



## Short Readings and Prayers for Participants

### 1) Make Opening Comments

Today we join with churches of many denominations across the country to offer special prayers for our nation and to participate in Golden Rule 2020. November 3, 2020 is our national election and there is growing concern that the deep divisions in our society--and especially in our politics--will continue to worsen as the election approaches. As Christians, we are encouraged to pray for our leaders and our country. We are also asked to follow the teachings of Jesus and reminded that those teachings have the power to transform individual lives as well as countries.

### 2) Read the Golden Rule and Other Relevant Scriptures

The heart of Jesus' teachings about how we are to treat each other is often called the Golden Rule. Listen once again to this powerful command from our Lord as well as some of his other teachings about how we are to relate to others.

**Two versions of the Golden Rule in the New Testament: *(These are RSV and you may wish to use other translations)***

- **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.

**Some other teachings related to the Golden Rule: *(There are also many others you can use)***

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

### 3) Comment on Relevance of These Teachings to Politics

The power and beauty of these simple commands from the Bible are relevant to every area of our life--including politics and election activities. If enough of us follow these teachings we could bridge the divisions in our country and spark a rebirth of community and cooperative action. Today we want to be mindful of the need to advocate for what we believe and also treat those who have different views with dignity and respect. Following Jesus' teaching of the Golden Rule has an impact on how we talk to others and also on how we talk about them when they are not around. It requires us to show dignity and respect to others--even in contentious and difficult situations. ***(If you have put information about applying the Golden Rule in political discourse in your bulletin or made it available in some other way you could point that out at this time)***

#### **4) Responsive Reading**

Leader: Let us all join together in a responsive reading. We acknowledge that God call us to show respect to everyone--regardless of their views on difficult issues that divide our country.

**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: As we advocate for what we believe, help us to remember 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 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, justice and peace for all people

**All: In response, we will do what we can during the year ahead to stay mindful of the sacredness of each person and to apply Jesus' Golden Rule in our personal lives and in our political activity.**

#### **5) Prayer--silent then verbalized**

I invite you now to a moment of silent prayer for our country

***(After about 30 seconds, offer the short prayer below or another one with a similar theme)***

We come together today to pray for our country and also for ourselves. We are thankful for the blessings of living in the United States, but increasingly fearful for our future because of the enmity and bitterness we see between our fellow citizens. Help us to be more mindful of your teachings and to act in love to help heal the deep divisions in our country. We pray that you will keep us mindful of your great command to "treat others as we want to be treated" and that you will help us find ways to apply that principle in our daily lives. We believe that your way of love and kindness can transform our country and ask your assistance as we seek to show that love to others--especially those who hold views very different than our own. Amen.