**A Sample Liturgy for a Worship Service with a Focus on Korea Peace**

Prepare the worship space by placing in the front center of the worship space a pole on which a large piece of fabric can be hung. The large piece of the fabric has the map of the entire Korean peninsula drawn/printed without the division and One Korea written on it. As the community gathers, they should be all able to see the hanging fabric. (Eventually this piece of fabric will be torn in half. To help the people doing the tearing easier, snip both sides a bit so the tear will be horizontal on the map.)

Prepare and place the Christ candle, candles for the voices, and candle holders in the front of the worship space.

Select \_\_\_\_\_\_ readers to be a voice. Each one will read the written words spoken by the person who either directly or indirectly has experienced the Korean War. (Choose the number of voices to be included in your worship.)

Suffuse the worship space with instrumental music that expresses lament and yearning.

**Welcome Liturgist**

Today we gather to re-member the legacies of the Korean War which has still not ended. By remembering, we bring to our attention not only those memories of the suffering that is endured by hundreds of thousands of the survivors of the War but also their yearnings for a different future. As we prepare for worship with this focus, I invite you to hear the following words that begin the “Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula” adopted by the delegates sent by 345 churches representing some 560 million Christians around the globe to the 10th assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

“We, the delegates of the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) meeting in Busan from 30 October to 8 November 2013, bear witness to the suffering of the men, women and children of the one Korean people through decades of violence caused by war and hostility that have left them divided into two nations.

Division, war and the suffering contradict God’s will for the fullness of life. Therefore, we call upon the churches of the world, and upon those holding social, economic, political and governmental power, to pursue a lasting and sustainable peace with justice that will reunify and reconcile the people of Korea.

The central theme of our assembly is a simple prayer, “God of life, lead us to justice and peace.” It is our prayer that the vision and dream of all Koreans, their common aspiration for healing, reconciliation, peace and reunification may be fulfilled. “[[1]](#endnote-1)

**Lighting of the Christ Candle**

Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12, NRSV). Jesus welcomes us to the light to worship God who leads us to justice and peace.

**Call to Worship: Psalm 72**

One: High mountains and hills shout the glory of God.

Let the children of God embrace peace and justice.

**All: Like the rains falling on the grass**

**Like the showers watering the earth  
 God’s grace will flow to all the people**

One: The righteous will flourish in God’s time

and peace will abound until the moon is no longer light

**All: God’s love will overflow from sea to sea**

**From the river to the end of the earth**

**Like the rains falling on the grass**

**God’s righteousness will flow to all the nations.[[2]](#endnote-2)**

**Hymn of Praise** “Sing Glory to the Name of God” *Glory to God* 10

**Remembering and Listening**

“Let anyone with ears to hear, listen!,” Jesus urged his hearers. Today, we are invited to heed these words of Jesus who summons us to listen. We will hear the voices of those whose lives have been forever changed by the Korean War. Five of them are Korean Americans, and one is an African American. Let us prepare our hearts to hear their stories.

Voice 1: My home is near Ham-heung, a town in what is now North Korea. When the Korean War broke out, I was nineteen still living in my hometown. My experience of the communist North Korea was not good and I had avoided conscription into the People’s Army initially, but that didn’t last very long. About two months into the war, I was caught and turned into a soldier fighting for North Korea. The People’s Army had retreated to the north as the South Korea’s allied forces had advanced, and only ten days after I had been conscripted,   
I was made a prisoner by American forces and I ended up in a POW camp in the South. I was there for three years. After the Armistice Treaty was signed, three options were offered to us prisoners who were presumed to be all communists in the eyes of the US Army: to repatriate to North Korea, defect to the South, or to go to a neutral country. I chose the third option. I did so because I couldn’t fathom the idea of living in the South, so close to home, and yet not able to go home! I haven’t been able to go back home ever since but not a single day goes by when I don’t think about my country, all of Korea. I am 85 years old. [[3]](#endnote-3)

Light a candle I light this candle for the Rev. Kang Hi-Dong.

Voice 2: One day we were hiding in one of the houses beside a small country path that led up the mountain, toward the north.  And then northern troops were going by – walking on that narrow path.  Yeah, it was pretty scary.  And then, one day, a U.S. jet fighter jet came and began to burn down my home town.  I was about three miles away from the town – my home town.  And we were able to see the flames, the smoke.  I think it was a napalm bombing.  Completely flattened, burned down my town.”[[4]](#endnote-4)

Light a candle I light this candle for the Rev. Yoon Kil-sang.

Voice 3: My father had seven siblings. When the War came to a cease fire, four of them ended up north of the border and three south of the border. Communication had been completely cut off. My father was featured in a documentary “Memory of the Forgotten War” that was broadcast by PBS stations nationwide in 2015 but I hadn’t known that he had been a part of it. I just happened to come across it by sheer chance. I was so sad that he did not even mention it to me—that he didn’t feel that he could mention it to me. When I asked him Why?, he said, “it’s too political. . . Some time later, I asked my mother if she had seen it, and to my shock, she said, “No, I don’t want to see it. So, I said, “Why don’t you want to see it?” And she said, “I don’t want to be reminded about the war.” And that’s when I understood it’s a hard subject matter, you know, for my mom especially, to revisit. [[5]](#endnote-5)

Light a candle I light this candle for Lee Eun-Joung Lee, the daughter of Lee Lee Eun Young.

Voice 4: I was born during the war in the southern part of Korea. While growing up, I drew the map of the Korean peninsula umpteen times to make anti-communism posters. That’s just what we children growing up in South Korea did. Anti-communism was a big part of our education. Because the maps were drawn by hand, a child’s hand, they never looked exactly the same, except for one thing—the line across the peninsula. The line was very bold. I never questioned who drew the line. It was simply there. It was natural to be there. The part north of the line was colored always red; the part south of the line was always colored blue. I never colored outside the line. Going outside the line was beyond my imagination. I just knew—I knew that going outside the line was an extremely risky business.[[6]](#endnote-6)

Light a candle I light this candle for Rev. Unzu Lee remembering the reality of growing up in divided Korea that made it dangerous to step outside the lines.

Voice 5: My brother did not want to join the [South Korean] army. He said, “How can I fight? Two boys shoot each other; one is from the north the other the south, but they are not our enemies. They are like brothers. What kind of people do that? My mother and I were the same way; that’s why we were always against this war, really. My mother was a strong complainer. She said, “So I have to fight my brother, this is my own brother! How can I do that?”[[7]](#endnote-7)

Light a candle I light this candle for Park Sung Eun remembering the absurdity of the Korean war that pitted brothers against each other.

Voice 6: My brother left South Carolina for Korea during the Korean War. Then he went missing. He became a MIA. He never came back. I still miss him every day.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Light a candle. I light this candle for all the missing people and all those who still yearn for them to return home, remembering their heartaches of separation.

Voice 7: There’s a lot we don’t know, which was never passed down to us. Our parents complain that we don’t know anything about our history. But they never want to talk about that shameful part of our history. How were we supposed to know? If Americans don’t think it was a big deal, and if our parents don’t want to think about it, where are we going to find this information?”[[9]](#endnote-9)

Light a candle I light this candle for Helen Kim remembering the silence that resulted from the trauma caused by the Korean War and the silence that has caused deep and wide chasms between generations among Koreans.

Voice 8 I have sometimes terrible, horrible dreams about the communists.  Oh, the communists coming to our village—you know, fear, scary feeling, deep inside to a young child.  It did hurt so much, you know, the emotional disturbance, [war] hurts the little kids not only physically, but also psychologically all their lives.  It’s bad.  War is bad.  Yeah, war is bad.   Of course, I have a big hope that someday, that time [for reunification] would come.  Sometimes it seems close, but sometimes it seems very far—Korean unification…Anyway, war is bad.  War is very bad.  So I hope Korea’s reunification would come without war.  There should come peace for reunification.  I pray.  I hope it will come that way.[[10]](#endnote-10)

Light a candle I light this candle for Insook Lee remembering the horror of war and yearning for reunification.

Voice 9 The fear and terror of this time period have carried forward into my dad’s life. It is visible; if you ever met him, you’d understand what it meant. It carried forward to my sisters’ lives, my life, as a hole, a silence, and in order to move forward into my own life and everything that it means in the present and everything that it can mean in the future, I really feel I have to release the past from this prison of silence.[[11]](#endnote-11)

Light a candle I light this candle for Orson Moon remembering the lasting effect of the tragedy of war through generations.

Voice 10 Because Americans bombed the city every day, we moved away from Kaesong about eight or ten kilometers. One day, we remembered chickens we left at our home, so I went to *Kaesong* to get the chickens. Then there was an airplane sound, so I ran to the tunnel my father and I had dug. Then airplanes, about two, three, or four of them, with propellers, came and for the first time I saw, what do they call it, carpet-bombing.[[12]](#endnote-12)

Light a candle I light this candle for Suntae Chun remembering the clash of the ordinary—the chickens—and the horror of carpet-bombing.

Voice 11 I had brothers and a sister who fled to the north. Actually, I don’t know if the word “fled” accurately describes the action they took because I have never asked anyone to tell me what actually happened. That was simply too painful for me. After the war, if people thought you had family in the north or worse, had relatives who went to the north, it was really hard for you because you were marked as a suspect. Whenever people asked, “Did your family escape from the north?”—sort of an acceptable story, I just said, “Yes,” because it proves that I’m affiliated to the south. In other words, I have had to tell lies about my own family for my own survival. I am without any family history because it had to be blotted out. Separated families don’t have any soul, any speech at all. . . That is trauma for all Koreans. I tried to be neutral but it’s impossible. The only way to survive was to hide my identity.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Light a candle I light this candle for Min Yong Lee remembering the imposed silence that denied the truth of his much loved family.

**Visual Enactment** two persons

Two people come forward, pick up the center of a piece of fabric on which the map of the Korean peninsula is drawn, and tear it to two pieces.   
Each piece is then hung on the pole.

When the two pieces of the fabric are well placed, the two of them come to the front center of the sanctuary and each read one of the following scriptures and then return to their seats.

**Scripture Reading** two persons—each one will read one verse

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, “Peace, peace,”  
    when there is no peace. –Jeremiah 6:14, NRSV

“As Jesus came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying,  
‘If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.’” Luke 19:41-42, NRSV

**Solo or Instrumental Music**: Precious Lord, Take My Hand Glory to God 834

**Prayer of confession**

One: Ever present God,[[14]](#endnote-14)

These stories speak of deep pain and the brokenness of a whole people from a world gone awry.

All: But, we have not known or wanted to remember their brokenness and pain. Forgive us.

One: They speak of warring within, between kin, between Americans and Koreans who did not even know each other.

All: But, we have neither known nor wanted to remember their endless suffering from these continuing unresolved conflicts. Forgive us.

One: They tell us how silence has ruled their lives, and how their trauma made the task of surviving a monumental task.

All: Forgive our conscious and unconscious participation in maintaining that silence.

One: Jesus said to those who wanted him to stop his disciples from telling the truth, “I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.” (Luke 20:40)

All: Today, we have heard some hard truths about the legacies of the so called “Forgotten War.” Do we have ears to hear?

One: If our eyes, our ears, and our lips had been just a little braver[[15]](#endnote-15)  
in bearing witness to Your justice,

All: It may not have taken 70 years for these truths to be told.

The Korean War might no longer be known as the “Forgotten War,”   
but remembered for what it actually was and is.

One: If our consciences and souls had been a little more sincere  
in seeking your truth and bringing about your peace,

All: Kin separated by the border may not have had to die without   
having had a chance to embrace one another ever again.

Two Koreas torn apart may have been reunited,

and Your peace may have been restored.

One: If our consciences and souls had been a little more sincere  
in seeking Your truth and bringing about Your peace,

All: Our fathers, brothers, and uncles who went missing during the War may have returned to our homes long ago.

One: If our eyes, our ears, and our lips had been just a little braver in bearing witness to Your justice,

All: then the world today might not have arisen

We may not be exchanging threats with North Korea   
We may not be engaging in massive military exercises in the seas surrounding South Korea at least four times a year, every year.

We may not fear a potential nuclear crisis   
We may not need 83 military bases in South Korea

God of mercy, we ask for Your forgiveness for our complicity.  
God of compassion, we ask for Your forgiveness for our fear of the other.

God of the prophets, we ask for Your forgiveness of our lack of vision and strength to love.

**Kyrie**  “Lord, Have Mercy” Glory to God, 577

**Assurance of Pardon** Psalm 103:17

In the name of Jesus Christ, who  
declared the year of Jubilee, forgiving all the debts  
In the name of Jesus Christ, who  
in the midst of death announced resurrection,  
in the midst of darkness leads by light,

in the midst of sin promises salvation,  
I declare to you, we are forgiven.

**Amen.**

**Hymn of Thanksgiving** “I’m So Glad”

I’m so glad, Jesus lifted me/I’m so glad, Jesus lifted me/  
I’m so Glad, Jesus lifted me/ Glory Hallelujah/ Jesus lifted me. (2 x)

**Passing of the Peace**

**Sung Psalter** “To the Hills I Lift My Eyes” *Glory to God* 845

**Scripture Reading (suggested readings)**

First Lesson: Genesis 33:1-12, Ezekiel 37:15-23

Second Lesson: Ephesians 2:14-19, Ephesians 4:2-4

Gospel: Matthew 5:21-24, Luke 4:16-19

**Meditation/Sermon**

**Prayer for Peace**[[16]](#endnote-16)

Creator and Bringer of Life, we come before you scared, unsure, anxious and needing your presence with us. Everywhere we look, the trappings of your peace may seem far from view.

We pray for leaders around the world, especially in the United States and North Korea, as they are tempted to seek solutions to conflicts through “fire and fury” and as their words inch us closer and closer to mutual destruction. We pray for the vulnerable individuals who find themselves situated squarely in the middle of these escalating conflicts.

*(Leave space for silence or for individuals to offer free prayers.)*

We pray for the people and places closer to home where we see the effects of our collective brokenness.

*(Leave space for silence or for individuals to offer free prayers.)*

We repent for the places and times when we have been complicit in the buildup of a culture that trusts military might above all and that has built a for-profit industry out of making war.

*(Leave space for silence or for individuals to offer free prayers.)*

Give us eyes to see the places where you are at work, beckoning us away from violence and toward your peace and healing.

*(Leave space for silence or for individuals to offer free prayers.)*

In the name of Jesus Christ who comes to us as the Prince of Peace, we pray.

**All: Amen.**

**Song of Response** “Come Now, O Prince of Peace” Glory to God, 103

(While the congregation sings “Come Now, O Prince of Peace”, two persons come up to the front, pick up the two torn pieces of the fabric and make them into one. They stand holding the fabric facing the worshipping community until the recession begins.)

**Blessing** **and Recession**

One: Friends, listen to God’s promise that comes to us through the prophet Jeremiah: For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me (Jeremiah 29:11-13a, NRSV)

All: May the blessing of God be with us all.   
May the healing of God restore our wounds.  
May the peace of God transform our communities in conflict into   
communities where peace dwells.  
May the Korean peninsula become one again.  
May we learn new ways of accompaniment that do not use military might,   
but the means of peace.  
May we know that peace is the only way to peace.

**Recessional Hymn** “Guide My Feet” *Glory to God*, 741

The two persons who hold the fabric with the Korean map will lead the recession, and the worship leaders including the liturgist will follow them singing “Guide My Feet” The last words of blessing that follow will be said by the worship leader.

One: May God bless you and keep you.  
May God be kind and gracious to you.  
May God look upon you with favor  
and grant you peace. Alleluia!

**All: Amen.**

1. “Statement on Peace and Reunification of the Korean Peninsula.” November 8, 2013. <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/assembly/2013-busan/adopted-documents-statements/peace-and-reunification-of-the-korean-peninsula>. Accessed December 20, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Adaptation of Psalm 72 written in page 82 of *Peace with Justice Peace* prepared by National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Manila, Philippines: The Eye Commercial Press, 1989. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Adaptation of the Rev. Hi Dong Kang’s story. To hear his interview in its entirety, go to: http://legaciesofthekoreanwar.org/story/reverend-hi-dong-kang/ [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Adaptation of an excerpt from the transcript of the Rev. Kil-sang Yoon’s interview. <http://legaciesofthekoreanwar.org/story/reverend-kil-sang-yoon/accessed> December 23, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. An adaptation of Eun Jeong Lee’s story as told by herself in her interview for the Legacies of the Korean War Project. http://legaciesofthekoreanwar.org/story/eun-joung-lee/ [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Unzu Lee’s story written by herself. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Adaptation of the words of Sung Eun Park found in “Silenced No More: Korean Americans Remember the “Forgotten War” by Ramsey Liem, http://legaciesofthekorean war.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Article-Ramsay-Liem.pdf, 5. Accessed December 10, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Based on a story that was shared by J. Herbert’s as he began his sermon preached at the No-Gun-Ri peace museum on November 2, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Adaptation of Helen Kim’s words recorded in “Silenced No More: Korean Americans Remember the “Forgotten War” by Ramsay Liem, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Adaptation of In Sook Lee’s words recorded in the transcript of her interview. [http://legaciesofthe koreanwar. org/story/](http://legaciesofthekoreanwar.org/story/)insook-lee/ accessed December 23, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Liem, Silenced No More: Korean Americans Remember the “Forgotten War,” 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Adaptation of Suntae Chun’s words recorded in “Silenced No More: Korean Americans Remember the “Forgotten War” by Liem, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Adaptation of Min Young Lee’s words recorded in “Silenced No More: Korean Americans Remember the “Forgotten War” by Liem, 6. ` [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Adaptation of “Prayer for Forgiveness and Transformation” by Rev. Brian Martin-Burkholder in *Prayers of Peace, Transformation and Justice* by E. K. M. Knappenberger, 2014, 11, <https://assets.mennonites.org/Downloads/> Vet%20prayers.pdf accessed December 16, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Adaptation of “For Justice and Peace in Korea” in *Peace with Justice* by National Council of Churches in the Philippines. Manila, Philippines: The Eye Commercial Press, 1989, 82-83. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. Written by Hanna Heinzekehr, in consultation with Hyun and Sue Hur and Gordon Houser. <https://themennonite.org/call-prayer-tensions-rise-n-korea-u-s/accessed> Dec. 10, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)