

A SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE, 16 January 2022

Welcome

Chant: **If you believe and I believe**
and we together pray,
the Holy Spirit shall come down
and set God's people free,
and set God's people free,
and set God's people free,
the Holy Spirit shall come down
and set God's people free.

Opening responses

Leader: O God, who called all life into being,
ALL: THE EARTH, SEA AND SKY ARE YOURS.

Leader: Your presence is all around us,
ALL: EVERY ATOM IS FULL OF YOUR ENERGY.

Leader: Your Spirit enlivens all who walk the earth,
ALL: WITH HER WE YEARN FOR JUSTICE TO BE DONE,

Leader: For creation to be freed from bondage,
ALL: FOR THE HUNGRY TO BE FED,

Leader: For captives to be released,
ALL: FOR YOUR KINGDOM OF PEACE TO COME ON EARTH.

Song:

1. **Inspired by love and anger,** (*Common Ground No.63*)
disturbed by need and pain,
informed of God's own bias,
we ask him once again:
'How long must some folk suffer?
How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self-interest
turn prayer and pity blind?'
2. From those forever victims
of heartless human greed,
their cruel plight composes
a litany of need:
'Where are the fruits of justice?
Where are the signs of peace?
When is the day when prisoners
and dreams find their release?'

3. God asks, 'Who will go for me?
Who will extend my reach?
And who, when few will listen,
will prophesy and preach?
And who, when few bid welcome,
will offer all they know?
And who, when few dare follow,
will walk the road I show?'

4. Amused in someone's kitchen,
asleep in someone's boat,
attuned to what the ancients
exposed, proclaimed and wrote,
a saviour without safety,
a tradesman without tools
has come to tip the balance
with fishermen and fools.

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Reading: Isaiah 58: 1-12

Prayer of confession:

Leader: O God, gladly we live and move and have our being in you.
Yet always in the midst of this creation-glory,
we see sin's shadow and feel death's darkness:
around us in the earth, sea and sky, the abuse of matter;
beside us in the broken, the hungry and the poor,
the betrayal of one another;
and often, deep within us, a striving against your Spirit.
O Trinity of love, forgive us that we may forgive one another,
heal us that we may be people of healing,
and renew us that we also may be makers of peace.

ALL: AMEN

Chant: Goodness is stronger than evil;
love is stronger than hate;
light is stronger than darkness;
life is stronger than death.
Victory is ours, victory is ours
through him who loved us.
Victory is ours, victory is ours
through him who loved us.

Desmond Tutu

A Christian Aid Affirmation of faith:

Voice 1: We believe that God hopes and works for a world
where all shall be included in the feast of life,
and that in Christ we see how costly it is
to bring that world about.

- Voice 2: We believe that God's strategy for a new world
is to put the poorest first,
and that nothing is more important for God's people
than to bring the poor good news.
- Voice 1: We believe that rich and poor alike
can be generous, wise and creative
because all are made in God's image,
and that all are made poorer when they are left out.
- Voice 2: We confess that we use our strength to protect ourselves
and order the world to benefit the rich and not the poor,
and that none of us can be trusted with too much power over others.
- Voice 1: We believe that loving our neighbours
means working for justice,
so that all have a say in what happens to them.
- Voice 2: We believe that God made the good earth
to sustain and delight us,
and that we are called to take care of it and enjoy it.
- Voice 1: We believe that the God of all the earth is at work
beyond the churches as well as within them,
making common cause with all who want the poor
to be included.
- Voice 2: We long for the time when the meek shall inherit the earth
and all who hunger and thirst after justice shall be satisfied,
and we believe that, despite the persistence of evil,
now is always the time when more good can be done
and we can make a difference.

Song: **Sent by the Lord am I;** *(Common Ground No.105)*
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.
Sent by the Lord am I;
my hands are ready now
to make the earth the place
in which the kingdom comes.

The angels cannot change
a world of hate and pain
into a world of love,
of justice and of peace.
The task is mine to do,
to set it really free.
Oh, help me to obey;
help me to do your will.

Prayers of concern:

Leader: Let us pray.

Spirit of integrity, you drive us into the desert
to search out our truth.

Give us clarity to know what is right,
that we may abandon the false innocence
of failing to choose at all,
but may follow the purposes of Jesus Christ.

ALL: AMEN

Leader: God of history, you share our joys and crushing sorrows,
you hear the cries of the afflicted, you fill the hungry,
and you set free the oppressed.

We pray for the end to all injustice.

Inspire us with the all-embracing love of God,
challenge us with the sacrificial love of Jesus,
empower us with the transforming love of the Spirit,
that we and all God's children may live and be free!

ALL: AMEN

Song: 1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness. *(Common Ground No.21)*

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts.

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in your church gathered today.

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.

Longing for hope, many despair.

Your word alone has power to save us.

Make us your living voice.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.

Longing for water, many still thirst.

Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.

Longing for warmth, many are cold.

Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,

many the hearts that yearn to belong.

Let us be servants to one another,

making your kingdom come.

(words & music) Bernadette Farrell

Closing responses:

Leader: Christ has come to turn the world upside down:
ALL: TO HUMBLE THE POWERFUL AND TO LIFT UP THE LOWLY.

Leader: Christ has come to turn the tables:
ALL: TO TOPPLE VAIN IDOLS AND TO STAND WITH THE POOR.

Leader: Christ has come to proclaim God's kingdom:
**ALL: TO FEED THE HUNGRY, TO GIVE SIGHT TO THE BLIND,
TO STRENGTHEN THE WEARY, TO SET THE PRISONERS FREE.**

Leader: Christ has come to turn the world upside down:
**ALL: TO OVERTHROW THE PRESENT ORDER
WITH A REVOLUTION OF LOVE.**

Blessing:

Leader: God has called you to live in integrity and justice.
May you love mercy, act justly and walk humbly with God.
ALL: AMEN

Leader: Jesus has shown you how to love your enemies and neighbours.
May you seek to be peacemakers and to live in God's light.
ALL: AMEN

Leader: The Holy Spirit has comforted and disturbed you with God's peace.
May you be full of joy and courage all the moments of your nights and days.
ALL: AMEN

Leader: May Almighty God bless you:
the Maker and the Son and the Holy Spirit.
ALL: AMEN

Ruth Burgess

Chant: May God's blessing be yours
and well may it befall you.
May God's blessing be yours
and well may it befall you.

Music: Paul Custerson