

Poor People's Campaign

Disciples Liturgical Tool Kit

Trinity Sunday – First Sunday After Pentecost

May 27, 2018

A group of Disciples are working together to provide liturgical resources for our congregations during the six Sundays during the 40-Days of action. Here are some materials for Pentecost Sunday, where we begin Week 3 of the Poor People's Campaign which will be [The War Economy: Militarism and the Proliferation of Gun Violence](#), so look for opportunities to address these themes in your worship on Sunday and public witness on Monday. With the prophetic leadership of Rev. Terri Hord Owens and Rev. Dr. William Barber II, God has raised up a holy remnant of Disciples of Christ who are willing to stand in the gap and be repairers of the breach, uniting people across the lines of deep difference to restore the soul of America.

Worship Resources

Hymns

Here I Am, Lord

O For A World

Down By The Riverside

Chalice Hymnal hymns: 673-680

Prayers

Here is a prayer from <https://themennonite.org/feature/jesus-gun-violence/>

Today, we pray for the victims of gun violence in our city and that their suffering can bring about change. Together we pray, God, grant us peace. Heal our broken hearts with your love.

Today, we pray for comfort and healing for the communities torn apart by violence. Together we pray, God, grant us peace. Heal our broken hearts with your love.

Today, we pray for wisdom for the politicians and activists advocating for stricter gun regulations.

Together we pray, God, grant us peace. Heal our broken hearts with your love.

Today, we pray for change to come to this place. Together we pray, God, grant us peace. Heal our broken hearts with your love.

A prayer for Peace by Sister Joan Chittister:

Great God, who has told us
"Vengeance is mine,"
save us from ourselves,
save us from the vengeance in our hearts
and the acid in our souls.

Save us from our desire to hurt as we have been hurt,
to punish as we have been punished,
to terrorize as we have been terrorized.

Give us the strength it takes
to listen rather than to judge,
to trust rather than to fear,
to try again and again
to make peace even when peace eludes us.

We ask, O God, for the grace
to be our best selves.
We ask for the vision
to be builders of the human community
rather than its destroyers.
We ask for the humility as a people
to understand the fears and hopes of other peoples.

We ask for the love it takes
to bequeath to the children of the world to come
more than the failures of our own making.
We ask for the heart it takes
to care for all the peoples
of Afghanistan and Iraq, of Palestine and Israel
as well as for ourselves.

Give us the depth of soul, O God,
to constrain our might,

to resist the temptations of power
to refuse to attack the attackable,
to understand
that vengeance begets violence,
and to bring peace--not war--wherever we go.

For You, O God, have been merciful to us.
For You, O God, have been patient with us.
For You, O God, have been gracious to us.

And so may we be merciful
and patient
and gracious
and trusting
with these others whom you also love.

This we ask through Jesus,
the one without vengeance in his heart.
This we ask forever and ever. Amen

http://www.worldprayers.org/archive/index/selected_prayers/peace_and_healing_index.html

Also---God of the Ever-Present Crosses #657 Chalice Hymnal (This one can work every week of the Poor People's Campaign.

Call to Worship Examples

Christ sets before us this day life and death
and calls for us to choose life that we and our children may live.
We accept life, so teach us to live.

Christ sets before us this day the challenge to seek peace and to pursue it.
We accept the challenge of peace, so enable us to pursue it.

Christ sets before us this day the call to be peacemakers;
to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ to a suffering world.

We gather to embody God's love and desire for peace for all people;
to hear and give voice to creation's cry for justice and peace.

We gather to name and confront the influence of evil within and among us;
to repent of our silence and complicity with the powers of chaos and death.

We gather to join with the oppressed and troubled people of the world
in the struggle for liberation and peace;
to work for justice, healing and wholeness of life.

We gather to embrace the unity of God's people and Christ's church;
to make peace a reality.

from *Prayer for Peace*, adapted from materials from the World Council of
Churches International Day of Peace. Produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in
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How beautiful upon the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news.
**Who publish peace, who bring good tidings,
who publish salvation, and proclaim,
"Your God reigns!"**
God will judge among many peoples,
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares
and nation shall not lift up sword against nation:
neither shall they learn war any more.
**Let us lift up our voices
and praise the God of peace and justice.**

from the [National Council of Churches USA website](#)

Quotes

If the first casualty of war is innocence, then perhaps with each bullet fired, bomb detonated, leader overthrown, wall built, economy destroyed and family member killed, we are not creating goodwill and harmony, but rather another child who believes violence is the only means to bring about change in the world.

Michael Franti

We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered.

Martin Luther King, Jr.

All violence is injustice. Responding to violence with violence is injustice, not only to the other person but also to oneself. Responding to violence with violence resolves nothing; it only escalates violence, anger and hatred. It is only with compassion that we can embrace and disintegrate violence. This is true in relationships between individuals as well as in relationships between nations.

Thich Nhat Hanh

Maybe we've lost our humanity.

What concerns us most are tax dollars and territory

Tax dollars make the difference between Mercedes and Ford

Territory is what God destined for our kind

Meanwhile, humans weigh the difference

Between their children starving and their children possibly being exploited.

Between traveling a thousand miles to find work or staying put and dying from violence or hunger

Maybe we've lost our humanity.

What concerns us most is a new sports stadium

Where our favorite teams can do battle

To win a championship

To show superiority

Meanwhile, humans are victims of battles

Where bullets, tanks, and serin gas are champions

Where fighter jets show their superiority over flesh and blood on the ground

Maybe we've lost our humanity

We concerns us most are our rights

Our rights to publicly say the name of Jesus

Our rights to sleep with an AK-15 under our pillow

Our rights to deny someone else the right to love

Meanwhile, the humans whom Jesus loves

Go hungry every night

Die from lack of health care
Rot in prison due to unjust laws
Maybe we have lost our humanity
Because we
Build walls
Hoard resources
Pass laws
That keep humans from getting close enough to us to show us our humanity

Rev. Chris Dorsey, President of HELM. Used with Rev. Dorsey's permission.

Sermon fodder on Lectionary Texts

First reading - Isaiah 6:1-8

Before we can receive our calling, we have to lament. "Woe is me! I am a person of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips." Then the power of God can touch our lips and give us the words to respond when God asks "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?"

In this PPC, we have a lot of people who are excited to say "Here I am; send me!" but let us make sure we are taking the time to get right with God first.

The narrator is pointing out that the narrator does not feel pure, clean and prepared enough to do what needs to be done. We (humans) can be the ones who go forth on the holy mission.

Letter from Birmingham Jail: Cleansing ourselves before we take direct non-violent action with love. Here we are cleansing our lips with the coal but our eyes still see and saw what was needed and going on.

Psalm – Psalm 29

This Psalm talks a lot about God's power and strength and glory! It is about a lot of the ways that God is a ruler over creation. Trees and rocks and wilderness - things thought to be unmovable are nothing when it comes to the power of God.

The Psalm ends with "May God give strength to the people! May God bless the people with peace."

Interesting that after extolling God's vast strength and power, the psalmist does not have God bless the people with military victory or strength in wars or in domination or conquering. They are blessed with strength for peace!

As we look at the Poor People's Campaign theme of militarism, the war economy, and proliferation of gun control, we need to use a text like this to reframe what it means to be strong and powerful. It is not about having strength to be able to bend the world to our ways, or use our weapons and influence to conquer or to colonize. It is about being strong enough to be peaceful, which is much harder and requires much more strength! May we be blessed with God's peace!

Strength and power in the Psalm and juxtapose it with the Poor People's Campaign theme for this week. The power and strength is in God not in our government. The Psalmist is asking for strength for the people to garner peace.

Epistle – Romans 8:12-17

Where do we see the Spirit of God leading in a war economy? Is the Spirit of God there?

Joint heirs with Christ: What is our heritage as heirs? What is our legacy as heirs? In the fight against militarism, war economy, Poor People's Campaign--are we continuing the fight created by Jesus picked up by MLK and now to us to have resources used for a war economy used for resources to bridge the gap between the poor and the wealthy in the United States?

Gospel – John 3:1-17

Jesus is a little frustrated with Nicodemus who seems so concerned with earthly things, but cannot even understand them. Jesus instead encourages to focus on the Spirit, and the rebirth that can happen with the Spirit so that the Kingdom of God may be known.

What focuses more on flesh and earthly things, and in a more ugly and devastating way, than the war economy, militarism, and the proliferation of gun control? What could be less concerned with the spirit, than the greedy motives for war, the economy based on war, and advocacy for guns rights over the rights of humans to live?

We need policies to help change these systems in the United States, but Jesus is reminding us that it is about more than just changing policies, it is about changing our orientation to the Spirit. It is good that we advocate for political justice, but what we need is not a political revolution, it is a deeply moral and Spiritual revolution!

This is also a time that we can claim Christianity for what it truly is, instead of what it is so often presented to be. So many (loud) Christians focus on 3:16, and neglect 3:17. "Indeed, God did not send Jesus into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Jesus."

Following Christ isn't about condemning the world, so that we focus on the Spirit, as so many would have us think. It is about saving the world through focusing on the Spirit! It is about letting the Spirit fill us, and the leadership of Christ guide us towards redeeming the beautiful but broken world that we live in!