



We are in a moment of transition. **What will we do?**

One response offered is the **People's Inauguration**. Here's what its organizers say:

"There's a powerful story in the Book of Nehemiah (chapters 9 and 10) about a time of national division and defeat. The people came together and did two powerful things. First, they confessed their faults. They took responsibility for their national problems and didn't just blame someone else. Second, they made a commitment to be different going forward.

The leaders went first in making that commitment publicly. But it wasn't enough for the leaders to do so. The people joined them, whatever their profession, wealth, or status. That story reminds us that we the people can't expect leaders to fix everything alone; we need good and wise leaders, but we also need to be good and wise citizens.

In that spirit, we invite all followers of Jesus and their communities to participate in the People's Inauguration on January 21 2021." (The People's Inauguration: Template for Christians)

To find out more go to www.thePeoplesInauguration.org. Sign up for the **kick-off event tomorrow/Thursday, January**

21st at noon. Watch, listen, and interact with visionaries, faith leaders, civic leaders, artists, educators, and healers while we explore ways to seek justice, heal, and lead with love throughout the day.

Take the People's Inaugural Oath and commit to being a part of bringing healing and wholeness to our world.

The Oath

Slowly place your right hand on your heart.
Then slowly bring your left hand up to join it.
Speak the following.

"I, _____,
do solemnly vow
that I will faithfully execute my role
in healing, reimagining, and rebuilding our country,
and will to the best of my ability,
preserve, protect, and defend
dignity, justice, truth, wonder and joy
for myself and for all around me,
and that I will do so with love."

Accountability is important so **have a witness** to your oath or if you are feeling ready to be publicly committed, **video yourself** taking the oath and send it to us so that we can post it on our website or make a montage of oath takers to use in worship or on social media. We want to see how many oath videos we can get by the end of the month, **31 January**. Send your video to ccml-peggy@optimum.net. Help us make our goal of at least 20 people who have committed themselves and been inaugurated for this important work!

FOR FAMILIES OR OTHER GROUPS

If you want to gather as a family, a group of friends or a quarantine group to discuss and make the oath, here are some suggestions on how you might to do that.

Prepare your heart

Before you gather together, we encourage parents to read and reflect on this story from Luke 10:25 ff:

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" The lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." And Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, the lawyer asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a clergyman was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a worship leader, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two days' wages, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" The lawyer said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Prepare your space

To prepare for the ceremony in person, find a comfortable place to gather across from each other where you can see each other clearly. A dining table would work well, as would a space on the floor where you can sit together in a circle. Consider lighting a candle in the middle of your gathering space or setting up pillows around your circle on the floor. If you are gathering online, be sure you can see each other and sit

comfortably.

The Ceremony

Once people are seated, invite everyone to take a few deep breaths, settling into the space. You may want to offer an opening prayer, perhaps one or more of these from the Book of Common Prayer:

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, kindle, we pray, in every heart the true love of peace, and guide with your wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth, that in tranquility your dominion may increase until the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Instead, or in addition, you may simply light a candle and invite everyone into a few moments of silence. Whoever is convening or leading your group, begin by welcoming everyone and expressing gratitude for the opportunity to be together to dream about the world we want to build. Explain the idea of a people's inauguration ... that building a better nation and world depends not just on elected leaders, but on all of us, working together, empowered by God's love.

Explain why this moment is important to you personally. What does taking this oath mean to you?

Share:

1. What you want to leave behind from these last years and;
2. What do you want to have more of as you move forward to in the future.

Next, invite each participant to share. Ask them to name some of the hard things for them about the past year. What do they wish was different?

Now ask them to imagine the world they would like to live in and share a dream they have for their future. They can speak these dreams out loud, or you could invite them to write a few sentences or a short poem or prayer that they could share (using the chat function if you're online). You might even use art supplies to draw them out.

Notice if anything a participant shares brings up feelings of fear or frustration in you. If so, it may help to remember that many people are struggling to envision a future for themselves at this moment. If they feel uncertain, they may deflect or use this opportunity to make a joke. If this is the case in your group, try to be understanding rather than discouraged.

Some participants may take this opportunity to express deep pain or articulate strong feelings about the world as they feel it should be. Make space to listen with curiosity, even if hearing about their experience is difficult or their vision differs in some ways from your own. Others have insights into the world we may not. Listening closely teaches us, and understanding can point us to a path forward together.

The Oath

Now it is time to take the oath. Leaders or conveners, invite your group to repeat after you, inserting their own name.

Slowly place your right hand on your heart.
Then slowly bring your left hand up to join it.

Repeat after me.

"I, _____,
do solemnly vow

that I will faithfully execute my role
in healing, reimagining, and rebuilding
our country,

and will to the best of my ability,
preserve, protect, and defend
dignity, justice, truth, wonder and joy
for myself and for all around me,
and that I will do so with love."

After the Oath

Thank participants for joining you, and ask them if they have enjoyed gathering together like this. If you would like to make this a monthly ritual, over the next 12 months, we will be providing monthly resources for ongoing meetings. You can sign up to receive them here. Also ask your participants if they would feel comfortable having you share their oath, dreams, or artwork on social media. If they say yes, please do!

1. Post video, photo or text of your oath with the hashtag #PeoplesInauguration #Rebuilding theUnion
2. Tag someone and ask them to join you. "I'm tagging @_____ to make their oath too!"
3. Send your video to the church (ccml-peggy@optimum.net)

For reflection after the ceremony

You may wish to read the Good Samaritan story from Luke 10, and then ask, "What does this story teach us about being better citizens and neighbors? Why do you think Jesus made the Samaritan the hero in the story instead of the priest or worship leader? How do you identify with the lawyer in this story? What other detail from the story stands out to you, and why?" The Good Samaritan story is about seeing across differences, to recognize "the other" as our neighbor. Instead of wishing that people who are different would be more like you, take this opportunity to pray that your heart will grow larger and stronger, so that you can love everyone with revolutionary love, love that is based not on who they are, but who you are, as a carrier and channel of God's love.

(Brian D. McLaren, author, speaker, activist, and public theologian; Adapted from Amy Olrick's Family Template)



