



A GUIDE FOR LISTENING PRAYER

(While this is written as a group experience with an appointed leader, it can easily be adapted for personal use. It will be helpful to have a bible and writing material or journal available.)

PREPARING OURSELVES

Leader: *I invite you to get comfortable; to place yourself in a relaxed posture. If you are comfortable doing so, close your eyes. Breathe deeply, then slowly exhale. Repeat. Become aware of sensations in your body, particularly of any physical discomfort you might have, or places you may be holding stress. With your next breath, focus on relaxing any tension, allowing it to dissolve as muscles relax and peacefulness enters that part of your being.*

Turn your attention to your spirit. Let go of the cares and concerns of the day and feel yourself slowing down and becoming still. Breathe deeply and slowly exhale three more times as you settle into a quiet place of comfort and ease. Sense the Holy Spirit's presence abiding with you...

Music: Holy Spirit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPPMSfCdUng>

Leader: Invite everyone to open their eyes. Light a candle, then invite participants to silently pray through the Examen:

Father God, send your Holy Spirit upon me to enlighten my mind and stir my heart as I reflect on where and how we have been together. Help me to look at my day.

Where did I sense your presence? When did I hear your word?

Thank you, God, for your nearness to me today. I am truly grateful.

Where did I ignore you or run from you? When did I reject you?

Oh God, I am sorry for the ways that I offended you today by what I have done or have left undone.

Father, I gratefully accept your mercy and pardon, and I humbly ask that you draw me ever closer to you, today and always. Amen

Leader: *Together let us pray:*

Father, we come to you in the name of Jesus. As we are instructed, we come to you seeking wisdom regarding the search for a new bishop for our diocese. We ask, Father, that only your Holy Spirit speak to us now as we wait on you for wisdom, insight, and direction. In the mighty name of Jesus we pray. Amen.*

*James 1:5

MEDITATION

Instructions:

The scripture will be read three times, preferably by three individuals. Reading should be unhurried. Each reading will be introduced with a different emphasis. Allow at least 5 minutes after each reading, encouraging participants to note any word or phrase that especially stands out to them. They may want to journal any insights, feelings, or understanding the Holy Spirit imparts.

Scripture reading:

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. ² But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ⁵ A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ This figure of speech Jesus used with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁷ So Jesus again said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. ¹⁷ For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

- John 10:1-18 [ESV]

First reading: Jesus models what it means to be a good shepherd. *As you listen, what do you hear the Spirit saying regarding the character or qualities of a leader of God's people ?*

Second reading: Shepherds bear great responsibility. *As you listen, what do you hear the Spirit saying regarding the work of a leader of God's people?*

Third reading: *As you listen, and wait in quiet trust, ask the Good Shepherd for insights regarding who might meet these standards. Does a name or face come to mind?*



The Leader may choose to invite participants to share their impressions either following each reading or after the third reading.

CLOSING

Offer a prayer of thanksgiving, naming and praying into the impressions/insights received from the Holy Spirit. You might end with this prayer, which includes text from the 2019 BCP (pg 648-649):

Almighty God, Our Heavenly Father, thank you for the person you have prepared to be the next bishop of the Diocese of the Great Lakes. We humbly ask for the grace of discernment as our ADGL Standing Committee and Search Committee engage in the task of shepherding our diocese through the process of discernment. “. . . So guide the minds

of those who shall choose a Bishop for this Diocese that we may receive a faithful pastor who will preach the Gospel, care for your people, equip us for ministry, and lead us forth in fulfillment of the Great Commission; through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen