

# Pray for Ohio – October 2025

## Theme: Mental Health

*“The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.”*

—Isaiah 61:1, NIV

Dear Praying Friends,

We are living in a time when the weight of mental health struggles is touching nearly every family and community. In Ohio high schools, more than a third of students reported in 2023 that they felt *sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more*—a steep rise from just a decade ago. At the same time, suicide deaths in our state have increased over the past 20 years, now standing among the leading causes of death for youth and young adults. These numbers tell a sobering story, but they also remind us of the urgency and importance of interceding for healing, hope, and wholeness across our state.

Mental health challenges are complex, often tied to both the realities of our bodies and the battles in our souls. Yet Scripture gives us language to contend with the root struggles that so often underlie anxiety, shame, and grief. God calls us again and again to *fear not* and *do not be anxious*, knowing how vulnerable we are to fear’s grip. Shame has haunted humanity since the fall, but Christ offers restoration and belonging. Grief, too, is a natural part of life in a broken world, yet when brought to the Lord, it can become the doorway to His comfort and presence.

Beloved friends, we are not powerless in the face of these struggles. In Christ, we are rooted and established in love, and through the Spirit, we can pray with confidence for freedom, peace, and renewed minds across Ohio.

This month, let’s lift up together:

- That anxiety would be transformed into a cue to run to the Lord, not an identity that defines us.
- That shame would lose its power as God’s children walk in vulnerability and authentic community.
- That grief would be met with godly lament, leading to comfort and resilience in Christ.
- That the Church in Ohio would rise to offer compassionate care, wise counsel, and faithful witness of the healing Jesus brings.

May our prayers release light into darkness and hope into despair, until mental oppression gives way to the freedom and abundant life Jesus promises.

For His glory,

Ursula Kemp

Sources for data:

1. **Ohio high school students feeling sad or hopeless**

In 2023, **35% of Ohio high school students** reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more, up from 26% in 2013.

Source: Health Policy Institute of Ohio, *Data Brief: Behavioral Health of Ohio's Children*, October 2024

2. **Suicide deaths in Ohio increasing over 20 years**

Ohio's suicide deaths have increased steadily over the last two decades. In 2022, the age-adjusted suicide rate reached **15.0 per 100,000**, about a 34% rise compared to twenty years ago.

Source: USAFacts, *How many people die by suicide in Ohio?*