



Prayer and Worship Resources

Community liturgy - linking to local resources

Prayer and worship are vital elements of the local church community. Liturgy is an expression of that community, what is central to its beliefs, its life, its dreams and its concerns. As a congregation, you may wish to explore the preparation of a liturgy/series of liturgies for the Decade to Overcome Violence as a group activity, where local issues and concerns are considered, and the gifts and abilities of members are used.

Some options -

-  A one-off liturgy focussing on the Decade to Overcome Violence
-  A series of liturgies that consider different issues relevant to your local community
-  Setting aside one Sunday every six months, or every year to focus on the Decade and current issues, for the remainder of the Decade

Ecumenical and community opportunity

This is also a great opportunity to work ecumenically and with other groups in the community. A community time of worship, focussing on local issues or areas of need, would be a very appropriate community action of peace-building. You might explore -

-  Involving the local community centre, community groups, local council and schools
-  Holding the worship in a public space - eg community centre, local park, local library
-  It may be on a significant day for the community, a time of reflection at night with candles, or at sunrise welcoming the new day while contemplating new ways of thinking and doing
-  Making a community commitment to building peace and overcoming violence in particular areas relevant to your community

Remember -

-  People and children of all ages have something to offer
-  Have plenty of time to prepare so that people don't feel rushed or under pressure
-  Get together to plan - you don't have to meet in a church hall, why not meet for coffee, over dinner, for lunch in a park?
-  Make the liturgy/worship inclusive of everyone (think about music, who is speaking, art, words that are used, stories that are told etc)
-  Use inclusive language





Prayer and Worship Resources

Song and Hymn Board

There are of course many, many possibilities for sharing Christ's Peace in song and music, but here are a few starters:

A new commandment I give unto you
Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair
Comfort, comfort all my people
Community of Christ
Creator God, you made every race
Creator God, you made this land
Dear Lord and Father of mankind
God gives us a future
God of freedom, God of justice
God of grace and God of glory
God of Jeremiah, grieving with an aching heart
In Christ there is no east nor west
Inspired by love and anger
Jesus Christ is waiting
Jesus put this song into our hearts
Kneels at the feet of his friends
Lord of all hopefulness
Make me a channel of your peace
May the mind of Christ my Saviour
Mine eyes have seen the glory
Nothing disturb you (Nada te turbe)
Peace is flowing like a river
Peace, perfect peace is the gift
Take, take off your shoes
Touch the earth lightly
We're standing here on holy ground
We shall go out with hope of resurrection
When I needed a neighbour





Prayer and Worship Resources

Prayers for peace

For peace in our country
 For the victims of violence everywhere
 For those struggling for peace and justice
 For churches in conflict situations
 For a world without war and violence

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 being,
 our world and our universe. Amen
(World Prayer for Peace)

Life-giving God
 teach us to value each other
 as people created in your image -
 so that love, and not hate,
 care, and not harm,
 compassion, and not disregard,
 peace, and not violence,
 will guide our ways
 and influence our actions.
 Amen



Justice-loving God,
 We are conscious of conflicts and tensions within Australia and the world. We see the divisions of humanity along racial, cultural, political, economic, sexual and religious lines. In obedience to you, help us to struggle against all systems and attitudes which set person against person, group against group, or nation against nation.
*Compassionate and justice-loving God, we seek your face -
 Hear our prayer, and hold us together.*

We belong to a church and a nation composed of people of many cultures and races. In response to your love, help us to live together in unity and diversity, maintaining different cultural traditions, yet forging a common destiny based on a commitment to the ideals of equality of opportunity, tolerance, justice and compassion.
*Compassionate and justice-loving God, we see your face -
 Hear our prayer, and lead us on.*

We recognise the widening gap between the rich and the poor, in our own country, and within the whole human community. Help us, O God, to uphold the rightful claims of the poor on the resources of this nation and the world; and to seek to identify and challenge all social and political structures and all human attitudes which perpetuate and compound poverty.
*Compassionate and justice-loving God, we seek your face -
 Hear our prayer, and show us our common humanity.*

We affirm the belief that the natural world is your creation. Recognising the vulnerability of the life and resources of creation, help us to work to promote the responsible management, use and occupation of the earth by human societies; and to seek to identify and challenge all structures and attitudes which perpetuate and compound the destruction of creation.
*Compassionate and justice-loving God, we seek your face -
 Hear our prayer, hold us together, lead us on, show us our common humanity,
 Justice-loving God. Amen.*

(Written by Colleen Geyer for the 1997 Social Justice Sunday Worship Resource, Dreaming a Just Community, for the Social Responsibility and Justice Agency of the Uniting Church in Australia.)

DOV in Australia





Prayer and Worship Resources

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
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 pardoning that we are pardoned;
it is in dying that we are born again to
eternal life. Amen.

(Franciscan prayer)

Affirmation of Faith beyond violence

We trust that beyond the absence:
there is a presence.

That beyond the pain:
there can be healing.

That beyond the brokenness:
there can be wholeness.

That beyond the hurting:
there may be forgiveness.

That beyond the silence:
there may be the word.

That through the word:
there may be understanding.

***That through all understanding:
there is love.***

*(From Breaking the Silence of Violence
from the Committee on the Status of Women in Mission
and Ministry, Episcopal Church Centre, New York)*

Cleansing rite with water

Loving God,
with this water, cool our hands, our bodies,
from the heat of the sun.
Christ have mercy.

With this water, kindly remove the heat of
the heart.
Lord have mercy.

With this water, soothe our injured feelings,
remove the anger of yesterday.
Christ have mercy.

Cleanse us from true and false accusation
Lord have mercy.

Clean the stains left by our own wrong doing.
Christ have mercy.

Wash away the blood stains of those who
died unjustly.
Lord have mercy.

Purify our hearts and minds.
Christ have mercy.

Remove any trace of suspicion.
Lord have mercy.

With this water, give us a fresh start to
build a new community.
Christ have mercy.

With this water, fill our hearts with a clean
spirit.
Lord have mercy.

With this water, prepare us to be reconciled
to yourself, through Christ and through one
another and to *one* another.
Amen.

You are invited to wash your face in fresh
water as a sign of healing, reconciliation and
hope.

*(from the WCC Worship Resources for the Decade to
Overcome Violence)*





Prayer and Worship Resources

Prayer Service on the Nonviolence of Jesus

*Jerusalem/Jerusalem,
if only today
you knew the things
that make for peace!*
(Luke 19:42)

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem and its disregard of Samaritans and lepers, and you weep today over the escalating violence of racism and hate in our own society and world.

Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem and its humiliating occupation by the Roman Empire, and you weep today over the escalating violence of terrorism and humiliating occupation in your Holy Land. Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem and its exploitation of the poor, and you weep today over the escalating violence of poverty in our own society & world. Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem and its disregard of women and children, and you weep today over escalating violence against women and children in our own society & world. Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem and its deadly use of weapons of violence, and you weep today over the proliferation of the weapons of violence, from handguns to nuclear bombs, in our own society and world. Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem where capital punishment was rampant, and you weep today over the escalating use of capital punishment in our own society.

Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

Jesus, you wept over Jerusalem where the forces of domination were everywhere, and you weep today over the escalating domination - all the 'isms - in our own society & world.

Jesus, in the face of escalating violence,
LET US ESCALATE LOVE

(from the The Institute for Peace and Justice
<http://www.ipj-ppj.org/index.html>)

Prayer for the Journey of Healing

Almighty and loving God,
you who created ALL people in your image,
Lead us to seek your compassion
as we listen to the stories of our past.

You gave your only Son, Jesus,
who died and rose again so that sins will be forgiven.
We place before you the pain and anguish of dispossession of land, language, lore, culture and family kinship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have experienced.
We live in faith that all people will rise from the depths of despair and hopelessness.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families have endured the pain and loss of loved ones, through the separation of children from their families.
We are sorry and ask God's forgiveness.

Touch the hearts of the broken, homeless and afflicted and heal their spirits.
In your mercy and compassion walk with us as we continue our journey of healing to create a future that is just and equitable.
Lord, you are our hope.
Amen.





Prayer and Worship Resources

Litany on the Pebbles of Love

In the face of the boulders of disrespect for all who are different,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF RESPECT FOR THE DIGNITY AND DIVERSITY OF EVERY PERSON.

In the face of the boulders of having it always my way,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF MUTUALITY.

In the face of the boulders of tuning out others,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF LISTENING LOVE.

In the face of the boulders of grudges and retaliation,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF FORGIVING LOVE.

In the face of the boulders of using more than our share,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF SIMPLE SUFFICIENCY.

In the face of the boulders of violence against other species and the earth herself,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF BEAUTY AND RESPECT.

In the face of the boulders of violent entertainment,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF PLAYFULNESS.

In the face of the boulders of discrimination and exploitation because of race, age, gender, or sexual orientation,
LET US BE PEBBLES OF SOLIDARITY.
In the face of escalating violence, escalate love.

As participants take their pebbles - pray
THE PEACE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS

*(from The Institute for Peace and Justice
<http://www.ipj-ppj.org/index.html>)*

Fast for peace in Lent

The Decade to Overcome Violence offers a new and important opportunity to mark Lent with purpose. We are invited to enter into this special season through the three traditional spiritual disciplines of Prayer, Fasting and Charitable Giving with a special focus on peace and reconciliation.

▶ **Pray the Prayer of St. Francis daily**

▶ **Fast from violence**

choose a fast which has meaning for you and your community - eg. fast from:
violent TV shows, movies, video games;
toys which encourage violent play or glorify war;
music with violent lyrics;
products made in sweat shops or by child labour;
financial investment in companies which produce violence.

▶ **Give to efforts which address the causes and consequences of violence**

- and consider volunteering to help with projects supporting reconciliation and peace-making in your church and community

(from an idea developed by the National Council of Churches in the USA)





Prayer and Worship Resources

An Advent liturgy

Journeying Together

 **Themes:** anticipation, courage, joy, presence

 **Readings used in liturgy:**

Isaiah 2:1-5

Isaiah 35:1-6

Psalm 146

Philippians 4:4-9

 This liturgy requires 4 purple candles and 1 white candle

Creation on our planet has faced many challenges, much disquiet, times of fear and terror, and presently times of war. As the community of Christ, we too face the challenge of our response to the events happening globally. The readings used for this liturgy have a clear message - our God, present in all things, is a God of justice and peace. If we are truly members of this community, then this must also be our goal. The future will not be easy, but as we journey together, we can find courage and companionship as we work together, with our God, for the transformation of creation. Peace be with you.



Liturgy

Gathering

We join together

Anticipating new ways

of being together

of seeking justice in our world

of finding peace in troubled times.

Acknowledging

our failure to act for change

the seeming hopelessness of world events

and the presence of our God with us.

God of justice and peace, your caring ways reach out to us at this time

Be present with us today

as we reflect on violence and injustice in our world, and our response to your call to bring peace.

Read: Philippians 4:4-9

[brief statement reflecting on reading - see notes in the *Reflection* section of this resource]

[time of silent reflection]

Litany of Longing - for peace and justice

Candle for the continuing presence of God [white]

We light a candle to acknowledge God's presence with us.

Be close to us, loving God, as you have been with people down through history.

In these uncertain times when we fear for our future

give us strength and resolve to act with honour and courage as bearers of your love.

Candle for seeking justice [purple]

Read: Psalm 146

We light a candle for justice.

Sustain us, God who protects as we strive to stand for justice.

Help us

to uphold the rights of the downtrodden to speak for those who are not allowed to speak

to welcome those who are seeking refuge.

Candle for peace [purple]

Read: Isaiah 2:1-5

We light a candle for peace.

Illuminate us, God of light and show us again

how we can live in peace.

Teach us

to walk together

to listen to your wisdom

to see in the faces of our sisters and brothers

the spark of your image.

DOV in Australia





Prayer and Worship Resources

Candle for replenishment and renewal
[purple] **Read:** Isaiah 35:1-6
We light a candle for replenishment and renewal.
Renew us, life-giving God
as a new creation
in harmony with your purposes.
Give us
strength when we are weak
courage when we are afraid
and joy when all we see are tears.

Candle for the journey [purple]
We light a candle for the journey.
Come with us, companion God -
for we dare not travel alone
and the way ahead may be dangerous.
We give you thanks
for those who journey with us -
keep us safe
as we prepare for your coming
and look towards a world of peace and justice.
Amen

Affirmation

We believe in God
everpresent and ever just and loving
under whose judgment the policies
and actions of all nations must pass.

We believe in God
made known to humanity in Jesus Christ
who showed concern for the welfare of
all persons everywhere
through actions which spoke of
justice, compassion and healing.

We believe in God
whose Spirit enlivens us
to see the divine presence in the whole
of creation
so that in community we can respond
to each other with dignity and honour
and in our living
respect the environment by which we are
nourished.

Prayers of the people

[Prayers are said for the gathered
community, and the current events of
the world]

Blessing

Remember
you are not alone
God is present with us.
Go out with expectation
and work towards a world
of peace and justice.

For you all
the blessing of God -
Nurturer of all humanity
Protector of all who are outcast
and Sustainer of all who require
strength.
Amen.



Adapted from the Advent Liturgy, written by
Colleen Geyer for the Gospel and Gender
unit, National Assembly, The Uniting Church
in Australia, 2001. Used by permission.





Prayer and Worship Resources

Recognising and Addressing Violence

Leader:

Our Christian tradition is no stranger to violence. We have fought wars in the name of Christ. We have sung hymns with violent and warlike language in the name of Christ.

We celebrate the martyrs of the church and worship the Crucified Christ. Yet in Christ God has reconciled the world to himself. We are aware of the need to work towards reconciliation and peace with each other; fully to become people in God's own image. As we do so let us acknowledge the past and where we fall short of love.

Voice One:

For the times we resort to aggression, violence and intolerance towards others.

ALL: Forgiving God, we seek wholeness

(a candle is extinguished)

Voice Two:

For the times we have caused pain in others either willingly or unknowingly.

ALL: Forgiving God, we seek wholeness

(a candle is extinguished)

Voice Three:

For the times we have watched and benefited from the violence of others.

ALL: Forgiving God, we seek wholeness

(a candle is extinguished)

Voice Four:

For the times we have remained apathetic to the violence in our society; standing back, being too afraid or too busy to become involved in helping those in need.

ALL: Forgiving God, we seek wholeness

(a candle is extinguished)

*Sounds of violence are heard
and time given for reflection*

Reading of Scripture

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Voice One:

Lord Jesus Christ, you assumed our poverty to transform it. We pray for those whose life is ground out of them by the violence of poverty; for those in our cities and towns, for those in distant lands, especially those living in countries burdened by international debt. To all these you have promised the kingdom of God. We pray for that kingdom and its coming. Maranatha!

(a candle is lit)

ALL: O Lord hear my prayer: when I call answer me. O Lord hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer: come and listen to me.

Voice Two:

Loving God, you gave your prophet a vision of the day when swords will be turned into ploughshares. Our hearts ache as we remember before you the casualties of war: civilians, soldiers, rivers and forests, and all your creatures. We look now to that day when war will be no more, and you will split the full metal jacket of our hearts to reveal living hearts for peace.





Prayer and Worship Resources

(a candle is lit)

ALL: O Lord hear my prayer...

Voice Three:

Accepting God, you inspired your apostle Paul with a vision for our world: a world in which there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female. May we, your creation who are so prone to reacting brutally to differences, may we be inspired with Paul's vision. Teach us not to identify and evaluate each other by our differences, but to see each other as you see us in Christ Jesus, whole and complete. For those cultural groups in which racial hatred and violence are traditionally intrinsic, we ask that you would uncompromisingly use us as salt and light for change. Inspire us with courage, lead us with patience and use us with persistence.

(a candle is lit)

ALL: O Lord hear my prayer...

Voice Four:

God of peace, it is inconceivable that a country which is so proudly cultured and sophisticated, should be so ready to inflict injury on its own members. We hear of the obscene violence inflicted upon women, children, the elderly and other, vulnerable, people and it sickens us. How you must weep. The very relationships which should promise supreme safety become putrid prisons for the powerless. Help us to end it. Give safety to those who experience violence within relationships, and repentant shame to those who perpetrate that violence.

(a candle is lit)

ALL: O Lord hear my prayer...

(Adapted from the liturgy used to launch the Decade to Overcome Violence in South Australia, written for the South Australian Council of Churches, October 2001)

The cross is the hope of the hopeless.
The cross is the freedom of the slaves.
The cross is the water of the seeds.
The cross is the consolation of the bonded labourers.
The cross is the source of those who seek water.
The cross is the cloth of the naked.
The cross is the healing of the broken.
The cross is the peace of the church.
(St.Yared, Ethiopia)

