

Eternal God,

Before you, we realize our finitude, our time-boundness. You are from everlasting to everlasting, and we are but a moment. We are fleeting; you are constant. And Lord, we admit this not to belittle ourselves, but instead to glorify you and your name, and to rest in your eternity. You are the Lord of our yesterday, today, and tomorrow. You never let your people down or forget your love for us. Today, hold us close to you, and wrap us in your promises.

As we continue through uncertainty, Lord, we cling to you. Be our rock through turbulent times. Here in the United States, we pray for peace and wisdom in the aftermath of the presidential election; please give our leaders hearts and minds that are in tune with the tenets of loving you: compassion, dignity, integrity, and justice. In Ethiopia, we pray for peace to prevail in a country teetering on the edge of civil war. Prevent needless bloodshed, Lord, and bring peace and reconciliation to that country.

In our homes, we pray for those wrestling through mental health struggles: give hope to the depressed, calm to the anxious, joy to the down-hearted. In our streets, we pray for those experiencing homelessness, especially as we turn toward the throes of winter. May they experience warmth, shelter, and the affirmation of their dignity, and may we not turn away from any suffering around us. In our county and country, we pray for all who have contracted COVID-19. Heal them, Lord, and please be near to the health care workers who are no doubt overloaded and exhausted in a time like this.

Lord, today we also come to you on behalf of some among us. We ask for quick healing for Marian Heerema's broken ankle, and for a fast recovery for Ann Boermans from this coronavirus. We pray your presence be near to Dave Dykgraaf, too, as he recovers from yet another eye surgery. Eternal God, you know us intimately, and for that we are so grateful. You know the prayers of our hearts, and by your Holy Spirit, we bring those prayers to you in this moment. Care for us all, dear God.

In a moment, we will hear your Word, and in it, we'll hear Jesus' command to remain, to abide in him. We need your help to do that. We desperately long to abide in you Lord, so please continually re-root us in Jesus Christ – through loving our neighbor, through prayer, through worship, through engagement with your Word in Scripture, and through engagement with your world. All things hold together in you Jesus, and so we pray the prayer you taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.**