



A LITURGY OF HOPE & RELEASE

for Election Season & the
Weeks Following an Election

Liturgy by Sarah Are

We invite you to implement this liturgy as-is, or adapt it for your context.

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INTRODUCTION

Election seasons are seasons of heightened anxiety, fear, and division. Following Jesus' model of caring for the most vulnerable, we believe God calls us to stay attentive to the policies and leaders that impact our collective well-being. We believe God calls us to use our vote to work toward building God's beloved community on earth. Therefore, this simple liturgy is designed to carve out space for reflection, listening, and connection—in the midst of staying active and engaged throughout election season. Written to be used at home by families or individuals, this liturgy could also be adapted for small groups or corporate worship. To adapt the liturgy for congregational use, we would encourage the addition of (COVID-safe) Holy Communion, a longer prayer of the people with silent reflection time, and hymns.

SOME HYMNS THAT MIGHT BE FITTING ARE:

- [“God of all Peoples”](#)
Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette; Tune: BUNESSAN 5.5.5.4 D (“Morning Has Broken”)
- [“In Times of Great Decision”](#)
Words: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette; Tune: AURELIA 7.6.7.6 D (“The Church’s One Foundation”)
- [“Be Thou My Vision”](#)¹ | *Words: Mary E. Byrne; Tune: SLANE*
- [“O God of Every Nation”](#) | *Words: William Watkins Reid (1958); Tune: LLANGLOFFAN*
- [“For Everyone Born, A Place at the Table”](#) | *Words: Shirley Erena Murray; Music: Lori True*
- [“What Does the Lord Require of You?”](#) | *Words: Jim Strathdee; Tune: MOON*
- [“For the Healing of the Nations”](#) | *Words: Fred Kaan; Meter: 8.7 8.7 8.7*
- [“God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me”](#)
Words: Richard Bruxvoort Colligan (2004); Tune: GREEN TYLER

¹ This version by Audrey Assad is beautiful and lovely for listening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Optrm7IF16s>.



A LITURGY OF HOPE AND RELEASE

I. SET THE SPACE

Optional Supplies: candle, lighter, Bible, pen, journal, etc.

Studies show that space affects how we act. We're formal in a courtroom. We're competitive on the soccer field. We're reflective in a sanctuary. Therefore, we invite you to create a space that feels reflective and calming to your spirit. Light a candle. Open a window. Grab your Bible and a pen. Maybe brew a cup of coffee or tea? Facetime someone you love if you hope to share this experience with another. Settle into a physical position that feels open and light. Take a deep breath in. Trust that God is in this space.

Tips for Young Families:

- Invite your kids to have a hands-on role in this liturgy by having them collect the needed supplies from around the house (*pens, Bible, candle, lighter, speaker or computer, etc*), and inviting them to light the candle to set the space.
- Before you begin the liturgy, invite your children to create a special place for you all to sit and reflect. They can make a comfortable fort out of pillows for you all to sit on the floor, or gather all the supplies needed around the table!

II. MUSICAL CALL TO WORSHIP

Supplies: computer or smartphone, speaker

Play "[The Keep Going Song](#)" by The Bengsons.²

Music speaks to our heart in a way that words cannot. That is why we so often begin our services with music. Music has the power to open our hearts, which we so often need. Therefore, to allow the Spirit to create a tender space in your heart for this hour and this moment, we invite you to listen to or watch the recording of "The Keep Going On Song" by The Bengsons. Let it move you. Let it open you up.

Close your eyes and listen to the lyrics.

Notice—what emotions stand out?

What parts of this song do you relate to?

Where do you hear grief? Where do you hear hope?

Tips for Young Families:

To help make this a more kinesthetic experience for your kiddos, play this song over a speaker. Invite them to dance to the song, or to lay down and stretch out on the ground, listening to the music around them. If they find some of the lyrics funny, let them giggle! Joy is a beautiful response to worship.

² Please note: there is a brief second of profanity during the intro of the song, at 0:51 in the video. If you are using this liturgy with children, you may wish to skip ahead and start the song at 1:15. The song is also available on Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/track/6KtmbXam7AxfCupFYeM6K7?si=qw2fyuBHSvOqFyfXV0IM8Q>.



III. READ + REFLECT

Supplies: Bible, journal and pen (optional)

Read: Romans 8:22-27

Read this passage from the book of Romans. If time allows, read it through several times, allowing yourself to be pulled into the words and images.

Journal or Discuss:

1. Verse 22 describes creation groaning. In your own life, what has felt heavy? What has been hard this season? What causes you to groan? What causes all of creation to groan? Write those things down or name them aloud.
2. Verse 23 describes waiting eagerly for deeper connection with God, for complete redemption. What is it that you are waiting eagerly for? What do you long for—in your life, in your community, in our nation? Write those things down or name them aloud.
3. Verses 24 and 25 speak of hope. What gives you hope today? What do you hope for that you have not yet seen? Write those things down or name them aloud. May these prayers of hope lift your spirit.
4. Verses 26 and 27 describe the closeness of the Spirit—interceding and searching, knowing us completely, and helping us to pray. The Ancient Greek word for “Spirit” also means “wind,” and the Hebrew word translates to “breath.” Therefore, in this challenging season of division, worry, and fear, take five deep breaths. Breathe slowly in and out, and as you breathe, give what is heavy and what is hopeful to the Spirit.

Read: Psalm 126

Read this psalm and then take a view moments to gaze at this image by Hannah Garrity, inspired by this scripture.



“This art piece simply represents the tears that sow the joy of the future, the simultaneous joy amidst the pain, the waters of restoration that will bring us joy in the morning. We meet with joy in this dreamlike time.”

— From the artist,
Hannah Garrity

III. READ + REFLECT (CONTINUED)

Breathe deeply as you continue to gaze upon the image. As you engage the image, use these prompts for contemplation:

1. Notice the visual qualities of what you see, paying attention to the colors, textures, movement, and shapes.
2. What emotions emerge for you as you gaze upon the image? What emotions emerge when you read Psalm 126?
3. Use your imagination. If you were to place yourself in this image, where would you be and why?

Read: “To Carry A Dream” a poem by Sarah Are³

To Carry A Dream

*To carry a dream
Is to walk at night,
Or to walk by light,
But with a pebble in your shoe.*

*To carry a dream is to
Wake at night
To wake and blink twice,
In case you see something new.*

*To carry a dream
Is to plant trees in old age,
To be a part of a church,
That is human and frayed.*

*To carry a dream is foolish and wild.
It's the faith of a child,
Wishing on stars.*

*But to carry a dream is also
hopeful and wise
The faith of our elders,
Saying God will provide.*

*So may we walk
Until we see the light.
May the pebble in our shoe
Remind us why we fight.
May they say
We are foolish and unwise,
And may we continue to dream;
May hope keep us alive.*

Journal or Discuss:

1. In this election season, what dreams do you have for our nation? What dreams do you have for your church? What dreams do you have for human connection?
2. If carrying a dream is like walking in the night, what gives you the strength to continue walking? Who in your world is weary of walking who could use your support? Who is walking in the opposite direction and how could you continue to be a neighbor to them?

³ This poem is featured in our [Those Who Dream](https://sanctifiedart.org/creative-written-liturgy/those-who-dream-advent-poems) Advent Bundle for Year B, and can also be found separately here: <https://sanctifiedart.org/creative-written-liturgy/those-who-dream-advent-poems>.



IV. RESPOND

Supplies: paper or stationery, an envelope, pen, and a stamp

Choose Connection

Election seasons are seasons of division. We find it hard to see one another and even harder to hear one another. To challenge that societal norm of division, we invite you to choose connection. Write a letter to someone you love and send it to them in the mail. Let them know they are on your mind. Surprise them with the outreach. Remember that connection is and always will be a spiritual practice.

Tips for Young Families:

Invite any children in your midst to write letters on their own. If they are not able to write letters, invite them to draw a picture or decorate the envelope!

V. CLOSE IN PRAYER

Holy God,

We come to you today in prayer, full of emotions.

Election seasons always seem to bring that out in us—

Worry and hope, fear and frustration. The list could go on.

So today we bow our heads and ask for guidance.

Open our ears to hear the groans of creation.

Open our eyes to see the needs of others.

Open our hearts to make room for empathy.

Give us the wisdom to navigate challenging conversations.

Give us the patience to disagree with grace.

Give us the compassion to make decisions for the greater good.

And when all else fails, bring us back to love.

Bring our hearts and our hands,

Our dreams and our hopes,

Our anger and our frustration,

Our hurt and our fear,

All back to love.

With hope we pray,

With hope we are sustained.

Amen.





ABOUT THE CREATORS

Rev. Sarah Are, *Founding Creative Partner of A Sanctified Art*

Sarah (*she/her*) is the Associate Pastor for Youth and Young Adults at Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas. She believes that the Church has a responsibility to open every door to God, so that those of us who are visual, kinesthetic, or relational learners all have equal opportunity to engage God to the fullest of our abilities.



Hannah Garrity, *Founding Creative Partner of A Sanctified Art*

Hannah (*she/her*) is an artist and an athlete, a daughter and a mother, a facilitator and a producer, a leader and a teammate. She is an art teacher at a middle school in Richmond, VA, a Sunday school visual choir facilitator at Second Presbyterian Church in Richmond, VA, an art in worship workshop leader wherever she is called, and a liturgical installation artist at the Montreat Conference Center, Montreat, NC.



A Sanctified Art LLC is a collective of artists in ministry who create resources for worshipping communities. The Sanctified Art team works collaboratively to bring scripture and theological themes to life through film, visual art, curriculum, coloring pages, liturgy, graphic designs, and more. Their mission is to empower churches with resources to inspire creativity in worship and beyond. Driven by the connective and prophetic

power of art, they believe that art helps us connect our hearts with our hands, our faith with our lives, and our mess with our God. Learn more about their work at sanctifiedart.org.

