

## ***Prayers of Peace, Transformation and Justice***

*By E. K.M. Knappenberger, 2014*

This resource is intended to provide inspiration, aiding in the ministry calling of building God's peace which surpasses understanding (Phil. 4:7), blessing all the nations of the earth (Gen. 22:18). The prayer forms collected here are from a number of sources, and serve as a starting point for the prayerful journey into right relationship with God, self, neighbor and earth. Many of these prayers take a call-and-response form, and most are meant to be used in community worship settings. **Bold font indicates the response portion.**

These prayers are organized into three sections: Prayers for Transformation and Redemption, Prayers of Praise and Confessions, and Meditations on Peace & Justice. This resource is for use in worship, and is not copyrighted, but the authors may assert copy rights and reprinting rights of their respective contributions.

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## ***Prayers for Transformation and Redemption***

### ***Community Prayer for Transformation***

*E.K.M. Knappenberger, 2014*

Living God of Mercy, you feed friends and enemies alike. You instruct us in the ways of righteousness.

**Grant that we may act as messengers of your salvation, Lord.**

Living God of Justice, you invest us with the Holy Spirit. You create us in your holy image.

**Teach us how to live with ourselves and our neighbors, Lord.**

Living God of Peace, you promise wholeness to all creation, and you tell of a time when the lion and the lamb shall live in harmony.

**Strengthen us in the life of the spirit, Lord.**

Living God of Mercy, you know the thoughts of our hearts, and from you nothing is hidden.

**Help us to know ourselves, Lord.**

Living God of Justice, you will redeem all those who serve the powers and principalities, through your transforming grace.

**Give them new hearts to know your love, Lord.**

Living God of Peace, you promise to dwell among us in the New Jerusalem.

**Come and sanctify this place, Lord.**

**[All:] Make us vehicles of your peace, and grant us mercy, justice and peace. Amen.**

### ***Invocation***

*Adapted from Jaci Maraschin*

Come to be our hope, O Jesus, come to set your people free.

**From oppression, come, release us, let us turn to life in Thee.**

Come release from every prison those who suffer in our land.

**In your love we find the reason still to live and understand.**

Come to build your new creation through the road to servanthood;

**Give new life to every nation, changing evil into good.**

Come and open our tomorrow for a realm, now, so near.

**Take away all human sorrow, give us hope against our fear.**

### ***Ojibway Prayer for Redemption***

*Matthew and Gail Tittle, 2010*

Grandfather,

Look at our brokenness.

We know that in all creation

Only the human family

Has strayed from the Sacred Way.

We know that we are the ones

Who are divided,

And we are the ones

Who must come back together  
To walk the sacred way.  
Grandfather,  
Sacred One,  
Teach us love, compassion and honor  
That we may heal the earth  
And heal each other.

### ***Litany for Redemption***

*Adapted from Larry Egly, Mennonite Church USA weekly prayers for peace*

God of Peace, hear our prayer. We give thanks to you for moving in the hearts of soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen.

**[Refrain:] We thank you, God of Peace, for the voices of peace crying in the wilderness.**

Thank you for those who counsel service members on the path to peace.

**[refrain]**

Thank you for the lawyers who defend our service persons from their institutions.

**[refrain]**

Thank you for those service persons and veterans who organize and educate others in the ways of peace.

**[refrain]**

Thank you for the civilians publicly standing for peace and against war.

**[refrain]**

God of Peace, we pray that your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as in heaven.

**[All:] We thank you, God of Peace, for the voices of peace crying in the wilderness. Amen.**

### ***Prayer to Our Peace***

*Christian Parks, 2014*

Our Peace,

Give us the strength to live out your call for peace in our world.

Remind us that your love and grace reaches beyond our understanding.

Give us a spirit of love in supporting those who have felt called to war in the name of peace.

Forgive our sin of exclusion and lack of grace.

Energize and invigorate Christ's message of peace in our daily lives

In the name of Christ who is our peace,

Amen.

### ***Litany of Resistance***

*Adapted from Jim Loney, as used by Christian Peacemaker Teams since 1991*

Let us pray – You have learned how it is said

**Love your neighbor and hate your enemy**

But I say this to you who are listening

**Love your enemies**

Do good to those who hate you  
**Bless those who curse you**  
Be compassionate  
**Judge not**  
Do not condemn  
**Grant pardon**  
Because the amount you measure out  
**Is the amount you will be given back**  
Let everything you do  
**Be done in love**  
Blessed are the poor  
**For theirs is the kingdom of God**  
Blessed are they who mourn now  
**For they will be comforted**  
Blessed are the meek  
**For they will inherit the earth**  
Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for justice  
**For they will be satisfied**  
Blessed are the merciful  
**For they will be shown mercy**  
Blessed are the pure in heart  
**For they will see God**  
Blessed are the peacemakers  
**For they will be called the daughters and sons of God**  
Blessed are they who are persecuted because of righteousness  
**For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.** [pause]  
Deliver us, O God  
**Guide our feet in the ways of your peace.**  
In humility, we ask  
**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.**  
In humility, we ask  
**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
**Have mercy on us**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
**Free us from the bondage of sin and death**  
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world  
**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.** [pause]  
For the victims of war  
**Have mercy**  
Women, men and children  
**Have mercy**  
The maimed and the crippled  
**Have mercy**  
The abandoned and the homeless  
**Have mercy**  
The imprisoned and the tortured  
**Have mercy**  
The widowed and the orphaned  
**Have mercy**  
The bleeding and the dying  
**Have mercy**  
The weary and the desperate

**Have mercy**

The lost and the forsaken

**Have mercy**

For those fleeing in terror

**Have mercy** [pause]

For our scorched and blackened earth

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For the scandal of billions wasted in war

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For our leaders who wage war in our name

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For our Caesars and our Herods

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For our generals and tacticians

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For the men and women in battle

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For the men and women training for war

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For the scientists and researchers

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For the arms dealers and the merchants of death

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

For our taxes that fund the evil of war

**Forgive us for we know not what we do**

Deliver us, O God

**Guide our feet into the ways of peace**

In humility, we ask

**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.** [pause]

From the arrogance of power

**Deliver us**

From the poverty of violence

**Deliver us**

From the tyranny of greed

**Deliver us**

From the ugliness of racism

**Deliver us**

From the politics of hypocrisy

**Deliver us**

From the hysteria of nationalism

**Deliver us**

From the cancer of hatred

**Deliver us**

From the seduction of wealth

**Deliver us**

From the addiction of control

**Deliver us**

From the avarice of imperialism

**Deliver us**

From the idolatry of national security

**Deliver us**

From the despair of fatalism

**Deliver us**

From the violence of apathy

**Deliver us**

From the filth of war

**Deliver us**

From the profanity of war

**Deliver us**

From the necessity of war

**Deliver us**

From the madness of war

**Deliver us**

From the blasphemy of war

**Deliver us**

From the brutality of war

**Deliver us**

From the demonic waste of war and of preparation for war

**Deliver us**

Deliver us, O God

**All: Guide our feet into the ways of peace**

In humility, we ask

**Hear our prayer. Grant us peace.** [pause]

Obedience to God comes before obedience to human authority

**Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's**

Let your will be done, not mine

**With the help of God's grace**

Let us resist and confront evil everywhere we find it

**With the help of God's grace**

With the waging of war

**We will not comply**

With all preparation and training for war

**We will not comply**

With the forces of fear

**We will not comply**

With the legalization of murder

**We will not comply**

With the legalization of genocide

**We will not comply**

With laws that betray human life

**We will not comply**

With the bombing of civilians

**We will not comply**

With the bombing of cities

**We will not comply**

With the violating of our earth

**We will not comply**

With the destruction of peoples

**We will not comply**

With the raping of women

**We will not comply**

With governments that are blind to the sanctity of life

**We will not comply**

With economic structures that impoverish and dehumanize

**We will not comply**

With the manipulation and control of public information

**We will not comply**

With economics that manufacture instruments of death

**We will not comply**

With economics that practice the use of instruments of death

**We will not comply**

With the perpetuation of violence

**We will not comply**

With structures that divide rich from poor

**We will not comply**

With the hypocrisy of political maneuvering

**We will not comply**

With the help of God's grace

**We will struggle for justice**

With the compassion of Christ

**We will stand for what is true**

With God's abiding kindness

**We will love even our enemies**

With the love of Christ

**We will resist all evil**

With God's unending faithfulness

**We will work to build the beloved community**

With Christ's passionate love

**We will carry the cross**

With God's overwhelming goodness

**We will walk as pilgrims of peace**

With Christ's fervent conviction

**We will labour for truth**

With God's infinite mercy

**We will live in solidarity with all people**

In the end there are three things that last

**Faith, hope and love, and the greatest of these is love**

Let us abide in God's love

**Thanks be to God.**

***Creator, Open Our Hearts***

*Adapted from Alycia Longriver, 1995*

**Creator, open our hearts**

to peace and healing between all people.

**Creator, open our hearts**

to provide and protect for all children of the earth.

**Creator, open our hearts**

to respect for the earth, and all the gifts of the earth.

**Creator, open our hearts**

to end exclusion, violence, and fear among all.

**[All:] Thank-you for the gifts of this day and every day.**

## ***Memorial Day Prayer***

*Rev. Joana Harader, Peace Mennonite Church, 2012*

God of Life,

We mourn the culture of death in our country:  
where our entertainment glorifies—even enacts—violence,  
where over three thousand people sit on death row,  
where even Christian preachers suggest brutalizing those they disapprove of,  
where drone strikes are considered necessary for national security.

God of Justice,

We decry the unjust ways of our nation's military:  
where the poor are lured into danger by promises of a better life,  
where a few at the top make money off of the deaths of others,  
where the very best virtues of many young men and women are warped into violence,  
where so many who have served and sacrificed are discarded and forgotten.

God of Comfort,

We pray for your presence to surround all affected by warfare:  
be with military personnel on every side—protect their bodies and their souls,  
be with all who are caught in the midst of violence—citizens of Iraq, Afghanistan, and many other places,  
be with wives, husbands, children, and parents of those in harm's way,  
be with those who grieve the death of someone they dearly love.

God of Hope,

We give thanks for the peacemakers in our midst:  
for those in government who speak against policies of violence,  
for those in organizations that work for peace, that engage in service around the world,  
for those who write and speak and act towards life and love and justice and peace,  
for those who teach our children their own worth and the worth of all people.

God of Power,

Bring forth the reality of your promise:  
that we will beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks;  
that nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will we train for war anymore.

In the meantime, God, let us walk in your light,  
that we might see  
the small turnings,  
the next steps toward life,  
the small acts of peace that catch in the light and shine.

Amen.

## ***A Prayer for Offense***

*John Fairfield, 2014*

Dear spirit of Jesus

Who dared to offend your family, your friends, the stranger, the proud and the powerful  
At the same time as you communed with them at table,  
We ask for your grace to live out our conflicts within our community

Refusing to abandon each other  
As you have never abandoned us  
Your offenders.

### ***Litany for Peace***

*By Linda Friern and Tony Bartlett, The Fire of Peace*

Let us pray to Jesus Christ that we may be set free  
from the chains of violence and war.

Jesus the Christ, by your cross and resurrection

**... deliver us.**

by your nonviolence and love

by your witness to truth

by your passion and death

by your victory over the grave

from the desire for power

from the conspiracy of silence

from the negation of life

from the worship of weapons

from the celebration of killing

from the slaughter of the innocent

from the extermination of the weak

from the nightmare of hunger

from the politics of terror

from a false peace

from relying on weapons

from the spiral of armaments

from plundering the earth's resources

from the despair of this age

from global suicide.

By the light of the Gospel

**... give us your peace.**

by the good news for the poor

by your healing and wounds

by faith in your word

by a hunger and thirst for justice

by the coming of your reign

by the outpouring of the Spirit

by reconciliation of enemies

by gentleness and nonviolence

by the truth that sets us free

by prophecy and witness

by persecution because of your name

by the power of your love.

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,

**... have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,

**... have mercy on us.**

Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world,

**... grant us peace.**

***Prayer for Forgiveness and Transformation***

*Rev. Brian Martin-Burkholder, Harrisonburg, Virginia*

Ever present God,  
In the midst of deep pain and brokenness from a world gone wrong,  
In the context of warring within and between peoples,  
In a dynamic of corporate and political greed and power ...  
We ask for forgiveness for our complicity,  
For redemption opening the way to a better future,  
And for healing making possible a healthier now.  
Amen

***A Memorial Day Lament***

*Adapted from Andrew Seaman, 2014*

God, we come to you in lamentation.

We plead, "How Long, O Lord?"

**How long shall country rise against country?**

How long shall leaders rise against leaders?

**How long shall the men and women run off to battle?**

How long shall bombs and terror destroy lives?

**How long shall we live in fear of more violence?**

How long shall wickedness, discord, and chaos rule?

**How long shall we have to endure the evils of war?**

How long, O Lord?

When will the swords be beaten into plowshares?

**How long, O Lord?**

When will righteousness prevail on the earth?

**How long, O Lord?**

When will justice and right judgment rule from on high?

**When Lord?**

May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. **Amen.**

## ***Prayers of Praise and Confession***

### ***Community Confession and Prayer for Guidance***

*E.K.M. Knappenberger, 2014*

Holy and Almighty God, you take away all sin, demonstrating to your children the truth of your peaceful reign, granting mercy with your unsearchable justice, and blessing us with grace in your timeless love.

Father we abide in you as your son our savior Christ abides in and among us. Before he was raised up in the ultimate triumph over the violence of the world, he taught us the ways of your love. Through him you gave us the gift of peace so that we might do the work of your kingdom in the world. Give us again what we need and show us the work that we might do. We ask humbly in the name of Jesus, Amen.

### ***Prayer for Peace***

*Jack Knox, Salem Mennonite Church, 2010*

Gracious Lord, we dream of a world free of poverty and oppression,  
and we yearn for a world free of vengeance and violence.  
we pray for your peace.

When our hearts ache for the victims of war and oppression,  
help us to remember that you healed people simply by touching them,  
and give us faith in our ability to comfort and heal bodies and minds and spirits  
that have been broken by violence.

When the injustice of this world seems too much for us to handle,  
help us to remember that you fed five thousand people  
with only five loaves of bread and two fish,  
and give us hope that what we have to offer will turn out to be enough, too.

When fear of the power and opinions of others  
tempts us not to speak up for the least among us,  
help us to remember that you dared to turn over the tables of money changers,  
and give us the courage to risk following you without counting the cost.

When we feel ourselves fill with anger at those who are violent and oppressive,  
help us remember that you prayed for those who killed you,  
and give us compassion for our enemies, too.

When we tell ourselves that we have given all we can to bring peace to this world,  
help us to remember your sacrifice,  
and give us the miracle of losing a little more of ourselves  
in serving you and our neighbors.

Walk with us, Lord, as we answer your call to be peacemakers.  
Increase our compassion, our generosity and our hospitality for the least of your children.  
Give us the courage, the patience, the serenity, the self-honesty  
and the gentleness of spirit that are needed in a world filled with turmoil and terror. Amen.

## ***Community Confession for American National Holidays***

*E.K.M. Knappenberger, 2014*

Living God of mercy, we confess that we have not upheld the ways of your Son, Jesus, as we have lived in times of plentitude.

**We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves, Lord.**

Living God of mercy, we confess that we have benefitted directly and indirectly from the violence done between nations, classes, races and genders.

**We have turned our faces away from you, Lord.**

Living God of mercy, we confess that our hearts have often been filled with pride and greed.

**We have not sought you with all our hearts, Lord.**

Living God of mercy, we confess that we have not given ourselves fully to the work of your peace in the world.

**We have left undone the work of redemption, Lord.**

Living God of mercy, we confess that we have judged our neighbors falsely.

**We have not fully embodied the light of your truth, Lord.**

Prince of Peace, help us to remember this day and always that you are the wonderful counselor to whom the nations look for healing and redemption. As you brought your people up from the land of slavery in order to make them a nation of priests, free us from the slaveries of addiction and reliance on systems of violence, and sanctify us as agents of your domination-free order. In your name we pray, **Amen.**

## ***Litany of Confession***

*Adapted from Christine Longhurst, 2008*

Merciful God, when we see the brokenness and violence of our world, it is tempting to point a finger of blame at others. Yet we know that we are not blameless: we also contribute to the brokenness and pain of our world. In your mercy, hear our prayer of confession.

When we harbour anger and impatience in our own hearts...

**forgive us, O God.**

When we allow grievances and jealousies to destroy our relationships with others...

**forgive us, O God.**

When we fail to act with love toward one another, even those within our own church community...

**forgive us, O God.**

When we harbour hidden prejudices against those who are different from us...

**forgive us, O God.**

When we hesitate to act or speak out against violence and injustice...

**forgive us, O God.**

When we hold tight to what we have, even though so many in our world do not have enough...

**forgive us, O God.**

You have called us to be peacemakers, to continue the reconciling ministry of Jesus Christ. Remove from us all those things which would prevent us from being true agents of reconciliation in our broken world.

**[All:] Through our lives, and by our prayers,  
may your kingdom come,  
and your will be done,  
on earth, as it is in heaven. Amen.**

## ***Sending Prayer***

*Adapted from Cindy Pile, Our Prayers Rise Like Incense*

We stand here, loving God, freed from our bondage, filled with the fire of your love and with the waters of your passion for peace. The fire of love burns deep in our hearts and the waters move deep in our souls.

We stand here before you reborn, made new, renewed in spirit and recommitted to the priesthood of all believers. We stand as witnesses to the struggle for peace and justice, and for those who cry out for an end to their anguish.

Send us forth as your servants, your instruments, your presence in our world. We ask all of this in the name of the one who walked this path before us.

**[All:] Amen.**

## ***Meditations on Peace & Justice***

### ***Congregational Prayer***

*E.K.M. Knappenberger, 2014*

God of Righteousness,  
You send away the full from your table;

**In our hunger for Justice, let us be empty for your spirit.**

You uplift the weak, reclaiming what was forsaken;

**In our weakness, let our hearts be open to your presence.**

You visit us as a stranger, offering us unexpected blessings;

**In our blindness, make the light of your presence known to our eyes.**

May God grant you the peace that surpasses all understanding, as you seek him in all things.

**Amen.**

### ***Prayer for Peace***

*Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan, 1921*

Send Thy peace O Lord, which is  
perfect and everlasting,  
that our souls may radiate peace.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we  
may think, act and speak harmoniously.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we  
may be contented and thankful for  
Thy bountiful gifts.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that amidst  
our worldly strife, we may enjoy Thy bliss.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that we  
may endure all, tolerate all, in the thought of  
Thy grace and mercy.

Send Thy peace O Lord, that our lives  
may become a Divine vision and in Thy light,  
all darkness may vanish.

Send Thy peace O Lord, our Father and Mother,  
that we Thy children on Earth may all  
unite in one family.

### ***Prayer for a New Society***

*From Pax Christi USA and Christian Peacemaker Teams*

All-nourishing God, your children cry for help  
Against the violence of our world;  
Where children starve for bread and feed on weapons;  
Starve for vision and feed on drugs;  
Starve for love and feed on videos;  
Starve for peace and die murdered in our streets.

Creator God, timeless preserver of resources,  
Forgive us for the gifts that we have wasted.  
Renew for us what seems beyond redemption;  
Call order and beauty to emerge again from chaos.  
Convert our destructive power into creative service;

Help us to heal the woundedness of our world.  
Liberating God, release us from the demons of violence.

Free us today from the disguised demon of deterrence  
That puts guns by our pillows and missiles in our skies.

Free us from all demons that blend and blunt our spirits;  
Cleanse us from all justifications for violence and war;  
Open our narrowed hearts to the suffering and the poor.

Abiding God, loving renewer of human spirit,  
Unfold our violent fists into peaceful hands:  
Stretch our sense of family to include our neighbors;  
Stretch our sense of neighbor to include our enemies  
Until our response to you finally respects and embraces  
All creation as precious sacraments of your presence.

Hear the prayer of all your starving children.  
Amen.

### ***A Prayer for the World***

*Rabbi Harold Kushner, 2003*

Let the rain come and wash away  
the ancient grudges, the bitter hatreds  
held and nurtured over generations.  
Let the rain wash away the memory  
of the hurt, the neglect.  
Then let the sun come out and  
fill the sky with rainbows.  
Let the warmth of the sun heal us  
wherever we are broken.  
Let it burn away the fog so that  
we can see each other clearly.  
So that we can see beyond labels,  
beyond accents, gender or skin color.  
Let the warmth and brightness  
of the sun melt our selfishness.

So that we can share the joys and  
feel the sorrows of our neighbors.  
And let the light of the sun  
be so strong that we will see all  
people as our neighbors.  
Let the earth, nourished by rain,  
bring forth flowers  
to surround us with beauty.  
And let the mountains teach our hearts  
to reach upward to heaven.

Amen.

### ***Hear My Voice, Creator***

*Pope John Paul II*

To you, creator of nature and humanity, of truth and beauty, I pray:

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of the victims of all wars and violence among individuals and nations.

Hear my voice, for it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer when people put their faith in weapons and war.

Hear my voice, when I beg you to instill into the hearts of all human beings the wisdom of peace, the strength of justice and the joy of fellowship.

Hear my voice, for I speak for the multitudes in every country and every period of history who do not want war and are ready to walk the road of peace.

Hear my voice, and grant insight and strength so that we may always respond to hatred with love, to injustice with total dedication to justice, to need with sharing of self, to war with peace.

O God, hear my voice, and grant unto the world your everlasting peace.

### ***Wage Peace***

*Judyth Hill, 9/12/2001*

Wage peace with your breath.  
Breathe in firemen and rubble, breathe out  
whole buildings and flocks of redwing blackbirds.  
Breathe in terrorists and breathe out sleeping  
children and freshly mown fields.

Breathe in confusion and breathe out maple trees.  
Breathe in the fallen and breathe out lifelong friendships intact.  
Wage peace with your listening: hearing sirens, pray loud.  
Remember your tools: flower seeds, clothes pins, clean rivers.  
Make soup.

Play music, learn the word for thank you in three languages.  
Learn to knit, and make a hat.  
Think of chaos as dancing raspberries, imagine grief as the  
outbreath of beauty or the gesture of fish.

Swim for the other side.  
Wage peace.  
Never has the world seemed so fresh and precious.  
Have a cup of tea and rejoice.  
Act as if armistice has already arrived.  
Don't wait another minute.