



Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

FEARLESS LOVE

A Season of Prayer:

Seeking God's Vision for the Diocese

Novena

September 14 - September 22, 2019

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8

Dear Friends,

As you may recall, I first invited you to join in a Season of Prayer in late May and early June, in order that the transition to my episcopal ministry was steeped in prayer as we all called upon the Holy Spirit to pour out upon this diocese God's grace and love. Now I invite you to join in a Second Season of Prayer in preparation for listening sessions to be held throughout the diocese in late September.

I invite you, members of all congregations and affiliated ministries, to join in a novena from September 14 through 22. A novena is an ancient tradition of Christian devotional prayer, consisting of private or public prayers repeated for nine successive days, often with a special focus or intention. For each of nine days, I ask you to pray in faith that God will open us to vibrant possibilities for mission, focused in ministry areas of discipleship, evangelism and service. By God's grace, I believe that the fruits of collective prayer will be known in our lives, in the congregations and organizations that we serve, and for the mission and ministry of the diocese.

On the next page are simple guidelines for incorporating the novena into your daily lives. Whether you include this in your practice of the daily offices (Morning, Noonday, Evening Prayer or Compline) or incorporate it into your other daily devotions, know that I am grateful for the time you will dedicate to praying to God with me and thousands throughout our diocese. You may wish to pray individually, you might want to come together with others, or even to pray collectively in your congregations at an appointed time each day. Whether you pray individually or in groups, I trust that the experience will be profound.

Because we are spread out in a geographically diverse diocese, this novena will not conclude in one gathering, but rather in the listening sessions themselves, each of which will begin with prayers of thanksgiving.

Thank you for making this commitment to me as your bishop, and to our diocese. I look forward to being with you in the listening sessions. Until then, I will be praying with you: *Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.*

In Christ,
+Susan

The Right Rev. Susan Brown Snook
Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of San Diego

In our Baptismal Covenant, we are called to three areas of Mission:

- **Discipleship**

Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

I will, with God's help.

As disciples, we draw ever closer to Christ, by sitting at his feet and learning; by worshiping and learning to pray; by growing in the ministry of reconciliation; and by learning to love God and love our neighbor.

- **Evangelism**

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

I will, with God's help.

As evangelists, we share the good news of God's love for this world that we have come to know as disciples of the risen Christ. We come to know our neighbors and our communities; we listen to their stories; and we share our own experience of God's reconciling, life-transforming love.

- **Service**

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

As servants, we recognize that love is not a feeling, but an action. We emulate the self-sacrificing love of Jesus by serving our neighbors, our communities, and the world.

Guidelines

- BEGIN by reading Acts 1:8 followed by the brief prayer:

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”
Acts 1:8

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people and kindle in us the fire of your love. *Amen.*

- READ the Bible text. Allow it to enliven your heart, stir your soul and spark your imagination. If you have time, pause, then read the passage a second time. Consider what words and phrases speak to you. Ask God what the Word might mean for you today. Unless otherwise noted, the translated offered is New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).
- LISTEN to the Word for insight. Pay attention to insights as you listen for yourself, your community and the diocese.
- PRAY the collect designated for the day. Unless otherwise noted, collects are from *The Book of Common Prayer (1979)*, using Rite II language. Should the language not accord with your customs, please substitute language that best suits your theological preferences.
- RESPOND to the questions. Consider using a prayer journal or a notebook to collect your responses. Then bring your responses to a Listening Session (the schedule will be published in diocesan communications). While we will not be able to hear all reflections, as there are sure to be many, they will inform the Listening Sessions as we seek God’s vision for the diocese. If you cannot attend a Listening Session and would like to share your reflections, please contact the Director of Formation and Transition, The Rev. Laura Sheridan-Campbell at lsheridancampbell@edsd.org or 619-481-5451.
- CONCLUDE by reading this verse:
Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.*
Ephesians 3:20, 21

Day 1: Saturday, September 14

Holy Cross Day

Focus: Call to Discipleship

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

⁵ Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,
⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.
And being found in human form,
⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the
point of death— even death on a cross.
⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2: 5-11

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Almighty God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ was lifted high upon the cross that he might draw the whole world unto himself: Mercifully grant that we, who glory in the mystery of our redemption, may have grace to take up our cross and follow him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Collect for Holy Cross Day, BCP 244

RESPOND Can you recall a ministry in your congregation or the diocese that came from an experience of loss, failure or death? How did you sense God's call then? In what ways might God be calling us to bear witness to the crucified and risen Christ in our communities and the diocese, particularly where we see suffering today?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 2: Sunday, September 15
The Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Focus: Call to Evangelism

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

¹⁶ Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:16-20*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY O God, you have made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, and sent your blessed Son to preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near: Grant that people everywhere may seek after you and find you, bring the nations into your fold, pour out your Spirit upon all flesh, and hasten the coming of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For the Mission of the Church, BCP, 257

RESPOND Can you think of a time in your life, your congregation, or this diocese when you felt called to share the Good News of the gospel? How did you respond to the call? How might God be calling us anew, in our churches and in the diocese, to go out into the world to tell others of the Good News of Jesus Christ?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 3: Monday, September 16

The Feast of Ninian

Focus: Call to Service

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

⁴² So Jesus called them and said to them, “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” *Mark 10:42-45*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve: Bless all who, following in his steps, give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister in his Name to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy- for the love of him who laid down his life for us, your Son our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.* *For Social Service, BCP, 260*

RESPOND What has the experience of serving others taught you? How might our diocese, by serving as Jesus taught us to do, offer a different sense of belonging, meaning and purpose than the dominant culture?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 4: Tuesday, September 17
The Feast of Hildegard of Bingen
Focus: Call to Discipleship

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

Now there was a disciple in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, "Ananias." He answered, "Here I am, Lord." ¹¹ The Lord said to him, "Get up and go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul. At this moment he is praying, ¹² and he has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight." ¹³ But Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints in Jerusalem; ¹⁴ and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who invoke your name." ¹⁵ But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is an instrument whom I have chosen to bring my name before Gentiles and kings and before the people of Israel; ¹⁶ I myself will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name." ¹⁷ So Ananias went and entered the house. He laid his hands on Saul and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here, has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, ¹⁹ and after taking some food, he regained his strength. *Acts 9:10-19*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For the Human Family, BCP 815

RESPOND In a polarized world where we may resist the call to engage those with whom we disagree, how can we better hear and obey Christ's command to love our neighbors as ourselves? What gifts do the Episcopal Church and our diocese have to offer the world now?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 5: Wednesday, September 18

Ember Wednesday

Focus: Call to Evangelism

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

¹Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, ²and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. ³He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. ⁴Whatever house you enter, stay there, and leave from there. ⁵Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” ⁶They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere. *Luke 9:1-6*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. *Amen.* *A Collect for Mission, BCP, 101*

RESPOND In the Episcopal Church that too often expects others to come to us, how are we now going out into the world to proclaim the kingdom of God? What are the obstacles to being “missionaries” of the gospel in our communities? What unique gifts do we as Episcopalians have to offer the world?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 6: Thursday, September 19
The Feast of Theodore of Tarsus
Focus: Call to Service

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

And during supper ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, ⁴ got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!"

¹² After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. *John 13: 2b-9, 12-15*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Almighty God our heavenly Father, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

For Vocation in Daily Work, BCP 261

RESPOND What kinds of service do you feel called to? What kinds of service are challenging for you? What service ministries in our diocese do you most appreciate? What service ministries would you like to see more of?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 7: Friday, September 20
Ember Friday
Focus: Call to Discipleship

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:23-28

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you have sent, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For the Unity of the Church, BCP, 255

RESPOND When have you experienced reconciliation across lines of human difference (i.e., race, culture, religion, age, background, gender, sexual orientation)? What does Christ's gift of unity mean to you? How might God be calling us to model unity in a time of polarization and division?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 8: Saturday, September 21

The Feast of Matthew

Focus: Call to Evangelism

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

⁹ As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰ And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² But when he heard this, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.” *Matthew 9: 9-13*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY

We thank you, heavenly Father, for the witness of your apostle and evangelist Matthew to the Gospel of your Son our Savior; and we pray that, after his example, we may with ready wills and hearts obey the calling of our Lord to follow him; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.* *Collect for Saint Matthew, BCP, 245*

RESPOND What brought you to the Episcopal Diocese of San Diego? What keeps you in the diocese? What do you treasure about the diocese? What do you wish were different?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

Day 9: Sunday, September 22
The Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost
Focus: Call to Service

BEGIN by reading aloud the opening scripture and prayer on page 3.

READ

One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, at three o'clock in the afternoon. ² And a man lame from birth was being carried in. People would lay him daily at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate so that he could ask for alms from those entering the temple. ³ When he saw Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked them for alms. ⁴ Peter looked intently at him, as did John, and said, "Look at us." ⁵ And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. ⁶ But Peter said, "I have no silver or gold, but what I have I give you; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, stand up and walk." ⁷ And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. ⁸ Jumping up, he stood and began to walk, and he entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ All the people saw him walking and praising God, ¹⁰ and they recognized him as the one who used to sit and ask for alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. *Acts 3: 1-10*

LISTEN for what the Holy Spirit is saying through the Word.

PRAY Everliving God, whose will it is that all should come to you through your Son Jesus Christ: Inspire our witness to him, that all may know the power of his forgiveness and the hope of his resurrection; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For the Mission of the Church, BCP, 816-817

RESPOND When did you or your church have to rely on God to fulfill a ministry (maybe you didn't think you had enough resources, but God provided)? What ways might our church and the diocese as a whole think about our resources, and better use them in service of God and God's people?

CONCLUDE by reading the scripture on page 3.

