

GRASPING FOR MUCH-NEEDED GRACE:
20 Days of Nonpartisan Prayer in a Polarized Political Season
Vermont Conference (UCC) prayer initiative
Fall 2020

Day 1 (Thursday, October 15)

“Heal This Land”

by Rev. Paul Eyer

Scripture focus: *If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (II Chronicles 7:14 NRSV)*

Reflection: This passage, with references to “sin” and “wicked ways,” has the potential to make people feel uncomfortable. And to be sure, there have been times when this scripture verse has been wielded as a weapon. There have been occasions when these stirring words have been misused to provide a veneer of political cover for labeling opponents as “wicked” and leveling accusations against others because they happened to be different.

This message of God comes in response to a prayer from King Solomon at the consecration of a newly-constructed house of worship, the Temple in Jerusalem three millennia ago. But today we offer prayers at a time when many of our own houses of worship are partially or fully empty as a consequence of a plague-like disease of biblical proportions.

If there was ever a time when our land was in need of healing, it is now. We need healing from the deadly impact of a frightening pandemic. We need healing from the sordid sickness of racism that continues to infect our society and our souls in ways we still don’t fully understand. We need healing from self-righteous arrogance that has led people across the spectrum to be contemptuous toward others who do not share their views of politics and society and faith. And we need healing from the potentially catastrophic consequences of failing to adequately care for the environment.

Perhaps it is time for us to reclaim the promise of this scripture passage. Perhaps it is time for us to turn again toward God. Perhaps, in a spirit of humility, it is time—even more fervently—to seek God’s face and to pray.

Prayer: O God, if there were ever a time when our land is in need of healing, it is now. So we humble ourselves, seek your face, and pray. Hear us, forgive us, and heal us. Amen.

Rev. Paul Eyer serves as pastor of Williston Federated Church in Williston, VT.