

GOLDEN RULE 2020

A CALL FOR DIGNITY AND RESPECT IN POLITICS

Liturgy to Use in Worship Service

Below are some suggestions of prayers, Scripture verses and responsive readings you can add to a worship service as a way of participating in Golden Rule 2020: A Call for Dignity and Respect in Politics. You can use all of these together or select some that fit effectively into your worship service. You should feel free to adjust or edit this language in any way you see fit for your congregation.

Introductory Comments

Today our congregation is joining with many other churches around the country to observe *Golden Rule 2020: A Call for Dignity and Respect in Politics*. All over the country churches of many different denominations and points of view are doing two things: 1) offering special prayers for our country and 2) emphasizing the need to apply Jesus' teachings to our politics. It is a good time to do this as we approach the national election and many of us are concerned about the prospect of an angry and hateful political campaign season that will further divide and demoralize our country.

We all know that America is painfully and bitterly divided. Everywhere we look we see mistrust and suspicion between our fellow citizens and a growing feeling that those who have different views are not just wrong, but dangerous or evil. Furthermore, people of different views aren't able to talk to each other very well and there is often more name and personal attacks than real discussion. Sadly, this seems to happen between Christians of different views as much as it does others in our society.

We are observing Golden Rule 2020 because we believe that the teachings of Jesus offer a way out of our national challenge. Indeed, Jesus' command to "treat others as we want to be treated" would completely transform our country if enough Christians followed that principle in our daily lives. We invite you now to a brief time of scripture reading, prayer and reflection on this teaching we call "the Golden Rule" and how it might help heal our country.

Scripture Readings

Read some or all of the New Testament verses listed below that reference the Golden Rule. They can be read by a worship leader or responsively or in unison. You may also want to follow up with one or more of the verses that have to do with how to practice the Golden Rule.

Golden Rule in the New Testament:

- **Matthew 7:12** So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.
- **Luke 6:31** And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.

- **Mark 12:8-31** The second (commandment) is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
- **Galatians 5:14** For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Other Scriptures relevant to practicing the Golden Rule:

- **5:43-44** You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- **James 1:19** Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.
- **Ephesians 4:29** Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
- **1 Peter 3:8-11** Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.

Time of Reflection

Let us begin a time of reflection by thinking about the current divisions we face in our country, and the need that exists for healing and reconciliation.

- Take a few moments now to reflect silently on the bitterness, anger and hostility we see between people of different political views and think about how these divisions make you feel as an American and as a Christian.
15 seconds of silent reflection
- Reflect also on your own actions and thoughts and ask yourself if there are ways you may contribute to these divisions. For example, are there ways you demonize or dehumanize those you see to be on "the other side?"
15 seconds of silent reflection
- Now think for a moment about what it would mean to apply the Golden Rule in your interactions with those who have very different views than you. What would be different?
15 seconds of silent reflection
- Finally, identify some specific ways that, with God's help, you want to apply the Golden Rule as a way of helping to bridge divides in our country.
15 seconds of silent reflection

Guided Prayer

These guided prayers can be lead by a worship leader or read as a responsive reading.

Let us pray now for our country, for our leaders and for ourselves. We will have times of spoken prayer alternating with times for silent prayer.

- Almighty God, we come to you with concern about our country and ask your help in bringing healing to our land. Help us to remember that our differences in politics, gender, race and age are far less important than the fact that we are all your children

Response: "Hear our prayer oh Lord" Brief silence

- We are thankful for your teaching that we are to "treat others as we want to be treated" and ask your help in applying that principles to our daily lives. Help us to stay mindful of the fact that we are to treat everyone, even our political enemies, with dignity and respect.

Response: "Hear our prayer oh Lord" Brief silence

- We pray for the leaders of our country and ask that you will help them to see the importance of finding ways to work together for the good of our country and for the world.

Response: "Hear our prayer, oh Lord" Brief silence

- We pray for forgiveness for those times when we have failed to show respect for others and have been too quick to dismiss those we disagree with. Help us to not judge others so harshly that we fail to see the person behind the views that are being expressed

Response: "Hear our prayer, oh Lord" Brief silence

- We pray for the humility to admit the limits of what we know and to acknowledge when we are wrong. Help us to keep our own shortcomings in perspective so we can work more effectively with others

Response: "Hear our prayer, oh Lord" Brief silence

- We pray for the patience to listen to others even when we disagree with what they are saying.

Response: "Hear our prayer, oh Lord" Brief silence

- We pray for wisdom needed to understand those who have different views and the courage to find ways to work together for the common good.

Response: "Hear our prayer, oh Lord" Brief silence

Responsive Reading on Call to Action

This can be read responsively by a worship leader and the congregation.

Leader: We have taken some time to reflect on the situation in our country and look at how our own thoughts and actions contribute to the divisions we face. We have also prayed for the forgiveness, humility and wisdom we need to move forward together. We want to close by sharing our intention to take actions which help bridge our divides. We will do that in the form of a responsive reading:

We acknowledge that God call us to show respect to everyone--regardless of their political views.

All: In response to God's commandment, we will strive to treat those who have different views, as we want to be treated by them

Leader: We acknowledge that the Bible tells us to be "quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to get angry."

All: In response, we will seek to do more listening and less talking so that we might learn from others

Leader: We remember that Jesus said we should forgive the sins against us not just seven times, but "seventy times seven"

All: In response, we will remember to forgive those who say harsh things about us and resist the temptation to respond in kind when we are attacked

Leader: We know that, as Christians, we are told to work for increased understanding and peace between all people

All: In response, we will do what we can to stay mindful of the sacredness of each person and practice the Golden Rule in our personal lives, in our community and in our country.

Congregational Prayer

Almighty God, our hearts are heavy with concern for our country and the enmity and bitterness we see between our fellow citizens makes us fearful for our future.

Bless us, the people of this community that we, in times of conflict, engage one another without hatred or bitterness, that we listen for your voice amid competing claims, and that we work together with mutual forbearance for the common good.

Forgive us when we have failed to show respect for those who have different views and for when we have been too quick to judge and dismiss those we disagree with.

Grant us the courage we need to speak your truth and also the humility we need to work effectively with others. In every interaction we have, help us to stay mindful of your command to treat others as we want to be treated.

Bless all of us as in the coming year as we debate the future of our country. Help us to stay mindful of your teachings so that we may engage each other in a spirit of wisdom, charity, and love. Help our political leaders to find ways to bring us together and not divide us. Help us all in this land to seek ways to faithfully serve each other and promote our common life together. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.