

Guide for Leading Prayers in Worship.

You have been invited to lead a most important part of the worship of the congregation, speaking to God about those things that we need and praying for others. This guide is intended to answer three questions: What shall you pray for? Whom are you addressing? What do you need to know about when to move and where to stand?

What shall you pray for?

One of the reasons for asking members of the congregation to lead the prayers is the hope that a variety of people will bring a variety of concerns so that over time a broad range of needs and issues will be entrusted to God. As you consider what to pray for think about the people you know and the challenges they face; think about your community, our state, our nation, our world; think about what has been in the news or events that are soon to happen; think about the church in this place and the church in all the world. If you are leading the prayers alone choose two or three of these concerns to speak to God about. If you are leading the prayers with others, you each will want to focus on one area. (When praying along with others make sure you communicate what area each will be focusing on so that the same things are not prayed for by each person. Normally one of the petitions will be for those who are sick or hospitalized, including all of the names listed on the prayer board in the lobby and in the bulletin. Be sure to check this board for late additions (immediately before worship or even during the hymn following the sermon. If for any reason you do not choose to pray for the sick please speak to the pastor presiding at communion that day well before the service so the pastor can be prepared to lead this petition.

Whom are you addressing?

It is important to remember that public prayer is addressed to God – not to the congregation. While all that are present focus their thoughts and prayers along with the one who is leading the prayer, the prayer is not intended to instruct them or to influence them or to inform them of announcements. A variety of names can be used for God – e.g. Heavenly Father, Almighty Lord, Gracious God, Creator of All, Lord, etc. Also prayers can be addressed to Jesus, or to the Holy Spirit in addition to God the Father. But once the address has been made be sure to use the word you – e.g. We ask you.... Rather than We ask God..... Each petition ends with the words Lord in your mercy... to which the congregation responds: Hear our Prayer.

What do you need to know about when to move and where to stand?

Normally a good time to come forward for the prayers is during the hymn following the sermon or if there is no hymn to come forward during the creed. If you need the hymnal to repeat the creed please bring it with you. The prayers are normally led from the lectern and those praying can comfortably arrange themselves near the lectern. You do not need to stand far back or hide behind the pillar. When the prayers are concluded remain in place until the passing of the peace.

(over)

Additional notes: When the Assisting Minister is leading the prayers she/he introduces the prayers with “Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus.....

When members of the congregation have prepared the prayers the Presiding Minister will speak this introduction.

Whenever possible let Pastor Schlessman know how many petitions you will be praying so he will know when to conclude the prayers.

On Baptismal Sundays and when there is Confirmation or Affirmation of Baptism the prayers become part of these rites. Please come forward during the hymn proceeding or when the baptismal party gathers. Especially on these Sundays it is helpful if those leading the prayer sit near the front on the lectern side. Including a prayer petition for the one(s) being baptized is appropriate. During a baptism please stay at the lectern following the prayers (you will have a better view from there!) until the passing of the peace.

If as you prepare your prayers you have any questions feel free to contact Pastor Schlessman.

Thank you for serving in this most important way.