of heaven here in our midst. Before we pray this week, one final word of encouragement, from John Calvin,

We see that nothing is set before us as an object of expectation from the Lord which we are not enjoined to ask of Him in prayer, so true it is that prayer digs up those treasures which the Gospel of our Lord discovers to the eye of faith. The necessity and utility of this exercise of prayer no words can sufficiently express. (Institutes, 3.20.2)

So...let us pray!

A prayer guide for the week to come:

Monday – We worship.

Read and Pray through Revelation 4:11 and Revelation 5:9-14. We are called to pray, but before we get verbal, let's pause and reflect. To whom are we praying?

Read Revelation 4:11...slowly...“Worthy are you, our Lord and God...” It is the Lord, our God, the creator, and redeemer who we approach in prayer. Spend time reflecting on who the Lord is, on the Lord's worthiness. Tell him and put your worship into words, song, or action! Join with all of heaven exclaiming that our Lord and God is worthy to receive glory and honor and power. Hallelujah!

Tuesday – We confess.

Confession is hard; I not sure if any of us enjoy doing this. But it is necessary...consider it a cleaning and disinfecting of attitudes, thoughts, words, and behaviour that will cause sickness of the heart and mind – a sickness that breaks relationships between us and God, and with other believers in Christ. I guess that is why the prophets and apostles expended a lot of energy and words to calling God's people to rid of their sin.

Read and pray Colossians 3:5-10, 13-14. Spend time reflecting on how your thoughts, words and behaviour measure up to this admonition from the apostle Paul. Think about your attitudes, words spoken, action taken against another member of your congregation, or the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Talk with Jesus about these things. Is there anything that you need to confess to him? Is there anyone you need to forgive? Do it now!

Wednesday – We are assured of forgiveness.

Forgiveness of sins. Redemption through the blood of Christ. It is all grace! All mercy! This is the Lord's promise to all of us. As we confess our sins before the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16) the Lord meets us with 'welcome my beloved!' Yesterday we sorrowed over our sin. Today we rejoice in the Lord's great love and mercy!

Read and Pray through Colossians 3:12-13. Spend time basking in and relishing the reality that you are one of "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved." Talk with Jesus about how this makes you feel. Do I hear an "amen!"?

Thursday – We are thankful.

Read and Pray through Colossians 3:15-17. Spend time reflecting on the good gifts received from Jesus Christ by you, the congregation you are a part of, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Spend time giving thanks to God the Father with words, songs, and deeds! Is there someone within your congregation or within the Presbyterian Church in Canada for which you give thanks to God the Father? Give thanks to the Lord for that person – pray, send a text, buy them a tea/coffee!

Friday – We intercede (Part 1)

We shift focus today, from ourselves to others and engage in intercessory prayer. Literally intercession means "to meet with, come between." I like to think of intercessory prayer "as standing in the gap". It is prayer in which we pray to the Lord for others, for their needs, for blessings upon them.

Read and Pray through Ephesians 6:18. We pray for the commissioners to General Assembly. Today, we lift up those appointed by Presbyteries 35-45 (42 commissioners total). See complete list [here](#). Starting at the top of the list, pray for each individual, that they would have wisdom, peace, humility, joy and protection as they prepare to step into the role of commissioner on behalf of their congregation and all of us nationally.

Saturday – We intercede (Part 2)

Today we continue to stand in the gap praying for the 2021 General Assembly: for the Moderator Elect, the Clerks, the conveners of the various agencies and committees that will be reporting, the Ecumenical visitors, and all the support persons working behind the scenes.

Read and Pray through 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. Spend time praying for those servants of the church participating in the 2021 GA. Give thanks to the Father for them; that with dedication and joy they would fulfill the trust given to them; that the Spirit would empower them so that through their words, acts, and prayer they would be used by the Lord to accomplish every good purpose; that the Lord would instil faith in them so that they would take risks and follow the leading of the Spirit as God does a new thing within the Presbyterian Church in Canada; and that from now to the end of the GA every person involved, through their thoughts, words, and acts would bring honour and glory to our Lord Jesus.

Try something...

REST: For one of the days this week trust Jesus to meet the needs outlined. Put it in his hands. Take a sabbath rest from this work of prayer and enter into a time of companionship with Jesus.

RESTORE: For one of the days this week, choose an activity that rests and restores your soul and spirit. For creatives, make a new piece of art. For the active, hike a local trail. For the social, call a friend or deliver a simple gift to their doorstep. Choose something you've been neglecting in this time of stress and pressure.

UNPLUG: Choose one day this week and step away from social media, email and news feeds. Breathe.

Sunday – We seek Holy Spirit protection and guidance.

As we close off this week of praying, I want to leave you with this promise from 1 John 5:13-15

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life. And this is the confidence that we have towards him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

Spend time today asking the Father of our Lord Jesus for a revelation of the Father's kingdom will for yourself, your congregation, for the 2021 GA, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Listen! What do you think the Lord is saying? What Scripture comes to mind? What impressions? Pictures? Now pray what you believe the Lord's will is. Align your praying with the Lord's will. And continue to pray until the Father's kingdom will be a reality here within the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Let us pray.

*Almighty and gracious God, in your majesty remember us. Grant us forgiveness of all sins, increase your heavenly grace to us, and give us your help against all the snares of our enemies, seen and unseen. In the same way, protect our hearts by your command, so that after this mortal life, we may rejoice together with all your saints in the glory of the kingdom of God, serving our Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer, who has all power and rule, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen. (from the **Dunkeld Litany**)*

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For more resources:
www.renewal-fellowship.ca
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