

RECOMMENDATIONS & GUIDELINES FOR INCLUSIVE PUBLIC PRAYERS

“Inclusive” public prayer in a pluralistic society is effective when the person leading the prayer is sensitive to the diversity of his/her audience. Those who lead general community prayers have a responsibility to have a clear understanding about the public nature of the occasion and respectful of the makeup of the audience.

- Prayer on behalf of the entire community is most honoring of all peoples’ faith traditions when listeners from a wide range of religious practices can share the experience and when the language is non-offensive to their faith traditions.
- Inclusive public prayer is non-sectarian, general, and carefully planned to respect the ground that diverse faith traditions have in common.
- An intentional effort to pray using universal, inclusive language helps bridge the gap among the faith traditions:

For example: Using opening language about God such as: ***Source of All Being; Creator and Sustainer; Our Maker; and Almighty God,*** or using closing words like, ***Hear our prayer; May Goodness Flourish; In the Name of All we hold Sacred;*** or ***Amen,*** can help to frame the prayer so that those gathered can affirm their personal faith tradition and still participate in a community expression of reverence.

- Inclusive public prayer remains faithful to the purpose of acknowledging the Divine Presence, giving thanks, and seeking blessing, and should not be used as a forum to preach, persuade, or testify.