

# Justice and Reconciliation

*NOTE: This document provides drafts of selected materials prepared for the section on Justice and Reconciliation in a forthcoming revision to the Book of Common Worship (WJKP, 2018). Used with permission.*

God sends the Church to work for justice in the world: exercising its power for the common good; dealing honestly in personal and public spheres; seeking dignity and freedom for all people; welcoming strangers in the land; promoting justice and fairness in the law; overcoming disparities between rich and poor; bearing witness against systems of violence and oppression; and redressing wrongs against individuals, groups, and peoples. God also sends the Church to seek peace: in the Church universal, within denominations, and at the congregational level; in the world, where nations and religious or ethnic groups make war against one another; and in local communities, schools, workplaces, neighborhoods, and homes. These acts of peacemaking and justice are established upon God's gracious act of reconciliation with us in Jesus Christ, and are a way of participating in Christ's priestly intercession or advocacy for the world.

In the Service for the Lord's Day we proclaim, receive, and enact reconciliation with God in Christ. Through the proclamation of the Word we are given the assurance of freedom and peace in Christ and are inspired to share these gifts with others. Through Baptism and the Lord's Supper we are united with Christ, made one in the Spirit, and empowered to break down the dividing walls of hostility that still separate us from one another. We confess our participation in unjust systems, pray for an end to violence and injustice, offer our gifts to support Christ's liberating work, and commit ourselves to pursue peace and justice in Jesus' name.

(Directory for Worship, W-5.0304)

Any time we gather for worship, we are called to proclaim the righteousness and justice of God, seek the peace of Jesus Christ, and pray for the reconciling work of the Holy Spirit. Yet particular events in a church, the local community, or the world may call for special times of prayer for justice, peace, and reconciliation. In the wake of acts of violence, denials of justice, bitter debates, or contested decisions, it is fitting for us to seek the abiding presence and transforming power of the liberating Lord.

When unjust actions occur, it may be enough simply to gather—perhaps to sit in silence, to light candles, or to sing. When a more elaborate service of prayer for justice and peace is desired, one of the orders of worship provided below may help communities to practice lament, speak hard truths, name conflicts, and give voice to disappointment or anger.

The services include the reading of scripture; they may also include a brief sermon or a time of testimony. The prayers in these services call for justice as well as peace, and are voiced in a way that invites the participation of all who are gathered for worship. When Christians gather and pray with neighbors of other faiths or no faith, we are called to offer a faithful and authentic account of our hope in Christ, while being respectful of the beliefs and hospitable to the practices of others.

## SERVICE FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

### ORDER OF WORSHIP

Opening Sentences  
Hymn, Psalm or Spiritual Song  
Prayer  
Readings from Scripture  
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song  
Prayer of Lament  
Offering  
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song  
Blessing and Charge

This service is designed for use in a time of controversy or crisis, when people gather to pray for God's justice and peace in the community, church, and world. Planners of worship will want to adapt and expand on these resources according to particular circumstances and concerns.

### OPENING SENTENCES

*All may stand as one of the following, or another verse from scripture appropriate to the occasion is said.*

- 1** Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord:  
**Hear our voice and answer our prayers!** Ps. 130:1-2
- 2** The word of the Lord is like fire in my bones;  
**I am weary with holding it in.** Jer. 20:9
- 3** What does the Holy One require of us?  
**To do justice, to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with our God.** Mic. 6:8

### HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG

*For hymn suggestions, see below.*

### PRAYER

*This or another prayer appropriate to the occasion is said; or a prayer of confession may be said.*

Mighty and merciful God,  
lover of justice and equity,  
you call us to support the weak,  
to help those who suffer,  
and to honor all people.  
By the power of your Holy Spirit,  
make us advocates for your justice  
and instruments of your peace,  
so that all may be reconciled  
in your beloved community;  
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

### READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

*For suggested readings from scripture, see below.*

*A brief sermon or time of testimony may follow the reading of scripture.*

## HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG

*For hymn suggestions, see below.*

## PRAYER OF LAMENT

*The following model for prayer is to be adapted for particular situations.*

*This prayer may be led at the baptismal font.*

Gracious God, by day and night  
we pour out our prayer to you.

We are crying out for justice,  
yearning for what is right,  
longing for your peace.

Come quickly to help us, O God;  
save those who call upon your name.

*Specific laments are spoken. After each lament, the leader and people may say:*

. . . and your people cry: **How long, O Lord?**

*A time of silence may follow each lament and response.*

*These phrases may be used as models for statements of lament:*

*We hear of hateful violence and senseless killing . . .  
We feel the suffering, sorrow, and shame of the oppressed . . .  
We fear that justice will again be delayed or denied . . .  
We recognize patterns of privilege and systems of discrimination . . .  
We see your creation destroyed by carelessness and greed . . .  
We weep for the victims of . . .  
We grieve in the aftermath of . . .  
We pray for an end to . . .  
We long for a day when . . .  
We learn of the death of N. . . .  
We remember the deaths of N., N., and N. . . .*

*The prayer concludes with these or similar words:*

Gracious God, keep us working and praying for the day  
when your justice will roll down like waters,  
and your righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Replenish our strength and stir up our hope  
as we look for signs of your coming reign.

And fill us with the peace that passes understanding—  
the deep peace of Jesus Christ our Savior,  
in whose holy name we pray. **Amen.**

*If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the Lord's Prayer may be spoken or sung here.*

## OFFERING

*The offering may include a collection to support work for justice and reconciliation, or symbolic expressions of solidarity or resistance.*

*If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, it is included here.*

**HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG**

*For hymn suggestions, see below.*

**BLESSING AND CHARGE**

*The service may end with this or another blessing and charge, or in silence.*

Beloved people of God—  
whatever is true, whatever is honorable,  
whatever is just, whatever is pure,  
whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,  
anything that is excellent and worthy of praise—  
keep on doing these things,  
and the God of peace will be with you.  
**Alleluia! Amen.**

*Phil. 4:8–9*

## ADDITIONAL TEXTS

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

#### *For communities affected by violence:*

Gen. 32:22–32	Jacob wrestles at Peniel and seeks a blessing
1 Kgs. 19:1–13	Fleeing for his life, Elijah meets God in the silence
Job 23	Job’s bitter complaint: I lay my case before God
Ps. 22	My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Ps. 23:4–6	Though I walk through the valley, I fear no evil
Ps. 30	Weeping may linger, but joy comes in the morning
Ps. 46	God is in the midst of the city; the Lord is with us
Ps. 74	A lament after the destruction of the temple
Ps. 88	God of my salvation, why do you cast me off?
Ps. 120	I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war
Ps. 130	Out of the depths I cry; my soul waits for the Lord
Ps. 137	By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept
Eccl. 3:1–8	For everything there is a season; a time for peace
Hab. 3:17–19	Though the fig tree does not blossom, I will rejoice
Isa. 41:10–13	Do not fear, for I am with you; I am your God
Isa. 35	A way through the wilderness for God’s people
Jer. 17:14–18	Heal me and save me, O Lord; let your word come
Ezek. 37:1–14	In the valley of dry bones, God gives new life
Matt. 2:7–18	A voice was heard: Rachel weeping for her children
Matt. 27:45–54	The death of Jesus; truly this was God’s Son!
Mark 16:1–8	The resurrection of Jesus; women at the tomb
Luke 23:26–31	Jesus says: Weep for yourselves and your children
2 Cor. 4:7–12	Treasure in clay jars; struck down but not destroyed
Rev. 21:1–4	A new creation; death and mourning will be no more
Rev. 22:1–5	Trees by the river of life, with leaves for healing

#### *For justice and reconciliation:*

Isa. 2:2–5	They will beat their swords into plowshares
Isa. 11:1–9	God’s peaceful realm; they will not hurt or destroy
Isa. 58:1–14	The fast God chooses is the pursuit of justice
Amos 5:14–15, 21–24	Seek good and not evil; let justice roll like waters
Mic. 6:1–8	Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God
Matt. 5:1–12	The Beatitudes; blessed are the peacemakers
Matt. 25:31–46	Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty?
Luke 4:16–21	God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor
2 Cor. 5:16–6:10	God has given us the ministry of reconciliation
Eph. 2:13–22	Christ breaks down the dividing wall of hostility

### HYMNS, PSALMS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS

#### *Related to violence:*

*See GTG 775–800, Lament and Longing for Healing section. Other hymns include:*

GTG 86	The People Who Walked in Darkness
GTG 87; PH 3	Comfort, Comfort Now My People
GTG 88; PH 9	O Come, O Come Emmanuel

GTG 177	I Will Come to You
GTG 183	Come to Me, O Weary Traveler
GTG 184	Calm to the Waves
GTG 195; PH 547	When Twilight Comes
GTG 206	This is the Night, vv. 1 and 5
GTG 210 ; PH 168	Lord, Why Have You Forsaken Me (Ps. 22)
GTG 247	Now the Green Blade Rises
GTG 314	Longing for Light
GTG 329; PH 191	God Is Our Refuge and Our Strength (Ps. 46)
GTG 353; PH 379	My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less
GTG 392	Jesus, We Are Here
GTG 424; PH 240	Out of the Depths (Ps. 130)
GTG 463; PH 361	How Firm a Foundation
GTG 465; PH 403	What a Friend We Have in Jesus
GTG 470	There Is a Longing in Our Hearts
GTG 474	As a Child Rests (Ps. 131)
GTG 649; PH 280	Amazing Grace
GTG 809; PH 406	Why Has God Forsaken Me?
GTG 834; PH 404	Precious Lord, Take My Hand
GTG 836; PH 543	Abide with Me
GTG 840	When Peace like a River

*Related to justice and reconciliation:*

*See GTG 749–774, Justice and Reconciliation section. Other hymns include:*

GTG 373; PH 450	O Day of Peace
GTG 378	We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom
GTG 746	Send Me, Jesus / <i>Thuma mina</i>
GTG 747	The Lord Now Sends Us Forth / <i>Enviado soy de Dios</i>
GTG 749	Come! Live in the Light! / We Are Called
GTG 750	Goodness Is Stronger than Evil
GTG 751	From the Nets of Our Labor / We Will Rise Up and Follow
GTG 753	Make Me a Channel of Your Peace / Prayer of St. Francis
GTG 757; PH 434	Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples
GTG 759; PH 385	O God, We Bear the Imprint
GTG 761; PH 343	Called as Partners in Christ's Service
GTG 762; PH 407	When the Poor Ones / <i>Cuando el pobre</i>
GTG 763	The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor (Ps. 82)
GTG 764	For the Troubles and the Sufferings / <i>Pelas dores deste mundo</i>
GTG 766	The Church of Christ Cannot Be Bound
GTG 769	For Everyone Born
GTG 770	I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table
GTG 772; PH 332	Live Into Hope
GTG 773	Heaven Shall Not Wait
GTG 787	God Weeps with Us Who Weep and Mourn
GTG 789	Jesus, Savior, Lord, Now I Come to You / <i>Saranam, saranam</i>
GTG 797	We Cannot Measure How You Heal
GTG 39; PH 276	Great Is Thy Faithfulness

*Contemplative choruses:*

GTG 90	Wait for the Lord (Ps. 27)
GTG 204	Stay with Me
GTG 227; PH 599	Jesus, Remember Me
GTG 294	Within Our Darkest Night

GTG 414	Be Still and Know That I Am God
GTG 466	Come and Fill Our Hearts
GTG 467	Give Us Light
GTG 471	O Lord, Hear My Prayer
GTG 678	Our Darkness Is Never Darkness in Your Sight

## PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

**1** Holy God, we confess that we have failed to stand with those crushed by systemic injustice. We have valued property and profits over the lives of people. Courts and public safety agencies enforce unequal justice. Struggling workers are displaced and pushed into homelessness. Public functions for the common good are privatized and deregulated. The cries of those who grieve are muffled. Victims are asked to forgive and reconcile even before their wounds can begin to heal. In its silence and inaction, the church is complicit in this unrighteousness. In your mercy, Holy God, help us to confess and repent of these sins. Lead us to cry out with the prophets, until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. Empower us to become repairers of the breach, able to join with the most vulnerable among us in making our communities livable again. In Jesus' holy name we pray.

**2** Creative and loving God, you have searched us out and known us and all that we are is open to you. We confess that we have sinned: we have put up walls between ourselves and you, closing our hearts to your gifts. We have failed to respect and honor the gifts you have given us in creation, earth and all living things. We squander the inheritance of generations to come.

We have sinned against each other: we have put up walls between ourselves and our neighbors, giving in to fear, ignorance, and arrogance. We are stained by the sin of racism and fail to respect the gifts of all your peoples.

We have used our power to dominate and our weakness to manipulate; we have evaded responsibility and failed to confront evil; we have trusted false gods and listened to their promises; we have denied dignity to ourselves and to each other;

we have fallen into deep despair.  
In our despair we have forgotten you,  
and have gone away from your path.

Forgive us for what we have done to hurt others  
and the ways we have hurt your earth.  
Give us your blessing and help.  
Let us walk in your great love;  
through the great peacemaker,  
your Son, Jesus Christ.

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*From the Confession of Belhar*

We believe in one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit,  
who gathers, protects and nourishes the Church  
from the beginning of the world to the end.  
**The Church is holy; the Church is universal;  
it is the fellowship of God's children,  
called together from the whole of humanity  
to proclaim God's wonderful deeds.**

We believe that the reconciling work of Christ  
gives birth to a uniting Church,  
because Church unity is a gift from God  
and a goal we need to strive for.  
**The unity of the Church must become visible  
so that the people around us can see  
how separation and hatred are overcome in Christ.**

We believe that genuine faith in Jesus Christ  
is the only condition for membership in this Christian church.  
**We praise God that race, class, gender, or culture  
does not determine who belongs to this Church.**

We believe that God has entrusted to the Church  
the message of reconciliation;  
and that the Church is called  
to proclaim and embody this reconciliation;  
to be peacemakers;  
and to believe and to witness that God conquers all powers  
of sin and death, of hate, bitterness and enmity,  
through his life-giving Word and Spirit.  
**We praise God that the gospel does not separate people  
on the basis of race, gender, class, or culture,  
but is the power of reconciliation in Christ.**

We believe that God wants to bring about true justice  
and lasting peace on earth;  
we believe that God is, in a special sense,  
the God of the suffering, the poor and the downtrodden.  
**We praise God who gives justice to the oppressed  
and bread to the hungry;  
who sets captives free and makes the blind to see;**



**who protects strangers, orphans and widows  
and obstructs the plans of the wicked.**

We believe that the Church belongs to God  
and that it should stand where God stands:  
against injustice and with those who are wronged  
**We commit ourselves to reject all forms of injustice  
in ourselves and amongst us;  
and to struggle against all forms of injustice  
and every teaching that allows injustices to flourish.**

We are called to confess and to do all this  
in obedience to Jesus Christ, our only Lord,  
even if authorities or laws oppose this,  
even if punishment and suffering may be the consequence.  
**Jesus is Lord! We will follow Him!  
To the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be honor and glory for ever and ever.**

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*1 The following model for prayer may be adapted for various situations. The sections in bold may be spoken by the one leading the prayers or by all.*

*This prayer may be led at the communion table.*

Holy God, we come before you in prayer  
hungering for justice,  
thirsting for righteousness,  
longing for peace.

*Rev. 7:9–17; 22:20*

We pray with a great multitude from every nation,  
from all tribes and peoples and languages.

We pray with saints of every time and place,  
those who have gone through the great ordeal . . .

*Names of saints, martyrs, civil rights leaders, and other witnesses for justice and peace may be included here.*

With all these faithful witnesses, we cry:  
**Salvation belongs to our God,  
who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!**

Now receive our prayers  
for justice, righteousness, and peace . . .

*A time of silence may follow each petition.*

That the hungry may be filled with good things . . .  
That the thirsty may be satisfied . . .  
That the oppressed may be set free . . .  
That the homeless may find shelter . . .  
That the sorrowful may be comforted . . .  
That enemies may be reconciled . . .  
That the world may know peace . . .

*Other specific petitions may be included here.*

*After each petition, leader and people may say:*

God of our salvation, **hear our prayer.**

Let the day quickly come  
when hunger and thirst will be no more,  
when suffering and sorrow will be no more,  
and you will wipe away every tear.

Until that day, keep us faithful—  
watching, working, and praying  
for the coming of your realm  
of justice, righteousness, and peace.

Then we will share the feast of salvation.  
Then we will rejoice around your throne, singing:

**Blessing and glory and wisdom  
and thanksgiving and honor  
and power and might  
be to our God forever and ever!**

All this we pray in the name  
of the one who has promised:  
Surely I am coming soon.  
**Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

*2 After an act of violence*

God of grace and peace,  
we pray for the city of \_\_\_\_\_  
and the people of [nation or state].

Help and heal the wounded,  
receive the dying into your embrace,  
and comfort those who mourn.

Strengthen rescue and relief workers  
who protect and provide for others  
in the midst of crisis and chaos.

Give leaders the wisdom and determination  
to understand the causes of hatred  
and prevent it from gaining force.

Put an end to all violence and war,  
and restrain the impulse  
to use injustice to seek justice.

Continue to pour out your mercy  
upon the victims of violence in  
[other places of recent violence],  
and all the places we forget or ignore.

Surround us all with your grace  
and bring peace to our weary world.  
This we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS

### *In Times of Disaster*

God of compassion,  
keep vigil with us this day.  
We grieve for the dead  
and pray for the wounded.  
We watch and wait with those  
who seek news about loved ones.  
We remember those who serve others—  
rescue workers and police officers,  
nurses and physicians,  
and volunteers of every kind.  
Fill them with your breath of life  
as they bind up the brokenhearted,  
heal bodies, and bury the dead.  
Enfold us all in your tender care  
as we entrust our lives to you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *In a Time of International Crisis*

Eternal God, our only hope,  
our help in times of trouble:  
show nations ways to work out differences.  
Do not let threats multiply  
or power be used without compassion.  
May your will overrule human willfulness,  
so that people may agree and settle claims peacefully.  
Hold back those who are impulsive,  
lest desire for vengeance overwhelm our common welfare.  
Bring peace to earth, through Jesus Christ,  
the Prince of Peace and Savior of us all. **Amen.**

### *During a National Crisis*

God of ages,  
in your sight nations rise and fall,  
and pass through times of peril.  
Now when our land is troubled,  
be near to judge and save.  
May leaders be led by your wisdom;  
may they search your will and see it clearly.  
If we have turned from your way,  
help us to reverse our ways and repent.  
Give us your light and your truth to guide us;  
through Jesus Christ,  
who is Lord of this world, and our Savior. **Amen.**

### *For Government Leaders*

O Lord, our governor,  
your glory shines throughout the world.  
We commend to your merciful care

our nation [state, community],  
that we may live securely in peace  
and may be guided by your providence.  
Give all in authority the wisdom and strength  
to know your will and to do it.  
Help them remember that  
they are called to serve the people  
as lovers of truth and justice;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*For State and Local Governments*

Almighty God,  
bless those who hold office  
in the government of this *state/city/town*,  
that they may do their work  
in a spirit of wisdom, kindness, and justice.  
Help them use their authority to serve faithfully  
and to promote the general welfare;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*At the Time of an Election*

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.**

*For Responsible Citizenship*

Lord, keep this nation under your care.  
Bless the leaders of our land,  
that we may be a people at peace among ourselves  
and a blessing to other nations of the earth.  
Help us elect trustworthy leaders,  
contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare,  
and thus serve you faithfully in our generation,  
to the honor of your holy name;  
through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

*For the Courts of Justice*

Almighty God,  
you sit in judgment to declare what is just and right.  
Bless the courts and the magistrates in our land.  
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
that they may perceive the truth  
and administer the law impartially  
as instruments of your divine will.  
We pray in the name of him

who will come to be our judge,  
your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *For Social Justice*

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

**2** You give us prophets, holy God,  
to cry out for justice and mercy.  
Open our ears to hear them,  
and to follow the truth they speak,  
lest we support injustice  
and seek to secure our own well-being.  
Give prophets the fire of your Word,  
but give them love as well.  
Though they are called to speak in your name,  
help them never to forget  
that they stand with us before you,  
and have no Messiah other than your Son,  
Jesus Christ, the Lord of all. **Amen.**

**3** O God,  
you have bound us together in a common life.  
Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth,  
to confront one another without hatred or bitterness,  
and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *For Racial and Cultural Diversity*

O God, you created all people in your image.  
We thank you for the astonishing variety  
of races and cultures in this world.  
Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of friendship,  
and show us your presence  
in those who differ most from us,  
until our knowledge of your love is made perfect  
in our love for all your children;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### *For the Human Family*

O God, you made us in your own image  
and redeemed us through Jesus your Son.  
Look with compassion on the whole human family,  
take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts,  
break down the walls that separate us,  
unite us in bonds of love,

and, through our struggle and confusion,  
work to accomplish your purposes on earth;  
that, in your good time,  
all nations and peoples may live in harmony;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*For Refugees and Migrants*

**1** Lord God, you cross every border  
between divinity and humanity  
to make your home with us.  
Help us to recognize your face  
in the refugee family,  
seeking safety and protection;  
in the migrant worker,  
bringing food to our tables;  
in the asylum-seeker,  
seeking security and compassion;  
in the unaccompanied child,  
traveling in a dangerous world.  
By the gift of your Holy Spirit,  
encourage and empower us  
to cross borders of our own—  
showing kindness, seeking justice,  
offering welcome, giving shelter.  
This we pray in the name of the one  
who fled as a child to Egypt,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**2** Holy God, as you have accompanied your people  
through times of captivity, wilderness, and exile,  
shelter and sustain all those who flee persecution,  
oppression, warfare, violence, hunger, and poverty.  
Open our hearts and homes, our gates and doors  
so that they might find safety, peace, and welcome—  
a place to live in freedom and without fear;  
through Jesus Christ, the hope of the world. **Amen.**

*For the Oppressed*

Look with compassion, O God,  
upon the people in this land  
who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death  
as their constant companions.  
Have mercy upon us.  
Help us to eliminate cruelty to these our neighbors.  
Strengthen those who spend their lives  
establishing equal protection of the law  
and equal opportunities for all.  
And grant that every one of us may enjoy  
a fair portion of the abundance of this land;  
through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*For Those Who Are Marginalized*

God of grace,  
no one is beyond the reach of your love,  
or outside your limitless mercy.  
Stand with those who are outcast, despised, and rejected;  
strengthen them in peace;  
encourage them by your presence;  
and use them to build on the cornerstone of Christ,  
until differences are honored and respected,  
and all people together give you glory. **Amen.**

*For Those Who Suffer for the Sake of Conscience*

God of love and strength,  
your Son forgave his enemies  
while he was suffering shame and death.  
Strengthen those who suffer for the sake of conscience.  
When they are accused, save them from speaking in hate;  
when they are rejected, save them from bitterness;  
when they are imprisoned, save them from despair.  
To us, your servants,  
give grace to respect their witness  
and to discern the truth,  
that our society may be cleansed and strengthened.  
This we ask for the sake  
of our merciful and righteous judge,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*For Enemies*

O God of all,  
as Christ commanded us to love our enemies,  
lead them and us from prejudice to truth;  
deliver them and us from hatred, cruelty, and revenge;  
and in your good time enable us all  
to stand reconciled before you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*For Just Work*

God, who labored creation into being,  
we give thanks for this day  
and the opportunity to work in your world.  
Grant us the strength to labor  
for what is right, just, and fair.  
Grant us the wisdom to speak out  
for those who are enslaved, oppressed, and exploited.  
Grant us the ability to break the chains of injustice  
and hear the voices of people long silenced.  
As we seek to work in your world this day,  
help us make it a better place for all.  
In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**