

The U.S. Supreme Court this May ruled that the Constitution allows towns to start their sessions with sectarian prayers . Justice Kennedy said that “offense does not equate to coercion”. What he wrote in his ruling was “ Adults often encounter speech they find disagreeable. Legislative bodies do not engage in impermissible coercion merely by exposing constituents to prayer they would rather not hear and in which they need not participate.”

All Eureka City Council members, this Tuesday, voted to update the city’s prayer policy to be consistent with this Supreme Court ruling.

Locally, no one has been required to participate in prayer at City Council meetings. The brief invocation is done at the beginning of the meeting. People who object are free to sit out or come a couple minutes late and they would not miss any part of the actual meeting.

This policy change is one I support. It is not just because the country’s highest court says so. It is about the Eureka City Council representing all it’s citizens, not just a vocal group of people who sue when they do not get their way. It is also not about whose numbers are larger or who can shout the loudest.

Under threats of lawsuits, the Eureka City Council agreed to non-sectarian prayer. That was not good enough for some people. They still sued. Judge Bruce Watson in a ruling said non-sectarian prayers are lawful.

Faith is a daily part of many people’s lives including mine. So is tradition. Unlike some people who feel accountable to no one or think intellectual knowledge answers everything, some of us believe in a power greater than any human. We believe a God, who wants the best for all people, even atheists.

I would rather trust a politician who is humble to know that he or she may not make the best decision for all, but can attempt to by asking for guidance from a higher power than someone who thinks they know best.

Many of us agree that locally poverty, mental illness and addictions need to be addressed and people need help. As an individual in a subjective, narcissistic society, I feel discouraged. As a believer in God, I feel hope and the strength to make a difference in small ways I can as an individual.

The Eureka City Council is a compromise to both sides. One wants to compromise, the other sue. One is thinking of all interests. The other only theirs.

It is ironic that the ACLU that claims to protect civil liberties has assisted some groups of people to trample on the rights of others.

The recent Hobby Lobby decision is another example where the Courts are standing up for all citizens of America and religious liberty.

