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Praying our way to the election

The closer we get to election day the more anxious I become. Strolls through Facebook resemble walks through minefields. My blood pressure mimics the ups and downs of the candidates' poll numbers. Maybe you can identify.

Last week I made a promise to myself; beginning in October I will avoid social media until the election is over. This vow provided initial relief but it didn't address my deeper need. My deeper need is for God. Recognizing this, I hatched a plan to pray daily in advance of the election.

No matter our party affiliation or spiritual framework, we all would be wise to be praying right now. Besides voting, it's the most powerful action we can take.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the number 40 has significance. Scripture tells us that the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years



Pastor's Perspective

By Karen Winkel

on their way to the Land of Promise. It also details how Jesus went off by himself to pray for 40 days before beginning his public ministry. With this sacred number in mind, I decided to commit to praying each of the 40 days prior to the election (Sept. 24-Nov. 2). I've since invited my congregation to do likewise. (Join us. You can find our simple framework on our website's home page, as well

as on our Facebook page.)

A colleague launching his own 40 Days of Prayer initiative asked me to contribute something. I share that prayer here, hoping you might find it helpful as you pray your way to Election Day:

“Be still and know that I am God? Holy One, the words of the psalmist indict me. With an election on the horizon — the most important in my lifetime, perhaps in the history of the United States — my mind races, my heart breaks, my body quakes as I consider all that is at stake and all that could go wrong. Still me, God. Let me find myself in you, not in the latest polls, not in the most astute political commentary, not in the most clever social media posts. Still me, God; let me find myself enveloped by you.

“As I sink into your peaceful presence, as I welcome your gift of stillness, minister to my

depths. Shore me up. Restore me. Fill me with whatever you filled Jesus with — confidence in you, hope, a vision of shalom made manifest here on earth. Whatever it was that enabled Jesus to meet the world head on and offer love and healing when so many were hard and heartless, whatever that was, bless me with a portion of it. I ask this not simply so that I can step into today and then tomorrow with a surer, steadier faith but so that I might offer a bit of light, love, and life to those around me, people who are right now as uncertain and concerned as I have been.

“With Election Day on the horizon, help me be still, O' Perfect Stillness. Help me, Gracious One, be of use in this season and in the season to come. Amen.”

Rev. Karen Winkel is pastor of Community Spirit Church (UCC) in Montrose.