

**From:** Patricia Soutas-Little <[psoutaslittle@leelanau.gov](mailto:psoutaslittle@leelanau.gov)>

**Subject: Re: Prayer**

**Date:** March 9, 2021 at 8:17:42 AM EST

**To:** Karen & Gery Zemaitis <[gkzemaitis@att.net](mailto:gkzemaitis@att.net)>

**Cc:** Will Bunek <[wbunek@leelanau.gov](mailto:wbunek@leelanau.gov)>, Chet Janik <[cjanik@leelanau.gov](mailto:cjanik@leelanau.gov)>

Dear Gery,

Thank you for your February 24th email and please accept my apologies for the delay in responding. A week ago Saturday I took my husband, Robert, to Munson ER where he underwent major surgery on Sunday, the third in less than one month's time. Following a stint in ICU he was moved to a regular ward and happily I was able to bring him home again late last week. I am now catching up on correspondence.

I appreciate your request to "take the lead" in replacing the moment of silence with a prayer, like the one you suggested. The moment of silence statute was passed to allow respectful, thoughtful contemplation and tribute to those men and women who have served or are still serving in defense of our country, many of whom gave their lives. This is why it follows the patriotic pledge of allegiance. My grandfathers fought in WWI, My father in WWII and two of my brothers served in the military. So for me, the moment of silence has great meaning. Today, the moment of silence also is used to pay respect for those who passed away during a tragic event, like the one we are in now that has claimed so many lives.

I appreciate the deep commitment you and Karen have to your faith and can understand why you want to share your support for others by changing the moment of silence to a thoughtful prayer. Right now I believe the world desperately needs kindness and respect. Kindness to one another and respect to allow each individual the freedom to pray in their own way. The moment of silence allows this, as many people do use it to offer a prayer for those they love who are now gone or for those who may be in harms way for a multitude of reasons. During these difficult times we are facing I cannot in good conscience eliminate the moment of silence depriving anyone of the right to utilize this special time in their own way.

Again, thank you for your thoughtful suggestion.

All my best,

Patricia Patricia Soutas-Little  
County Commissioner District #5  
Leland and Centerville Townships  
231-218-8496

On Feb 24, 2021, at 1:53 PM, Karen & Gery Zemaitis <[gkzemaitis@att.net](mailto:gkzemaitis@att.net)> wrote:

Dear Commissioner Soutas-Little,

I am contacting you regarding your final comments at the end of the last Commissioners meeting. If you truly mean what you said at that time; I am asking you to initiate adding a prayer after the Pledge of Allegiance. This is being done at our Nation's Capitol, our State Capitol, at the Traverse City Commissioners Meetings and many other government meetings across our great county. This is especially needed in the difficult times we are all facing. It is eventually going to happen here. Why not take the lead?

Suggestion for a short prayer: Oh, God, please help and protect all who live in Leelanau County, especially those facing health (both physical and mental) and financial difficulties. Also we pray for Commissioners, give them the wisdom they need when they have to make difficult decisions. Thank you for this wonderful place we live in.

Amen.

Looking forward to your taking the lead on this issue.

Thank you,  
Gery Zemaitis

Resent due to better email address.