

JUSTICE AND PEACE SHALL KISS:  
PRAYING THROUGH THE YEAR



W. MARK KOENIG, EDITOR

Published by the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program



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### About This Resource

This resource contains prayers or other liturgical elements for each of the special days and programmatic emphases appearing on the Presbyterian Planning Calendar that concern peace and justice. Prayers are also included for the major holidays of Easter, Pentecost, Christmas Eve, and Christmas.

The prayers are for use in corporate worship and individual devotions. We hope they will inspire further reflection and prayer as the followers of Jesus seek peace and pursue it through prayer.

The Rev. W. Mark Koenig, coordinator of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, served as editor.

### Acknowledgments

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# JUSTICE AND PEACE SHALL KISS: PRAYING THROUGH THE YEAR

W. MARK KOENIG, EDITOR

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## Introduction

Prayer plays an essential role in our faith journey as individuals following Jesus and in our corporate life as we gather to worship. In prayer we pour our hearts and minds out to God. In prayer we listen to God, seeking insight and guidance for our living.

Prayer plays an essential role in peacemaking. The psalmist encourages prayers for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). Jeremiah urges the exiles to seek the welfare of the city where God had sent them and to pray on its behalf (Jer. 29:7). Jesus teaches us to “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44).

The writers of *Peacemaking: The Believers’ Calling* recognized the centrality of prayer to peacemaking:

How will peace be achieved? By disarmament? Certainly, but not only by disarmament. By global economic reform? Certainly, but not only by global economic reform. By the change of political structures? Basically, at the heart, it is a matter of the way we see the world through the eyes of Christ. It is a matter of praying and yearning. It is an inner response to God, who loves the whole world and *whose Spirit calls for and empowers the making of peace* (192nd General Assembly (1980), United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Peacemaking*, p. 5; italics added).

The *Commitment to Peacemaking* recognizes prayer as one of the ways we engage in peacemaking. This happens on at least two levels. Prayer and other spiritual disciplines “nurture and deepen the spiritual life of the community and equip people to share the gospel message of peace to the world.” Prayer opens us to God’s transforming grace, allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire us to work to answer our own prayers.

But our prayers themselves are acts of peacemaking. Praying for enemies is peacemaking, difficult peacemaking. Laying our brokenness and the wounds of the world before God for healing is peacemaking. Joining hearts and hands with neighbors we do not like too well is an act of peacemaking. Renewing our allegiance to Jesus Christ in a world where so many human institutions and causes would claim our ultimate allegiance is peacemaking—a reminder that we are first of all God’s children through Christ.

## Race Relations Sunday

O Holy One, Father of all Life, Mother of all Creation, in your love you have brought forth one human family.

You have clothed each child with uniqueness and anointed each one with distinction. You have imbued all people of the earth with the sanctity of your Spirit, and claimed all families as your own.

Move us all toward such humility that we may honor each other as the sisters and brothers that we are in your grace. Help us to rejoice in the beauty of each person, and of each race, that we may cherish them, and thereby live as your beloved community. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—The Rev. Juan Treviño, pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Brownsville, Texas; written for the 1997 Peacemaking Conference, “Facing Racism: In Search of the Beloved Community”

Visit [www.pcusa.org/racialjustice](http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice) for more resources.

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday

Most holy and merciful God: we acknowledge and confess our slowness to do good, our blindness to injustice, and our complicity in deferring the dreams and hopes of the oppressed. We have refused to heed your call to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with you, our God.

We condemn racial injustice in our pronouncements, yet we cling to the privileges derived from inequity. When we ought to be ashamed of our failures, we prefer to cling to private, selfish, imprisoning desires. We participate in our own oppression.

Help us to name our sin, to claim responsibility for our actions, and to change our behavior. In accordance with the commands of Jesus Christ our Savior, shake us from our sleep with your imperative to do justice; move us to action with the compassion of your grace; and give us courage to pay the price, however painful or costly, that the justice you will may be done, on earth as in heaven. Amen.

—The Rev. Dr. Otis Turner, honorably retired, Jacksonville, Florida

Gracious God, Giver of Life for us all, you have created us to love; you have created us to be a community—a beloved community. You have created us to love and to value one another, to bring fairness and justice into all of what we do, into all of who we are. Thank you for young prophets of the past—for Coretta Scott King, for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., for Judy Richardson and other Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee activists; thank you for young prophets of today, in our world and in this church—who speak truth about your vision for our lives—who speak truth about privilege and injustice—who speak truth about hate and complacency—and who do something about it. God, we have all that we need to change the church, to change this world. Awaken the prophetic call inside each of us to be advocates and activists for all human rights—empower the young people to indeed become, in the words of Coretta Scott King, “the soul of this nation.” Thank you for grace, goodness, strength, and life, and thank you for this day and this time to be in community with one another. Amen.

—Katie Anderson, student, McCormick Theological Seminary

Visit [www.pcusa.org/racialjustice](http://www.pcusa.org/racialjustice) for more resources.

## JANUARY





## Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

Merciful and life-giving God, "Though we are many, we are one body."

Thank you for creating the One Church of Christ to glorify and serve you.

Thank you for giving us pause to remember the mystery of the relationship that binds us around our world as followers of Jesus Christ.

Teach us to celebrate and learn from our differences in government and theology, always remembering Jesus who made room at his table for both saints and sinners—categories to which we all belong.

We are a proud people, we who follow the Living God.

In our longing to find our place in community, we hold to peripheral forms and ideas to give us a sense of security and imagine that our differences are what define us.

At times, we hold onto these signposts of faith as if your life depended on it: historic traditions or emerging ones; praise songs or hymns; sprinkles or immersions; wine or juice; guitars or organs; kneeling or standing.

Into this reality you remind us, "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples, that you have love for one another."

O Love that breaks down walls of fear and hostility, Love that sets the table for us regardless of political persuasion, Love that sees our differences as beautiful treasures: teach us to get on with what you would have us do together in our fragile and alienated world. Make us one. And together we will celebrate your work in and through us, to the glory of God. Amen.

—Shannon Parks-Beck, Seattle, Washington

Visit [www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org) for more resources.

## FEBRUARY



### Souperbowl of Caring

Spirit of mercy, trump the hunger of my stomach.

Where I hunger for food, teach me to hunger for justice.

Spirit of compassion, satisfy my longing to consume.

Where I seek to hoard, teach me to share.

Spirit of wisdom, feed me the bread of life.

Where I feast on the folly of scarcity, teach me to spread a table of abundance.

Amen.

—Adam Fischer, Youth Intern, Harvey Browne Memorial Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky

Visit [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org) and [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger) for more resources.

## Self-Development of People Sunday

God of Love, your compassion extends to all people—the sinful and the devout, the poor and the wealthy, the humble and the powerful. As we gather in Christian love, let us care for one another and work for the empowerment of those within our faith community and in communities of need both near and far. We pray that all may know the justice that flows from your abiding love and the hope that comes from your healing grace. In the name of Christ we pray. Amen.

—Prayer from Self-Development of People: Sermons and Liturgy,  
*Self-Development of People, 2006. Used with permission.*

Visit [www.pcusa.org/sdop](http://www.pcusa.org/sdop) for additional resources.

## World Day of Prayer

God of our hope, we gather to celebrate your steadfast love and to celebrate new moments that this love provides to us. You who live everywhere bind us together. Free us from our prejudice and bias. Free us from our divisions. Free us from the belief that our theology, our culture, and our way of thinking are better than those of our brothers and sisters from different places. Free us from a world culture of violence and war and instead help us to be agents of peace and reconciliation. We call upon your Holy Spirit to grant us a new and fresh look at your work in our lives and in our midst. We invoke you as we wait for new moments of even more exhilarating blessings and possibilities of love and peace in our lives, new moments for our families, new moments for our world. May your Holy Spirit touch us deeply and makes us able to rejoice, to be thankful, and to laugh out loud. In the name of Jesus, in whom there are no longer strangers but friends. Amen.

—The Rev. Claudio Carvalhaes, assistant professor of Worship and Preaching,  
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary

Visit [www.wdpusa.org](http://www.wdpusa.org) for more resources.

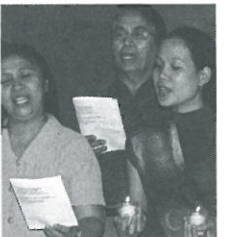
## Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday

Gracious, peacemaking God, we so often fail to be your partners in your work of reconciliation. We fail to recognize all the places in our world that need your healing. We fail to hear the ideas or see the actions of our sisters, mothers, spouses, and friends. We hear, "How beautiful are the feet of those . . . on your holy mountain," and we think only of how tired and hurting are our own feet engaged in walking in heavily worn paths and habits of oppression. Like peacemakers of the Congo, Liberia, and Sri Lanka, let us hear your daughters' voices calling for peace—a deep and abiding peace that values all your children and protects the least and the vulnerable. Help us hear voices long silenced; help us change how we are with one another that we may be welcoming of the gifts women bring to your church and society. Today, as we celebrate these peace-seekers among us, refresh us in your Spirit as it renews a passion for your work in the world and compels us to commit to your cause of peace. Grant us your grace to give to one another and to ourselves as we walk along your way. Amen.

—The Rev. Molly Casteel, minister member, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery

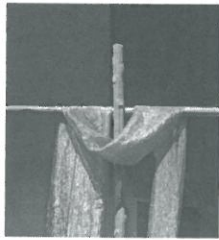
Visit [www.pcusa.org/women](http://www.pcusa.org/women) for more resources.

## MARCH





## APRIL



### Easter

For this Easter day and all the Easters of our lives;  
We thank you with hearts overflowing, O God.  
For times when we were violated by word or deed and were raised again;  
We thank you with the vitality of our lives, O God.  
For dead ends which became new beginnings;  
We thank you with the freshness of hope, O God.  
For graves which caught our tears but could not hold those for whom we wept;  
We thank you with the gratitude of healing, O God.  
For the presence in our midst of a living Lord;  
We give you our Alleluias, O God.  
Amen.

—Dr. Freda Gardner, Moderator of the 211th General Assembly (1999) of the PC(USA),  
professor emerita of Christian Education, Princeton Theological Seminary,  
originally published in *Peacemaking through Worship*,  
*Presbyterian Peacemaking Program*, 1983

### Holocaust Remembrance Day

#### *The Lighting of Memorial Candles*

One: We light candles in memory of those who were killed during the Holocaust. We remember the six million Jews. We remember Poles, people with disabilities, Slavs, gays, lesbians, Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war, political opponents, religious dissidents, and the others who were killed during this time. We remember those who resisted and those who offered refuge and provided rescue. As we light these candles, we acknowledge our responsibility for one another. We commit that we will build on this earth a world that has no room for hatred, no place for violence. Together, we ask God to grant us strength that we might fulfill that commitment.

*(Invite the members of the congregation to stand as representatives of the community light the candles. While they are being lit, the community joins in praying a portion of Psalm 22.)*

One: My God, my God,  
why have you forsaken me?  
why are you so far from helping me,  
from the words of my groaning?

**All: O my God,  
I cry by day, but you do not answer;  
and by night, but find no rest.**

One: Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.  
In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.

**All: To you they cried,  
and were saved;  
in you they trusted,  
and were not put to shame.  
Amen.**

*(Allow a period of silence. Invite the members of the congregation to sit.)*

—Inspired by *Liturgies on the Holocaust*, Marcia Sachs Littell, ed.  
(Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1986)

Visit [www.pcusa.org/interfaith](http://www.pcusa.org/interfaith) for more resources.

### Health Awareness Sunday

Mighty and merciful God, you sent Jesus Christ to heal broken lives. We praise you that today you send healing in doctors and nurses, and bless us with technology in medicine. May we work with justice and compassion to assure that the blessing of this care is available to all and not just to some. We claim your promises of wholeness as we pray for those who are ill in body or mind, who long for your healing touch. Make the weak strong, the sick healthy, the broken whole, and confirm those who serve them as agents of your love. Then all shall be renewed in vigor to point to the risen Christ, who conquered death that we might live eternally. Amen.

—Adapted from *Book of Common Worship*, © 1993 by Westminster/John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, [772], page 831. Used by permission.

Visit [www.pcusa.org/nationalhealth](http://www.pcusa.org/nationalhealth) and [www.pcusa.org/phewa/phn.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/phn.htm) for more resources.

### Earth Day (April 22)

Invite participants to write a psalm in which they name their favorite things about God's creation. Remember that everything is a part of God's creation, so allow the participants to say whatever they want. The more eclectic the list the better! Record everything that everyone names on a piece of newsprint that reads "We thank you God for . . ." at the top and "and we pray that all may share in the blessings of your creations" at the bottom. Fill the paper to create the group's psalm of thanksgiving. Invite participants to pray the psalm in unison. Point to the items on the list one at a time so everyone can say them together. Close with a rousing unison AMEN!

—David Hacker and Sheri Noah in *God's World, Our Home*,  
published by the *Presbyterian Peacemaking Program*, 2004

Visit [www.pcusa.org/environment/earthday.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/environment/earthday.htm).



## MAY



### National Day of Prayer

Grant us, O God, a vision of this nation as your love would have it:  
a nation where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor;  
a nation where the riches of creation are shared, and everyone can enjoy them;  
a nation where different races and cultures live in harmony and mutual respect;  
a nation where peace is built with justice, and justice is guided by love.  
Grant us, O God, a vision.  
Give us the inspiration and courage, wisdom and faith to live into that vision,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Source unknown

### Immigration Sunday

#### *Creed for Immigrants*

I believe in almighty God, who guided his people in exile and in exodus, the God of Joseph in Egypt and of Daniel in Babylon, the God of foreigners and immigrants.

I believe in Jesus Christ, a displaced Galilean, who was born away from his people and his home, who had to flee the country with his parents when his life was in danger, and who upon returning to his own country had to suffer the oppression of the tyrant Pontius Pilate, the servant of a foreign power. He was persecuted, beaten, tortured, and finally accused and condemned to death unjustly. But on the third day, this scorned Jesus rose from the dead, not as a foreigner but to offer us citizenship in heaven.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the eternal immigrant from God's kingdom among us, who speaks all languages, lives in all countries, and reunites all races.

I believe that the church is the secure home for all foreigners and believers who constitute it, speak the same language, and have the same purpose.

I believe that the communion of saints begins when we accept the diversity of the saints.

I believe in forgiveness, which makes us all equal, and in reconciliation, which identifies us more than does race, language, or nationality.

I believe that in the Resurrection, God will unite us as one people in which all are distinct and all are alike at the same time.

I believe in the eternal life beyond this world, where no one will be an immigrant but all will be citizens of God's kingdom that has no end.

Amen.

#### *Credo Para Inmigrantes*

Creo en Dios Todopoderoso, quien guió a su pueblo durante el éxodo y en el exilio, el Dios de José en Egipto y de Daniel en Babilonia, el Dios de los extranjeros y los inmigrantes.

Creo en Jesucristo, el Galileo desplazado, que nació lejos de su hogar y de su gente, que tuvo que huir de su país con sus padres porque su vida corría peligro, y cuando regresó del exilio, tuvo que sufrir la opresión del tirano Poncio Pilato, servidor de un imperio extranjero; que fue perseguido, injuriado y finalmente torturado; fue acusado y condenado a muerte en un juicio injusto. Sin embargo al tercer día, ese Jesús despreciado, resucitó de la muerte, no como extranjero sino para ofrecernos la ciudadanía de los cielos.

Creo en el Espíritu Santo, el inmigrante eterno del Reino de Dios entre nosotros, quien habla todas las lenguas, habita en todos los países y reúne a todas las razas.

Creo en la iglesia como un hogar seguro para todo extranjero y creyente que la forman, quienes hablan un mismo idioma y tienen el mismo propósito.

Creo que la comunión de los santos comienza cuando aceptamos la diversidad de los santos.

Creo en el perdón que nos hace a todos iguales, y en la reconciliación que nos identifica mucho más que la raza, el idioma o la nacionalidad.

Creo que Dios en la resurrección nos reúne a todos como un solo pueblo en el que todos somos distintos, pero iguales al mismo tiempo.

Creo en la vida eterna más allá de este mundo, en la cual nadie será inmigrante, sino todos ciudadanos del Reino de Dios que no tendrá fin. Amén

—The Rev. José Luis Casal, General Missioner, Tres Rios Presbytery

Visit [www.pcusa.org/immigration](http://www.pcusa.org/immigration) for resources on immigration issues.

### Multicultural Congregation Sunday

Creator God,  
who calls us each "beloved,"  
we celebrate the world you have made:  
a tapestry of colors and cultures, tastes and textures,  
in which you delight.

Teach us to share the joy you find in our  
variety and difference,  
and by your holy invitation,  
make us brothers and sisters,  
united in Jesus Christ.

Remind us, O God,  
that we come bearing histories,  
born of generations whose stories shape our own.  
As we name and claim our past,  
as we seek to be faithful in the present,  
make us bold to proclaim your justice and peace.

Saving God,  
who calls us at baptism and meets us at Table,  
we thank you for Jesus, who taught his disciples  
your love's command to cross lines of difference.  
Make our living a witness and declaration  
that no chasm is too wide for your reach and embrace.  
Faced with division, give us courage and wisdom,  
to be repairers of the breaches your people have made.



When your love calls us to speak,  
give our voice strength.  
When your love requires silence,  
teach us to listen.  
When your love demands repentance,  
humble us to seek forgiveness.  
When your love asks of us forgiveness,  
help us grant it with freedom that heals.

Sustaining God,  
who fed our ancestors in the wilderness  
and led them to promise,  
pour out your Holy Spirit upon us as we journey together.  
Make our hearts fertile ground  
for the dreams and visions you will plant in us;  
so that scattered again to the four corners of your creation,  
we will carry within us new seeds of reconciliation  
and peace,  
heavenly signs of a bountiful harvest  
for the healing of the church and the salvation  
of the world.  
Amen.

—Written for the 2001 Presbyterian Peacemaking Seminars, “Venturing into  
Differences: An Intergenerational Journey across Cultural Divisions”

Visit [www.pcusa.org/multicultural](http://www.pcusa.org/multicultural) for resources on multicultural ministries.

### Memorial Day

Holy God, your love is stronger than death,  
and your life-giving power has no end.  
We commend to your eternal care  
all who have died in the service of others,  
even as we lament the violence of war.  
Comfort and sustain all those who mourn.  
Heal the wounded body, mind, and spirit.  
Bring justice, freedom, and dignity to all people  
and bring an end to war throughout the earth  
so that all may know your promised peace;  
through Christ, the resurrection and the life.

—The Rev. David Gambrell, Associate for  
Worship, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### Pentecost

Spirit of the Living God, each year we gather with hopes that our meditations may be pleasing to you.  
Each year we gather as your children and as your church, feeling the unquenchable fire of your Spirit,  
ready to be resurrected into new life and a new creation.

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us. Fall afresh on us and breathe on us as you did on those  
who gathered in the upper room on that great day of Pentecost. Fall afresh on us and breathe on us,  
filling us with your Holy Spirit—the same Spirit as promised to us by the resurrected Christ, Jesus  
of Nazareth.

Give us the ability to speak through your Spirit the language of you, loving and merciful God, so  
that others may see you, know your grace, and feel the love of Jesus. With your Spirit, give each of us the  
language to speak peace where there is no peace; to speak love where there is no love; to speak justice  
where there is no justice; to speak kindness where there is no kindness.

Give us strength through your Spirit to work for safe communities and neighborhoods in our towns  
and cities. Give us strength through your Spirit to vote for opportunities and access for all. Give us  
strength to cry out against evil, against unfairness, against the maltreatment of the least regarded, least  
respected, and least protected in our communities. Give us strength to love those who hate us. Give us  
strength to comfort those who disappoint us. Give us strength to speak the language of your Spirit:  
peace, love, justice, and kindness.

We pray this prayer in the name of our resurrected Savior.

Amen.

—The Rev. Bridgett A. Green, doctoral candidate in New Testament at Vanderbilt University

### Disability Inclusion Sunday

#### A Prayer of Confession

God of Creation, with your hands you made each of us to praise your name. This is our great joy and  
glad duty. But we have erred in not welcoming or accepting all who are called to be part of this chorus of  
praise. Time and again, we have persuaded ourselves to keep away others who are not like us. We too  
easily focus on what others cannot do rather than understanding whose we are. Christ, you have sent us  
many people to be part of your household, but we have simply given people labels to wear and shunned  
those who are members of your body. Forgive us, Holy Spirit, and remind us that the chorus of praise is  
incomplete unless all are given room and a place to express our gratitude. We pray this in the name of the  
Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

#### Assurance of Pardon

Christ, you are the living Word of God, a Word of forgiveness, a Word of assurance, and a Word of grace.  
We are all loved and accepted because of you, our Savior, and nothing can separate us from your love.  
For this, we give you thanks! Amen.

—Presbyterians for Disability Concerns

Visit [www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pdc) for more resources.

JUNE



## JULY



### Independence Day (July 4)

Almighty God,  
you have given us this good land as our heritage.  
Make us always remember your generosity  
and constantly do your will.  
Bless our land with honest industry,  
sound learning,  
and an honorable way of life.  
Save us from violence, discord, and confusion;  
from pride and arrogance,  
and from every evil way.  
Make us who come from many nations  
with many different languages  
a united people.  
Defend our liberties  
and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government  
the spirit of wisdom,  
that there might be justice and peace in our land.  
When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful;  
and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail.  
We ask all this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

—Book of Common Worship, © 1993 by Westminster/John Knox Press,  
Louisville, Kentucky, [728], p. 816. Used by permission.

## AUGUST



### Hiroshima Day (August 6)

Grant us the awareness that true security lies not in weapons systems.  
Grant us the grace to repent our arrogance that allows us to create and rely on nuclear weapons.  
Grant us the wisdom to conceive a world free from nuclear weapons.  
Grant us the courage to work for that day.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

—The Rev. W. Mark Koenig, coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

Visit [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking) for more resources.

### Homelessness/Affordable Housing Sunday

Our Holy God, fill us with wonder at your earth  
And fill us with compassion for what society deems the least of these.  
If we see those whose strangeness is off-putting,  
May we overcome our fear to embrace them as Christ!  
For those who walk naked down the street  
May we offer prayer and clothes and hope.  
To those languishing in cold, unhappy prisons,  
May we pray for repentance and forgiveness.  
As we see those hungry or thirsty on the street  
May our response be not rejection but as if they were the King!  
Open us to see clearly how we can finally live out the wonder of your creation earth  
In our relationship with those most unlike us, and yet  
Most like you in the margins of life.  
We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

—Small Church and Community Ministry Office, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Visit [www.pcusa.org/smallchurch](http://www.pcusa.org/smallchurch) for more resources.

### Christian Vocation Sunday

Gracious God, you call us to live together in community, many members comprising one single body.  
Each of these members has been blessed with differing gifts made evident through the living out of varied  
calls to serve in this, your world. Yet we remain aware and seek to confirm our ultimate calling to live as  
followers of Christ, loving you above all, and loving our neighbor as ourselves:

In a world filled with a spirit of respect among nations and peoples;

In a church filled with truth and love, bound in unity through the Holy Spirit;

As people delivered from hardness of heart and demonstrating your glory in all that we do;  
heeding your call to live as people of one body, living into our baptismal identity as the Body of  
Christ on earth.

In your loving purpose, O God, answer our prayers and fulfill our hopes. Amen.

—Adapted from the worship resources for Christian Vocation Sunday 2008 as prepared by  
January Term students participating in "Leaders in a Connectional Church"

Visit [www.pcusa.org/christianvocation](http://www.pcusa.org/christianvocation) for more resources.

## SEPTEMBER





## Labor Day

### *For the Church as We Proclaim the Gospel*

Guard your church, O God,  
from illusions of grandeur,  
from obeisance to power,  
from vanity that demands notice.

Guard your church, O God,  
from certainty that exterminates novelty,  
from uncertainty that precludes action,  
from neutrality that blesses what is.

Guard your church, O God,  
from arrogance that speaks for others,  
from dalliance that trivializes agony,  
from advocacy that tinkers at transformation.

Guard your church, O God,  
from cowardice during times of contention,  
from capitulation to threats without and within,  
from charity that perpetuates inequality.

Guard your church, O God,  
from pity that precludes partnership,  
from heroics that disintegrate democracy,  
from procedure that prolongs injustice.

Guard your church, O God,  
Awaken us in mercy,  
strengthen us in crucifixion,  
forge us in resurrection  
that we may give  
though it make us insecure;  
that we may depend  
though it offend our pride;  
that we may challenge  
though it cost our reputation;  
that we may hope  
though it seems unreasonable;  
that we may love  
though scorn feels righteous;  
that we may build  
though tearing down be expedient;  
that we may speak  
though silence would be safer;  
that we may venture  
though we may not see the end.

Guard your church, O God.  
In the strong name of Jesus Christ we pray.  
Amen.

—The Rev. Noelle Damico, National Coordinator, PC(USA) Campaign for Fair Food.  
Reproduced from Prayers for the New Social Awakening: Inspired by the New  
Social Creed, © 2008, Westminster John Knox Press. Used by permission.

Visit [www.pcusa.org/fairfood](http://www.pcusa.org/fairfood) for more resources.

## International Day of Peace (September 21)

We confess, O God,

That we know who the “enemy” is:  
those we cannot love because the hurt is too deep,  
those we identify by their difference from us,  
those we fear.

We confess, O God,

That we know hate all too well.  
Some of us have experienced it  
hearing it in the words of a curse,  
or sensing it in the tense silence of a cold  
or indifferent stare.  
Some of us have given in to its power  
for we find the closure of a “no” safer  
than the challenge a “yes” offers us.

Yet we also confess that you call us to “yes.”

You remind us that the power of love is greater than the  
power of hate;  
and that as a people given the signs  
of the liberating cross  
and the affirming emptiness of the tomb,  
we can pray even for those we would deny prayer.  
We can seek peace even with those who would strike at us.

Continue to guide us, in the way of peace,  
through Christ Jesus our Savior.

—The Rev. Robert Williams-Neal, minister member, Presbytery of Mid-Kentucky,  
and teacher of the visually impaired at the Kentucky School for the Blind

Loving God, we long for a world at peace,  
a world free from violence and war,  
a world free from hunger and poverty,  
a world free from injustice and oppression.  
In Jesus Christ, you show us a force more powerful  
than evil, sin, and death.

You show us the power of love and truth  
to bring about personal transformation and social change.  
Help us to embrace Jesus’ way of nonviolence.  
Stir us from our comfort and complacency.  
Inspire us with prophetic vision.  
Instill in us a passion for the possible.  
Give us courage to speak truth to power.  
Help us heal the wounds of our broken world. Amen.

—The Rev. Roger Scott Powers, pastor, Light Street Presbyterian Church, Baltimore, Maryland

Visit [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking) for more resources.



### Native American Day

Creator God, in your Son, Jesus Christ, you show us boundless love. In every tree, river, and changing season we have visual evidence of "How Great Thou Art." This day we thank you for the Native American congregations scattered throughout this land: for the elders who keep those congregations going, volunteer their time and preach the gospel of peace, we give thanks; for the Native American ministers who have answered your call to serve their own people, we ask your continued blessing. You have gathered tribal people from Alaska to Long Island into this church as more than congregations, as native people who share with the larger church their gifts of culture, spirituality, and the beauty of diversity that is the body of Christ. In speaking your wisdom, help us know the ways the church can partner with Native American congregations. We see your miracles in the rising sun, feel them in the cool of the evening, hear them in the voices of our children, and experience them in your salvation of our very souls. Help us to speak peace, help those in need, and show the love of Jesus Christ in all things. We ask this in the name of our wonderful Counselor, our mighty God, our everlasting Father, our Prince of Peace. Amen.

—The Rev. Irvin Porter, pastor, Church of the Indian Fellowship, Tacoma, Washington; moderator, Native American Consulting Committee; and descendant of the Pima, T'hono O'odham, and Nez Perce tribes

Visit [www.pcusa.org/nativeamerican](http://www.pcusa.org/nativeamerican) for more resources.

## OCTOBER



### World Communion Sunday

O God of majesty, as we gather today to worship you, disquiet us and your whole creation with your peacemaking Holy Spirit, quietly insisting, "Know justice, know peace." As your Son broke bread and gave it to thousands, so call us anew to a peace marked by a just distribution of your abundance, until that day when no one shall hunger or thirst any more; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

—The Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer, assistant professor of New Testament at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia; affiliated with Central Presbyterian Church in Atlanta

Visit [www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemakingoffering) for more resources.

### Domestic Violence Awareness Sunday

We are the church.  
We offer ourselves to you, O God, our Creator.  
We offer our hands.  
May we use them to extend a healing touch to comfort sisters and brothers and children, youth, and elderly who are afraid.  
We offer our eyes and ears.  
May we see and hear the signs and stories of violence so that all may have someone with them in their pain and confusion.  
We offer our hearts and our tears.  
May the hurt and sorrow of the abused echo within us.  
We offer our own stories of violence.  
May we be healed as we embrace each other.  
We offer our anger.  
Make it a passion for justice.  
We offer all our skills.  
Use our gifts to end violence.  
We offer our faith, our hope, our love.  
May our encounters with violence bring us closer to you and to each other.  
All this we ask through Jesus Christ, who knows the pain of violence. Amen.

—From the background rationale of the policy statement Turn Mourning Into Dancing, approved by the 213th General Assembly (2001) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Visit [www.pcusa.org/padvn](http://www.pcusa.org/padvn) for more resources.

### World Food Day (October 16)

O God,  
to those who hunger  
give bread,  
and to those who have bread  
give the hunger for justice.  
Amen.

—Prayer from Latin America

Visit [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger) for more resources.



## Children's Sabbath

### *A Candlelighting Service*

*(Light candle.)*

**Child:** Dear Lord, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small.

**Adult:** Hear these words from Scripture: "[Jesus] was in the stern [of the boat] asleep on the cushion; and [the disciples] woke him up and said to him, 'Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?' He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, 'Peace! Be still!' Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm" (Mark 4:38–39).

Creator, we pray for the most vulnerable among us, those children who perish in the face of the storm from lack of affordable health care, from violence and neglect, from the denial of their culture, from failing family structures and crumbling social systems. Forgive us when we act as if we do not care that they are perishing. Move us to act in ways that demonstrate that we do.

**People:** Help us to be a safe harbor for children. Amen.

—Prayer from "A Presbyterian Sabbath Supplement" to accompany  
When Will We Hear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Call to End Poverty?  
*National Observance of Children's Sabbaths® Manual 2008. Used with permission.*

Visit [www.pcusa.org/children](http://www.pcusa.org/children) and [www.pcusa.org/phewa/pcan.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pcan.htm) for more resources.

## United Nations Day (October 24)

O God, Our Father, O God, Our Mother:  
we pray for all your children on earth,  
of every nation and of every race;  
that we may be strong to do your work.  
We pray for the Church in the world.

**Give peace in our time, O God.**

For the United Nations, the World Court, and for all governments and their leaders,

**give peace in our time, O God.**

For worldwide agencies of caring which bind wounds and feed the hungry,

**give peace in our time, O God.**

For all who seek to transform systems that wound,

**give peace in our time, O God.**

For all who work for justice and peace,

**give peace in our time, O God.**

Amen.

—Peacemaking through Worship, *Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 1983*

Visit [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking) for more resources.

## Christian and Citizen Sunday and Election Day

Under your law we live, great God,  
and by your will we govern ourselves.  
Help us as good citizens  
to respect neighbors whose views differ from ours,  
so that without partisan anger,  
we may work out issues that divide us,  
and elect candidates to serve the common welfare;  
Through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

—Book of Common Worship, © 1993 by Westminster/John Knox  
Press, Louisville, Kentucky, [732], p. 817. Used by permission.

Visit [www.pcusa.org/washington](http://www.pcusa.org/washington) for more resources.

## World Community Day

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.

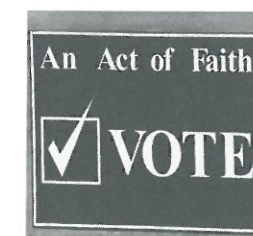
Grant us peace that will  
DISTURB  
our apathy  
then we'll dance together under the sun.

Grant us peace that will  
BURN  
our weary hearts  
then we'll let love and justice glow.

—Lei Garcia, executive director of CONTAK Philippines, International Peacemaker  
through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program in 2004 and 2005

Visit [www.churchwomen.org](http://www.churchwomen.org) for more resources.

NOVEMBER





### Veterans Day (November 11)

Righteous God, you rule the nations.  
Guard brave men and women  
who risk themselves in battle for their country.  
Give them compassion for enemies  
who also fight for patriotic causes.  
Keep our sons and daughters from hate that hardens,  
or from scorekeeping with human lives.  
Though they must be at war,  
let them live for peace,  
as eager for agreement as for victory.  
Encourage them as they encourage one another,  
and never let hard duty separate them  
from loyalty to your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

—Book of Common Worship, © 1993 by Westminster/John Knox Press,  
Louisville, Kentucky, [733], p. 818. Used by permission.

## DECEMBER



### World AIDS Day and Presbyterian HIV/AIDS Awareness (December 1)

One: Holy God, we know you hear the prayers and cries of your people.

**Many: Our lips express great need and we turn to your listening presence.**

One: Loving and listening God, we pray for the strength needed to help ease the burden of illness and stand in solidarity with those living with HIV/AIDS.

**Many: Help us to see that in sharing one another's grief, we grow in strength and compassion.**

One: We pray for those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS; may they be strengthened to call upon you and upon us for help and mercy.

**Many: Hear their prayers, God, and grant us the hearts needed to respond to their calls. Help us to meet their needs with loving spirits and willing hands.**

One: We pray for the young who are infected with HIV/AIDS and those who are orphaned because of AIDS.

**Many: Extend to the young your loving presence and comfort them when they feel scared and all alone.**

One: Gracious God, we thank you for the friends, families, religious organizations, and medical communities who help care for and support those living with HIV/AIDS. Help these people remain steadfast in their commitment to helping those living with HIV/AIDS.

**Many: Holy God, help fill them with the knowledge of your healing and redemptive love. Remind us all of the hope we find in you.**

One: We pray for all who are ill that they may have courage, strength, and hope.

**Many: O God, inspire us to love and care for all of your children. Help us to serve those in need so that we may better serve you.**

—Andrew Black, associate director of religious life and associate chaplain, Eckerd College,  
St. Petersburg, Florida, and leadership team member, Presbyterian Aids Network of  
Presbyterian Health, Education and Welfare Association (PHEWA)

Visit [www.pcusa.org/aids-international](http://www.pcusa.org/aids-international) and [www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/phewa/pan.htm) for more resources.

### Human Rights Day (December 10)

We gather today as your people. Help us see beyond our differences and glimpse your image in each of us. Help us listen closely that we may hear your word spoken in a thousand different ways. Help us protect the weak, challenge the strong, free the prisoner, proclaim peace in violence, and heal the broken. We give thanks for the legacy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and we pray that people everywhere might come to know the hope and promise embodied in that document. As your people, we ask that you help us to welcome one another into our common calling, seeking to serve you and the people of every land as we live into your reign. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

—The Rev. Rachel Pedersen, associate pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Bloomington, Indiana

Visit [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking) for more resources.

### Christmas Eve (December 24)

A reading based on "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and the writings of the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb.

*O little town of Bethlehem,  
How still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight.*

Christians have to take Christmas in Bethlehem seriously, because on that holy night and in this very place, God chose to be very concrete, to take flesh, and to take our world very seriously.



*For Christ is born of Mary;  
And gathered all above,  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wondering love.  
O morning stars together  
Proclaim the holy birth!  
And praises sing to God the King,  
And peace to all on earth.*

The real challenge today for Palestinians in general, and for Christian Palestinians in particular, is this: How can we hope in a context of despair and hold on to our vision in times of bitter conflict and war? This is so important, for, as the Bible says, without a vision, the people perish.

Hope doesn't mean that things are in any way improving or that all we have to do is to sit back, wait, and watch. Waiting, being passive, and feeling optimistic about the future—these are false hope. True hope is active: it is all about developing a strategy for action, for work, for getting engaged and involved.

*How silently, how silently,  
The wondrous gift is given!  
So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heaven.  
No ear may hear His coming,  
But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still,  
The dear Christ enters in.*

From the hometown of Christ, we have no other message on the day when we celebrate his life: "For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." We wish ourselves nothing less than for the transforming power of the incarnation to strengthen all of us in our commitment to breaking down walls, making peace, and building bridges.

*O holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels  
The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us,  
Our Lord Emmanuel!*

—The Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem and director of the International Center of Bethlehem; from *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 146–147, 152–153

## **Nativity of Jesus Christ/Christmas Day (December 25)**

Dear God,  
in this time of birth we pray for life.  
We pray for people, not for buildings.  
We pray for faith in Jesus, not for faith in institutions.  
We pray for miracles.  
We move with hope.  
In the midst of the nations, we move with hope.  
To Afghanistan and Iraq, we move with hope.  
In the Balkans and past biological weapons, we move with hope.  
Standing with child soldiers in Uganda, we move with hope.  
Along the horn of Africa and war-torn Sudan, we move with hope.  
In the house churches of China, we move with hope.  
With all indigenous peoples, we move with hope.  
Past the atom bomb, we move with hope.  
In the chambers of the International Criminal Court, we move with hope.  
Between the seats of the UN Security Council, we move with hope.  
Over the ledgers of the World Bank, we move with hope.  
In Palestine and in Israel, we move with hope.  
Amidst militias in Colombia, we move with hope.  
With the homeless of Haiti, we move with hope.  
Between Ethiopia and Somalia, we move with hope.  
On the convoys of the World Food Program, we move with hope.  
Among refugee tents in Chad, we move with hope.  
With those who have been raped in Congo, we move with hope.  
Facing climate change, we move with hope.  
Dismayed, overwhelmed, afraid, we move with hope.  
We pray, come Lord Jesus!  
Come and fill our hearts with your peace  
As we witness that grace still abides on this earth,  
And proclaim the miracle  
That even in this broken world,  
Miracles are possible,  
Expected,  
Awaited,  
And born out of deep hope.  
In Jesus' name we pray.  
Amen.

—Joel Hanisek, Presbyterian United Nations Representative



## Additional Resources



Each week, the Peacemaking Program posts prayers related to current situations in need of peace and justice on "Spiritual Nurture for Peacemakers" at [www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/nurture.htm](http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/nurture.htm). The prayers can help deepen the spiritual life of individuals and help congregations provide worship experiences that respond to Christ's call to live as peacemakers.

Other resources containing prayers for justice and peace:

*Sacraments and Seasons: Peacemaking through Worship*, vol. 3, Barbara Battin, ed. Louisville: Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 2001. This booklet provides resources that span the church year and some secular days. PDS 70-270-01-011; \$4.95.

*Peacemaking through Worship*. Louisville: Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, 1989. This material designed for a loose-leaf notebook contains liturgies, readings, quotes, hymns, poems, and sermons on peacemaking themes. PDS 259-89-905; \$4.95.

*Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*. Louisville: Mission Interpretation, PC(USA). Each year this yearly devotional provides new mission stories and prayers for Presbyterian work around the world.

*Children's Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*. Louisville: Mission Interpretation, PC(USA). This resource provides stories, games, prayers, and other information about Presbyterian mission work around the world.

*Prayers Encircling the World: An International Anthology*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999; \$29.95.

*Praying for Peace Around the Globe*, by James McGinnis. Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 2009; \$10.95.

*Gifts of Many Cultures: Worship Resources for the Global Community*, by Maren C. Tirabassi and Kathy Wonson Eddy. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995; \$20.00.

*And Everyone Shall Praise: Resources for Multicultural Worship*, by R. Mark Liebenow. Cleveland: United Church Press, 1999.

Resources with a PDS number can be ordered from Presbyterian Distribution Service. Call (800) 524-2612, or send fax to (502) 569-8030, or order online at [www.pcusa.org/marketplace](http://www.pcusa.org/marketplace).