

PRAYERS FOR UNITY AND TRUTH, JUSTICE AND PEACE in 2019
A Resource for Personal and Communal Prayer (January 1, 2019)
Washington Theological Consortium



End and Beginning

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INTRODUCTORY PRAYERS

A Call to Unity

Ephesians 4:1a-3 “...lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, 3 making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

A Prayer for Peace (Ecumenical)

Lord Christ, at times we are like strangers on this earth, Taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions. Like a gentle breeze, you breathe upon us the Spirit of peace. Transfigure the deserts of our doubts, and so prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation wherever you place us, until the day when a hope of peace dawns in our world. Amen.

Brother Roger of Taizé, The Taizé Office

An International Prayer for Peace

(Adapted from the Upanishads by Satish Kumar)

Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth.

Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.

Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace.

Let peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

Peace, peace, peace.

New Century Hymnal, United Church of Christ

The Work of Christmas begins...

When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone,

when the kings and princes are home,

when the shepherds are back with their flocks, the work of Christmas begins: to find the lost,

to heal the broken,

to feed the hungry,

to release the prisoner,

to rebuild the nations,

to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart.

Howard Thurman, African-American pastor and theologian

PRAYERS IN TIMES OF DARKNESS

Can God Bring Good from Everything? (Confessing Church, Germany)

“I believe that God can and wants to create good out of everything, even evil.... For that he needs people who use everything for the best. I believe that God provides us with as much strength to resist in every calamity as we need. But he does not give it in advance, so that we trust him alone. In such a trust all anxiety about the future must be overcome.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Lutheran pastor and theologian

Prayer for Guidance (Mennonite)

Dear God, the world seems so dark and foreboding.

Where are the signs of hope?

What are you calling us to do?

Wars, uprisings, displacements, hunger, poverty, and disease continue to claim victims by the millions around the world each year....

Our ears do not want to hear their stories and our eyes do not want to see their plight because the suffering and destruction is so massive and cruel.

In our hearts and minds there is a desire to help somehow, but the crisis seem so overwhelming that we shake our heads in dismay and we wonder what the point is for us even to attempt to be witnesses for healing and hope in this hellish morass.

We beg with the song writer to open our eyes that we may see glimpses of truth you have for us.

Help us to follow the path of Jesus, the Suffering Servant. Give us the courage to be willing to walk the path of depression and pain with the victims of injustice here at home as well as abroad.

Help us to seek ways to light candles of hope, however small, through our words, our deeds, and our prayers, to encourage our sisters and brothers to hold onto the faith in spite of the pain and suffering they are facing....

And help those of us who are among the fortunate ones, who have enough bread to eat, good health, and who live in relative peace, to open our heart to learn from our sisters and brothers who are living lives of grace and forgiveness in the horrid circumstances which surround them. O God, help us to light one candle rather than to curse the darkness.

We pray this in the name of Jesus, who knows what being a light in this dark world is all about. Amen. *Larry Kehler, Mennonite Central Committee, Canada, 2009*

A Prayer for Light Within (African-American, Ecumenical)

Lord, Lord, open unto me

Open unto me, light for my darkness.

Open unto me, courage for my fear.

Open unto me, hope for my despair.

Open unto me, peace for my turmoil.

Open unto me, joy for my sorrow.

Open unto me, strength for my weakness.

Open unto me, wisdom for my confession.

Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins.

Open unto me, love for my hates.

Open unto me, thy Self for my self.

Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

Howard Thurman, Baptist pastor and theologian

PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE AND FORGIVENESS

A Prayer for Deliverance (early Church, Catholic)

We beg you, Lord, to help and defend us.
 Deliver the oppressed,
 have compassion on the despised,
 raise the fallen,
 reveal yourself to the needy,
 heal the sick,
 bring back those who have strayed from you,
 feed the hungry,
 lift up the weak,
 remove the prisoners' chains.
 May every nation come to know that you are God alone,
 that Jesus is your Son,
 that we are your people, the sheep of your pasture.
Clement, Third Bishop of Rome

Litany for Peace (Lutheran)

One: From words and deeds that provoke discord, prejudice and hatred,
 All: O God, deliver us.
 One: From suspicions and fears that stand in the way of reconciliation,
 All: O God, deliver us.
 One: From believing and speaking lies about other peoples or nations,
 All: O God, deliver us.
 One: From cruel indifference to the cries of the hungry and homeless,
 All: O God, deliver us.
 One: From all that prevents us from fulfilling your promise of peace,
 All: O God, deliver us.
 One: Deliver us from our brokenness, we pray, O God,
 All: and by your grace and healing presence deliver us to You...
 One: To still waters and green pastures,
 All: O Creating God, deliver us.
 One: To the freedom and forgiveness we find in you,
 All: O Risen Christ, deliver us.
 One: To the tough task of loving our enemies,
 All: O Jesus, deliver us.
 One: To joyful service in your name,
 All: O Servant of All, deliver us.
 One: To the promise of a new heaven and a new earth,
 To the wholeness of justice,
 To the power of your peace,
 All: O Holy Spirit, deliver us now and in the days to come.
From International Day of Prayer for Peace (ELCA)

A Prayer of Confession (Presbyterian)

God, our fears and prejudices run deep. Sometimes we can only see our own point of view. We stick with those who are like us, rarely venturing outside our comfort zones. We do not hear those crying for justice and true peace. We blame those who are suffering and in need, instead of standing by them. We deny the power of your gospel to unite us with those who are different from us. Lord, give us eyes to see and ears to hear. Open us to new possibilities of life for all of your people, and use us to enact the new life given in Christ. *Barbara Hedges-Goettl (PCUSA)*

PRAYERS FOR TRUTH

A Prayer for Truth amidst Falsehoods (Iona)

Leader: It is not true that this world and its inhabitants are doomed to die and be lost;

All: This is true: for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him shall not die, but have everlasting life.

Leader: It is not true that we must accept inhumanity and discrimination, hunger and poverty, death and destruction;

ALL: This is true: I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

Leader: It is not true that violence and hatred shall have the last word, and that war and destruction have come to stay forever;

ALL: This is true: for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, in whom authority will rest, and whose name will be Prince of Peace.

Leader: It is not true that we are simply victims of the powers of evil that seek to rule the world;

ALL: This is true: To me is given authority in heaven and on earth, and lo,

I am with you always, to the end of the world.

Leader: It is not true that we have to wait for those who are specially gifted, who are the prophets of the church, before we can do anything;

ALL: This is true: I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and daughters shall prophesy,

your young people shall see visions, and your old folk dream dreams.

Leader: It is not true that our dreams of liberation of humankind, our dreams of justice, of human dignity, of peace, are not meant for this earth and its history;

ALL: This is true: The hour comes, and it is now, that true worshippers shall worship God in Spirit and in truth.

Iona Abbey Worship Book (Glasgow: Wild Goose Publications, 2007).

A Prayer for Truth in Love (Plymouth Brethren)

The highest evidence of a close communing with God is not a haughty holding of the truth and a separation from all who do not see it as we do. We are to endeavor to correctly partition the word of truth, but we are also to endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the tie of peace. Truth, too often, has been held in hate. Truth in love is the key to the approval of God and to the hearts of His saints.....

Truth, in love, is sometimes silent, for fear of offending. It is often grieved, but does not retaliate. Above all it does not, like Peter, cut off the ears of those who oppose, for it is patiently waiting for the time when the ears will be healed, not hurt.

Let us, who believe in ultimate reconciliation and present conciliation complement our belief by a most gracious and loving exercise of the grace we have received in our contact with the world and with His beloved saints!

Adolph. E. Knoch, the founder of the Concordant Publishing Concern and the editor of "Unsearchable Riches" magazine.

To Discern the Signs of the Time (Roman Catholic)

God of the ages,
you call the church to keep watch in the world
and to discern the signs of the times.

Grant us the wisdom which your Spirit bestows,
that with courage we may proclaim your prophetic word,
and complete the work that you have set before us;
through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever. Amen.

International Commission on English in the Liturgy, Inc.

For Courage to Do Justice (South Africa, Anglican)

O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others
 Open my ears that I may hear their cries;
 Open my heart so that they need not be without succor;
 Let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong,
 Nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.
 Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,
 And use me to bring them to those places.
 And so open my eyes and my ears
 That I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee.
 Amen.

Alan Paton, South Africa, text from the United Methodist Hymnal

PRAYERS FOR THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH**Prayer for Unity (Roman Catholic)**

May the Risen Lord strengthen our efforts to mend the ruptures of the past and to meet the challenges of the present with hope in the future which, in his providence, he holds out to us and to our world.

Pope Benedict XVI, Evening Prayer, Westminster Abbey, 17 Sept 2010

Prayer for Christian Unity (Anglican)

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Book of Common Prayer (England)

Prayer for Unity (Catholic and Anglican)

Lord Jesus Christ who said to your Apostles: peace
 I leave with you, my peace I give to you, look not
 on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and
 graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance
 with your will. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
 Amen

The Roman Missal and the Anglican Book of Common Prayer

A Prayer for Peace in the Church (Presbyterian)

God of our lives,
 by the power of your Holy Spirit
 we have been drawn together by one baptism into one faith,
 serving one Lord and Savior.
 Do not let us tear away from one another
 through division or hard argument.
 May your peace embrace our differences,
 preserving us in unity,
 as one body of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Worship, PCUSA

A Prayer for the Human Family (Episcopal)

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

–Book of Common Prayer, Episcopal Church

Prayer for Unity with God and One Another (Roman Catholic)

We Are One With You

O God, we are one with you. You have made us one with you.

You have taught us that if we are open to one another, you dwell in us.

Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection.

O God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept you, and we thank you, and we adore you, and we love you with our whole being, because our being is your being, our spirit is rooted in your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one spirit which makes you present in the world, and which makes you witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious.

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

PRAYERS FOR JUSTICE & PEACE

A Prayer for Social Justice (Episcopal)

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that the barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease, and that, with our divisions healed, we might live in justice and peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *Book of Common Prayer, Episcopal Church*

A Prayer Against Violence at Home and in Society

Lord Jesus Christ,

You told the women of Jerusalem not to weep for you
but to weep for themselves.

Be with women who suffer violence in their homes,
As they weep for their sons caught up in the violence.

Be with the women who live in domestic violence,
Who have learnt not to weep for their own pains,
Who have suffered so long they are numb.

Strengthen your Church in its care and support
Of all who are in pain.

Help us to be sensitive and caring
For you are the Lord who suffers and serves.
from Papua New Guinea

A Thanksgiving for Life, Love, and Peace

Salamat, salamat O Dakilang Manlilikha (Our deep gratitude, O Great Creator)
sa buhay, pag-ibig, kapayapaan (for life, for love, for peace)
apoy na nagbibigay ng buhay (life-giving fire)

turuan kaming umibig (teach us to love)
 hininga, hangin (breath, breeze)
 turuan kami ng kapayapaan (teach us peace)
 ilog, tubig, dagat (river, water, sea)
 turuan kami ng katarungan (teach us justice)
 lupang nagluluwal ng buhay (life-creating earth)
 salamat sa iyong biyaya (our gratitude for your blessings)
 salamat O Dakilang Manlilikha (our deep gratitude, O Great Creator)
from the Philippines

A Prayer for Peace (Methodist)

Gentle Spirit,
 Breathe in us the wind
 of truth, wisdom and righteousness.
 May your Presence inspire us
 to create labyrinths of peace.

Compassionate One,
 Make our hearts burn with love,
 honoring all peoples and creation.
 Bless all nations, every family and community
 while we seek to work for justice and unity.

Prince of Peace,
 Lead us to ways of healing and reconciliation
 we pray with those who suffer and struggle.
 Bless us with your reconciling love that knows no boundaries
 as we seek to live in community, justice and peace.
 So be it.

Elizabeth Tapia, United Methodist Church (Philippines)

Prayer of Pope John Paul II for the World Day of Peace (Jan. 1, 2002)

"Salve, Madre santa!"
 Virgin Daughter of Zion,
 how deeply must your Mother's heart suffer for this bloodshed!

The child you embrace has a name that is dear to the peoples of biblical religion: "Jesus," which means "God saves." So the Archangel named him before he was conceived in your womb (cf. Lk 2,21). In the face of the newborn Messiah, we recognize the face of all your children, who suffer from being despised and exploited. We recognize especially the faces of your children, to whatever race, nation or culture they may belong.

For them, O Mary, for their future, we ask you to move hearts hardened by hatred so that they may open to love and so that revenge may finally give way to forgiveness.

Obtain for us, O Mother, that the truth of this affirmation -- No peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness -- be engraved on every heart. Thus the human family will be able to find the true peace, that flows from the union of justice and mercy.

Holy Mother, Mother of the Prince of Peace, help us!
 Mother of Humanity and Queen of Peace, pray for us!

Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace (June 4, 2014)

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen.

Waldensian Community, Italy

O Lord, you have said to us 'Peace I leave with you.'

This peace that you give is not that of this world:

it is not the peace of order, when order oppresses;

it is not the peace of silence, when silence is born of suppression;

it is not the peace of resignation, when such resignation is unworthy.

Your peace is love for all people,

is justice for all people,

is truth for all people,

the truth that liberates and stimulates growth.

Lord, it is this peace we believe in because of your promise.

Grant us peace, and we will give this peace to others.

A Prayer for Human Rights Day (Baptist)

Blessed God of all comfort, we humbly bow before you in this moment of prayer. We thank you for your great love for us and at the same time we affirm together our common humanity, people made in your glorious image. Even as we prepare to celebrate your Son's coming into this fallen world, we turn our hearts inward to see ourselves just as you see us, people in constant need of your amazing grace, people who earnestly desire to allow the light of your Christ to be seen more clearly in us in all our actions, and people who strive to love others as we love ourselves.

We also turn our hearts outward, Merciful God, and we earnestly pray for the pain of so many millions of people all over our world whose voices have been silenced by unjust systems, whose daily life is painfully punctuated by senseless violence and abuse as adults and children, whose cry for justice too long denied seem to fall on deaf ears, whose anguish for the basic necessities of life become an occasion for the rich and powerful to render them invisible by inhumane policies, and whose humanity seem to be reduced to mere numbers.

So, Dear God, baptize us again afresh today. We stand not only in need of your forgiveness and your salvation, but we also need to be unburdened from our own private fears. We need to be loosened from our helplessness and doubt. We need to be emboldened to take our stand firmly on the side of peace, mercy, justice, compassion, hope and nonviolence. Give us the courage to risk our safety for the sake of all persons who suffer the diminishing of their humanity. You love us all. We are all created equal in your sight.

Remind us, holy God, as we also keep our hearts looking upward, that the Good News has been entrusted to us; we are people of good tidings. We are certain of your coming again and again to empower us by your Holy Spirit to finish your work. May the sacrifice of your beloved Son continue to inspire us to serve others, to be faithful to our God-given call, to be indeed the keepers of our sisters and brothers, and to not grow weary in well doing.

We make this prayer in the strong name of Jesus Your Christ. Amen.

Dr. Leo S. Thorne, Associate General Secretary (Retired)

American Baptist Churches USA

PRAYERS IN THE FACE OF UNJUST KILLINGS AND GUN-VIOLENCE

A Prayer In Response to Gun Violence (Episcopal)

Let us lament with all those who are touched by gun violence

Let us lament the shooter's choice for violence

Let us lament laws that allow violent men easy access to guns

Let us lament our politicians' unwillingness to work for change

Let us lament with the hearts broken by loss today

Let us lament all the lives cut short today

Let us lament, O God, and then let us rise from our knees to work for change

In the name of Christ, the prince of peace. Amen.

Rev. Dr. Ellen Clark-King, Grace Cathedral, San Francisco

A Prayer for Black Men, Police, and Others (June 2016, Reformed)

God, we are stunned and deeply troubled by the killings that occurred this week. We lift prayers to you, asking that your Spirit intercede for us and for this world.

We mourn with those who are suffering the loss of precious members of their family--in Dallas, in Baton Rouge, in Minnesota. May your Spirit give them peace.

We pray for a Church that does not become polarized at this moment--may the Church proclaim, with words and with action, both that black lives matter and that acts of brutal violence against public servants are wrong.

May our congregations vocalize God's definitive "NO" to the murder of black lives. May all of us be awakened and stand alongside the black community, willing to lay aside confusion and questions and to proclaim that this epidemic of police violence must be addressed. May privilege and power be used as a means to raise awareness and demand justice. May leaders feel pressure from all who live in their communities--white, brown, black--and respond with plans to stop the destruction of black bodies.

We lift in prayer the police officers who must show up for work today, who are doing a dangerous job for too little pay, who are personally blamed for the failure of the whole system. Give them wisdom and strength as those whom we rely on to maintain composure, fairness, and a commitment to the common good. Come alongside them, Lord. Grant them protection and empower them to serve justly.

We pray for healing in communities that carry the weight of generations of broken down relationships between law enforcement and the people they are called to serve. We lament our history of racism and pray for love in the face of violence.

May your Church be afflicted in its core again for this sign of a deep sickness in our communities.
 May we listen to the prophetic voices speaking truth and pleading for action.
 May our prayers find footing, that we might live lives that are answers to our prayers for peace and justice.
Christian Reformed Church in North America

A Blessing When the World is Ending

Look, the world
 is always ending
 somewhere.

Somewhere
 the sun has come
 crashing down.

Somewhere
 it has gone
 completely dark.

Somewhere
 it has ended
 with the gun,
 the knife,
 the fist.

Somewhere
 it has ended
 with the slammed door,
 the shattered hope.

Somewhere
 it has ended
 with the utter quiet
 that follows the news
 from the phone,
 the television,
 the hospital room.

Somewhere
 it has ended
 with a tenderness
 that will break
 your heart.

But, listen,
 this blessing means
 to be anything
 but morose.

It has not come
 to cause despair.
 It is simply here
 because there is nothing
 a blessing
 is better suited for
 than an ending,
 nothing that cries out more
 for a blessing
 than when a world
 is falling apart.

This blessing
 will not fix you,
 will not mend you,
 will not give you
 false comfort;
 it will not talk to you
 about one door opening
 when another one closes.

It will simply
 sit itself beside you
 among the shards
 and gently turn your face
 toward the direction
 from which the light
 will come,
 gathering itself
 about you
 as the world begins
 again.

*Jan Richardson, Artist, Author and United
 Methodist Pastor, from her "Circle of
 Grace"*

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Litany for Those Who Aren't Ready for Healing (African-American Pentecostal)

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound.

Let us not rush to offer a band-aid, when the gaping wound requires surgery and complete reconstruction.

Let us not offer false equivalencies, thereby diminishing the particular pain being felt in a particular circumstance in a particular historical moment.

Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations and restoration, or how we can repair the breach and how we can restore the loss.

Let us not rush past the loss of this mother's child, this father's child...someone's beloved son.

Let us not value property over people; let us not protect material objects while human lives hang in the balance.

Let us not value a false peace over a righteous justice.

Let us not be afraid to sit with the ugliness, the messiness, and the pain that is life in community together.

Let us not offer clichés to the grieving, those whose hearts are being torn asunder.

Instead...

Let us mourn black and brown men and women, those killed extrajudicially every 28 hours.

Let us lament the loss of a man, dead at the hands of a police officer who described him as a demon.

Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.

Let us call for the mourning men and the wailing women, those willing to rend their garments of privilege and ease, and sit in the ashes of this nation's original sin.

Let us be silent when we don't know what to say.

Let us be humble and listen to the pain, rage, and grief pouring from the lips of our neighbors and friends.

Let us decrease, so that our brothers and sisters who live on the underside of history may increase.

Let us pray with our eyes open and our feet firmly planted on the ground

Let us listen to the shattering glass and let us smell the purifying fires, for it is the language of the unheard.

God, in your mercy...

Show me my own complicity in injustice.

Convict me for my indifference

Forgive me when I have remained silent.

Equip me with a zeal for righteousness.

Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness.

Dr. Yolanda Pierce, now Dean of Howard University School of Divinity

Litany for Gun Violence Prevention (Episcopal Church)

Giver of Life and Love, you created all people as one family and called us to live together in harmony and peace. Surround us with your love as we face the challenges and tragedies of gun violence.

For our dear ones, for our neighbors, for strangers and aliens, and those known to you alone, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.

God of Righteousness, you have given our leaders... our President, the members of Congress, the judges of our courts and members of our legislatures, power and responsibility to protect us and to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

*For all who bear such responsibility, for all who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.*

God of Compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters and EMTs, and all those whose duties bring them to the streets, the lobbies, the malls and the homes where the carnage of gun violence takes place day after day. Give them courage and sound judgment in the heat of the moment and grant them compassion for the victims.

For our brothers and sisters who risk their lives and their serenity as they rush to our aid, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.

Merciful God, bind up the wounds of all who suffer from gun violence, those maimed and disfigured, those left alone and grieving, and those who struggle to get through one more day. Bless them with your presence and help them find hope.

For all whose lives are forever marked by the scourge of gun violence, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.

God Who Remembers, may we not forget those who have died in the gun violence that we have allowed to become routine. Receive them into your heart and comfort us with your promise of eternal love and care.

For all who have died, those who die today, and those who will die tomorrow, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.

God of Justice, help us, your church, find our voice. Empower us to change this broken world and to protest the needless deaths caused by gun violence. Give us power to rise above our fear that nothing can be done and grant us the conviction to advocate for change.

For your dream of love and harmony, Loving God,
Make us instruments of your peace.

All this we pray in the name of the One who offered his life so that we might live, Jesus the Christ. Amen.
Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, Episcopal bishop of Maine

Hymn in the Face of Grief and Loss

In Deepest Night
In deepest night, in darkest days,
When harps are hung, no songs we raise,
When silence must suffice as praise,
Yet sounding in us quietly
There is the song of God.
When friend was lost, when love deceived,
Dear Jesus wept, God was bereaved;
So with us in our grief God grieves,
And round about us mournfully
There are the tears of God.
When through the waters winds our path,
Around us pain, around us death:
Deep calls to deep, a saving breath,
And found beside us faithfully
There is the love of God.

*Words: Susan Palo Cherwien, Music: David Schwoebel, Tune: ROSE MARY
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PRAYERS FOR PEACE FROM ROUND THE WORLD

A Prayer for Peace of the Soul (Roman Catholic)

O blessed Jesus, give me stillness of soul in You. Let your mighty calmness reign in me. Rule me, O King of Gentleness, King of Peace.

Saint John of the Cross (16th c.)

A Prayer for Refugees

Almighty and merciful God, whose Son became a refugee and had no place to call his own; look with mercy on those who today are fleeing from danger, homeless and hungry.

Bless those who work to bring them relief;

inspire generosity and compassion in all our hearts;

and guide the nations of the world towards that day when all will rejoice in your Commonwealth of justice and of peace;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

United Church of Christ

Grant Us Peace (the Philippines)

Grant us peace that will

BREAK our silence in the midst of violence

then prophetic voices shall resonate

Grant us peace that will

PULL US DOWN from the steeple of our pride

then we'll learn to wash each other's feet

Grant us peace that will

EMPTY us of hate and intolerance

then we'll turn guns into guitars and sing

Grant us peace that will

SHUT our mouths up when we speak too much

then we'll learn to listen and understand what others are saying

Grant us peace that will

DISTURB us in our apathy

then we'll dance together under the sun

Grant us peace that will

BURN our lethargic hearts

then we'll endure burning and let love and justice glow

From Tanzania

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your apostles

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you".

Give us courage to challenge the perpetrators of violence

and to change their behaviour. Help us devote our whole life,

thought and energy to the task of making peace.

We pray for a new Africa,

where fear, violent thoughts or action shall no longer exist,

and where selfishness will not lead people to commit injustice to others.

As for the peoples of every African tongue and race,
may your kingdom come;
your kingdom of justice, peace and love.

May peace prevail in Africa.
May peace prevail on earth.
Amen.

A Prayer for the People of Syria (adapted from Catholics Confront Global Poverty)

Almighty eternal God, source of all compassion,
the promise of your mercy and saving help fills our hearts with hope.
Hear the cries of the people of Syria;
bring healing to those suffering from the violence,
and comfort to those mourning the dead.
Empower and encourage Syria's neighbors
in their care and welcome for refugees.
Convert the hearts of those who have taken up arms,
and strengthen the resolve of those committed to peace.

O God of hope and Father of mercy,
your Holy Spirit inspires us to look beyond ourselves and our own needs.
Inspire leaders to choose peace over violence
and to seek reconciliation with enemies.
Inspire the Church around the world with compassion for the people of Syria,
and fill us with hope for a future of peace built on justice for all.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace and Light of the World,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever.
Amen.

Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation in Kenya

Oh God our Creator and giver of life, you sent your Son, the Prince of Peace to redeem us and teach us the way of Love. Listen to the supplications of your suffering children of Kenya in this difficult moment of our dear country. Hear the cries of many people afflicted through the death of their loved ones, or the loss of property. Hear the signs of those who fear for their lives or have been displaced and are facing hunger and scarcity.

Through the power of your grace, we ask you Lord, to drive out from our midst any form of hatred with your healing Love. Bring about Justice through the way of charity. Where there is bitterness teach us forgiveness and reconciliation. Put in our hearts the Love for truth so that your Justice can prevail. Above all Father, touch the hearts of our political leaders so that they may humbly seek a disinterested dialogue that will bring about understanding.

May you bless our Land once more with lasting peace and fraternal understanding, where in your Love; we will live in unity, peace and liberty as brother and sisters. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Sala ya Kuomba Amani
Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops, January 25, 2008

See also (<http://overcomingviolence.org/en/decade-to-overcome-violence/about-dov/international-day-of-prayer-for/resources/prayers-2005.html>) (World Council of Churches)

Prayers for Peace in the Korean Peninsula

2018 North-South Joint Prayer for Peaceful Reunification (excerpts)

God of love!

We thank you Lord that Christians in North and South Korea who live in the same land, under the same heavens once again greet this year's Liberation Day...

God of history!

We greet this year's Liberation Day with new hope. The period of separation, war and hostile confrontation that our people went through is dimly fading away and we now look at the rainbow of peace and prosperity stretching over Mount Halla to Mount Baekdu. God, who rules history, lead this land to greet a new history of peace, unification and prosperity.

God of peace!

Help us overcome with strength the many walls and high barriers that still remain. The historical meeting between the North and South Korean leaders has taken place in Panmunjom (and) the two Koreas have finally taken a step towards reconciliation. But the walls of separation and the embers of war still remain. We pray that by completely removing any contemptible barriers of separation that threaten the people's livelihood and block common prosperity, you bring long lasting peace that may be a stepping stone for peace not only in the Peninsula, but in Northeast Asia and the entire world....

In Jesus Christ's name we pray, Amen.

National Council of Churches in Korea Korean Christian Federation Central Committee (2018)

PRAYERS FOR PEACE IN THE LAND OF ABRAHAM

Muslim

In the Name of God, The Everlasting Merciful, The Cherisher
Of the Worlds and Worthy of all Praise,
Our Lord: You have created us from a single (pair) of a male
And a female and made us into Nations and Tribes that we may
Know one another (not that we may despise each other) so
Help us to love each other and take the hatred and anger from our
Hearts so that the People of The Book (Christians, Jews and Muslims)
In the Middle East may live in Peace and Justice. Amen

Dawud Ahmad Assad, Council of Mosques, USA

Jewish

Sustain together in undiminished hope, O God of hope,
those who continue to labor with undiminished determination
to build peace in the land from which, of old,
out of brokenness, violence and destruction,
nevertheless hope emerged for so many of faith. . . .
Bless all the spiritual seed of Abraham together
with the light of your Presence.
For in the light of your Presence
we have found a way of justice and mercy
and a vision of Peace.

We praise you O God, Giver of Peace,
who commands us to Peace. Amen

Rabbi Herbert Bronstein

Northshore Congregation Israel, Glencoe, IL

Christian

From the land of the Resurrection and the cradle of the
 promise of salvation to all humankind through Jesus Christ
 our Lord, and with a candle of hope, we pray to you, God
 our Father, that the action of peace seekers and peace
 makers may bear fruit, so that
 Hope will take the place of despair,
 Justice will prevail over oppression,
 Peace will turn strife into love.

The Prayer of a Palestinian Woman

PRAYERS FOR PEACE FROM OTHER FAITHS: JEWISH, MUSLIM, HINDU, JAINIST, BUDDHIST, NATIVE PRAYERS, BAHAI

Hasidic Prayer for Peace (Judaism)

Lord of Peace, Divine Ruler, to whom peace belongs.

Master of Peace, Creator of all things.

May it be thy will to put an end to war and bloodshed on earth, and to spread a great and wonderful peace over the whole world, so that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

Help us and save us all, and let us cling tightly to the virtue of peace. Let there be a truly great peace between every person and their fellow, and between husband and wife, and let there be no discord between people even in their hearts.

Let us never shame any person on earth, great or small. May it be granted unto us to fulfill Thy Commandment to 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' with all our hearts and souls and bodies and possessions. God who is peace, bless us with peace.

Rabbi Nachman ben Feiga of Breslov, 1773-1810

Jewish Prayer for Peace

Grant us peace. Your most precious gift, O Eternal Source of Peace,
 and give us the will to proclaim its message to all the peoples of the earth.

Bless our country, that it may always be a stronghold of peace,
 and its advocate among the nations.

May contentment reign within its borders, health and happiness within its homes.

Strengthen the bonds of friendship among the inhabitants of all lands.

And may the love of Your name hallow every home and every heart.

Blessed is the Eternal God, the source of Peace.

*The Gates of Prayer: The New Union Prayer Book,
 by the Central Conferences of American Rabbis*

Native African Prayer for Peace

Almighty God, the Great

Thumb we cannot evade to

tie any knot;

the Roaring Thunder that splits

mighty trees:

the all-seeing Lord up on high who sees

even the footprints of an antelope on a

rock mass here on Earth.

You are the one who does

not hesitate to respond to our call.

You are the cornerstone of peace.

Native American Prayer for Peace

Native American Prayer for Peace

O Great Spirit of our Ancestors, I raise my pipe to you.

To your messengers the four winds, and to Mother Earth who provides for your children.

Give us the wisdom to teach our children to love, to respect, and to be kind to each other so that they may grow with peace in mind.

Let us learn to share all the good things you provide for us on this Earth.

Hindu Prayer for Peace

Oh God, lead us from the
unreal to the Real.

Oh God, lead us from darkness to light.

Oh God, lead us from death to immortality.

Shanti, Shanti, Shanti unto all.

Oh Lord God almighty, may there be peace in
celestial regions.

May there be peace on earth.

May the waters be appeasing.

May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and
plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent
beings bring peace to us.

May thy Vedic Law propagate peace all
through the world.

May all things be a source of peace to us.

And may thy peace itself, bestow peace on all,
and may that peace come to me also.

Muslim Prayer for Peace

In the name of Allah,
the beneficent, the merciful.

Praise be to the Lord of the

Universe who has created us and

made us into tribes and nations,

That we may know each other, not that
we may despise each other.

If the enemy incline towards peace, do
thou also incline towards peace, and
trust God, for the Lord is the one that
hears and knows all things.

And the servants of God,

Most Gracious are those who walk on
the Earth in humility, and when we
address them, we say "PEACE."

Sufi Prayer for Peace (Islam)

O Almighty Sun, whose light clears away all clouds,
We take refuge in you.

Guide of all people, God of all deities, Lord of all angels,

We pray you to dispel the mists of illusion from the hearts of the nations

And lift their lives by your all-sufficient power,

Your ever shining light, your everlasting life,

Your heavenly joy and your perfect peace.

Jainist Prayer for Peace

Peace and Universal Love is the essence
 of the Gospel preached by all the
 Enlightened Ones.
 The Lord has preached that equanimity
 is the Dharma.
 Forgive do I creatures all,
 and let all creatures forgive me.
 Unto all have I amity, and unto none enmity.
 Know that violence is the root cause of
 all miseries in the world.
 Violence, in fact, is the knot of bondage.
 "Do not injure any living being."
 This is the eternal, perennial, and unalterable
 way of spiritual life.
 A weapon howsoever powerful it may be,
 can always be superseded by a superior one;
 but no weapon can, however,
 be superior to non-violence and love.

Zoroastrian Prayer for Peace

We pray to God to eradicate all the
 misery in the world:
 that understanding triumph
 over ignorance,
 that generosity triumph over indifference,
 that trust triumph over contempt, and
 that truth triumph over falsehood.

Buddhist Prayer for Peace

May all beings everywhere plagued with sufferings of body and mind quickly be freed from their illnesses.
 May those frightened cease to be afraid, and may those bound be free.
 May the powerless find power, and may people think of befriending one another.
 May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wildernesses--the children, the aged, the unprotected--be
 guarded by beneficent celestials, and may they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

Baha'i Prayer for Peace

Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity.
 Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech.
 Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger.
 Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring.
 Be a breath of life to the body of humankind, a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of
 humility.

(See also <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/online-resources/prayer-index/prayers-for-peace>)

FINALE:**The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow charity;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is error, the truth;

Where there is doubt, the faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light; and

Where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying to ourselves that we are born to eternal life. Amen



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