

~~Prayer~~ Jeanine Kersey Russeel

Most prayers in this room begin with a request to bow your heads. I would like to ask that you not bow your heads. I would like to ask that you take a moment to look around the room at all of the men and women here, in this moment, sharing together this extraordinary experience of being alive and of dedicating ourselves to working toward improving the lives of people.

This is sometimes a space where there are challenging debates, moments of tension, maybe ideological division, or frustration. But this is also a space where, by the very fact of being human, we have much more in common than we have differences. We share the same spectrum of potential for care, for compassion, for fear, for joy, for love.

Carl Sagan once wrote, "for small creatures such as we, the vastness is bearable only through love." There is, in process, much to bear. In this room, let us cherish and celebrate our shared humanness, our shared capacity for reason and compassion, our shared love for people—and let us root our process in these values that are relevant to all people regardless of religious belief or nonbelief. In gratitude and in love, in reason and in compassion, let us work together and let us pray...

Creator, Thank you for every seat that has been filled here today. For each mind and heart that fills the presence of this room, we thank you. Only You truly know what we are setting out to accomplish today. We have an idea, a vision, hints, and daily instructions. We have talents, abilities, and time to work. However, only You can see in perfect detail the end of every beginning. Every project, every season, every life. Nothing is ever in vain, for even mistakes and missteps are used for good.

Forgive us for our pride, the pride that puffs us up and the pride that threatens to unqualify us. Strengthen our confidence in who You have made us to be. Set us free from comparison in order to work together. Amen