

# 2019 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

## ANNOTATED WORSHIP SERVICE



Other helpful tips and suggestions may be found in 2019 *Tips for Organizing an Ecumenical Worship Service* and *Tips for Preparing the Worship Service* resources available at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) .

You may choose to decorate the worship area with textiles or other craft items from Indonesia.

The planning group should give some thought to how the worship leaders are to enter and arrange themselves in the worship space. If the group is more intimate in size, and the space permits, it may be most appropriate to have the congregation sit in a circle, and perhaps dispense with a formal entry.

One or two people should be designated to hand out and collect the commitment cards, which may be index cards or other suitably-sized pieces of cardstock. Large baskets may be used to hold the cards.

**Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue**  
*(Deuteronomy 16:18-20, NRSV)*

If your local committee elects to use the generic order of service, either in hard copy, or printed from the online PDF, it will be necessary to announce hymns and other locally chosen parts of the service. If you would like to include hymns and other music in the printed order of service, or to customize elements of the service for your local context, you can find the service booklet as an editable Word document at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) . After you have finalized the content, the most effective printing method is to save the customized Word document as a PDF, and “print as booklet” from Acrobat.

You may wish to provide straight pins, plastic name-tag holders, or some other device for attaching commitment cards to people's clothing.

*L Leader*  
*C Congregation*  
*R Reader*

Some Canadian churches' justice, unity, and mercy resources and initiatives can be found at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).

During the service, participants are called to reflect on how they might commit to a particular act of justice, mercy, or unity, and to write on each of the two provided cards what that concrete commitment is. One of these cards is attached to the person's clothing, and the second will be gathered up as part of the offering and put at the foot of the cross. At the conclusion of the worship, these cards will be distributed to participants as they leave the church, so that each may pray for another's commitment.

### Call to worship

If your local churches use gender-inclusive language, you are invited to adjust the text of the service accordingly. This could be discussed in your planning meetings. (e.g. "God, our Creator...")

L Let us worship the Triune God.  
C God, our Father, you crown your creation with justice and mercy,  
**we come to worship you.**  
L Jesus Christ, your cross brings new life and justice,  
C **we come to worship you.**  
L Holy Spirit, you inspire our hearts to act justly,  
C **we come to worship you.**  
L May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
C **And also with you.**

### Gathering / processional hymn

Hymn and music suggestions can be found in the 2019 *Hymn Suggestions* resource at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).

### Introductory words

L As Christians from separated communities, we gather here to pray for unity. This year, the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity chosen by the churches in Indonesia is "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue." This theme is imperative due to the recurring situations that bring divisions and conflicts.

As we pray together, we are reminded that our calling as members of the body of Christ is to pursue and embody justice. Our unity in Christ empowers us to take part in the wider struggle for justice and to promote the dignity of life.

## Hymn of praise

### Prayer of repentance

- L Beloved sisters and brothers,  
let us confess before the Lord that we have sinned  
and ask for forgiveness  
so that our worship will be pleasing to God.
- R1 *(read by an ordained minister or a leader of one of the participating congregations)*  
Compassionate God, you have chosen us  
to shepherd your flock.  
Jesus, your Son, taught us to act justly.  
We are aware that in our ministry,  
we sometimes behave unjustly  
towards the people whom you have entrusted to us by:  
prioritizing those who are close to us  
or those who have higher social status;  
ignoring strangers, the poor and the least in society;  
fearing to defend the oppressed; misusing church resources.  
These deeds have caused some people  
to turn away from your church.  
Lord, have mercy.
- C **Lord, have mercy.** *(This response may be sung.)*
- R2 *(read by a member of the congregation)*  
Loving God, you have gathered us as members of your flock.  
Jesus, your Son, taught us to love one another  
as a sign of being his disciples.  
We confess that we have failed  
to live his commandment of love by:  
regarding those of other churches as rivals;  
being hostile to each other and slow to forgive;  
focusing only on our personal interest;  
ignoring the needs of sisters and brothers;  
excluding those who do not share our point of view.  
In these ways, our attitudes strengthen  
the dividing walls between us.  
Lord, have mercy.
- C **Lord, have mercy.**

Hymn and music suggestions can be found in the 2019 *Hymn Suggestions* resource at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).

This worship service reflects the context of the Indonesian communities which created it. You might consider adjusting the language here, and at other appropriate places throughout the service, to include injustices and struggles in your own local context and in Canadian society – e.g., religious violence, the persecution of specific peoples, the struggles of refugees, repentance for colonialism, and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.

R3 *(read by a different person)*  
Gracious God, you have commissioned us  
to make our common home a place of justice for all.  
In your generous love, you send rain  
on the righteous and the unrighteous  
and, in Jesus, teach us to love without discrimination.  
We confess that we have failed to follow this teaching by:  
disrespecting our neighbours;  
spreading falsehoods through various social media;  
participating in the disruption of social harmony.  
Our conduct risks making the world a barren field  
that no longer brings forth your justice for all of creation.  
Lord, have mercy.

**C Lord, have mercy.**

L May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive our sins and  
lead us to eternal life.

**C Amen.**

*Hymn / song / meditative music*

### **Proclamation of the Word of God**

**First reading:** Deuteronomy 16:11-20

**Responsorial Psalm:** 82:1-8 *(read or sung)*

R Rise up, O God, judge the earth.

**C Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

R God has taken his place in the divine council;  
in the midst of the gods he holds judgement:  
“How long will you judge unjustly  
and show partiality to the wicked?

**C Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

R Give justice to the weak and the orphan;  
maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.  
Rescue the weak and the needy;  
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

**C Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

Hymn and  
music  
suggestions can  
be found in the  
2019 *Hymn  
Suggestions*  
resource at  
[www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca) .

Local planning  
committees are  
invited to select  
their own music  
if they wish the  
psalm to be  
sung, and  
adjust the text  
of the psalm  
accordingly.

R They have neither knowledge nor understanding,  
they walk around in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

**C Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

R I say, "You are gods,  
children of the Most High, all of you;  
nevertheless, you shall die like mortals,  
and fall like any prince."

Rise up, O God, judge the earth;  
for all the nations belong to you!

**C Rise up, O God, judge the earth.**

**Second reading:** Romans 12:1-13

*Alleluia (may be said or sung)*

**Gospel reading:** Luke 4:14-21

*Alleluia (may be said or sung)*

**Sermon / reflection**

**Commitment to Justice, Mercy and Unity**

L Jesus Christ prays for the unity of his disciples.  
The gift of his life is justice for the world.

R1 As members of the body of Christ,  
we are called to walk together in his path.

R2 Let us hear his calling.

**C Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ,  
we are called to keep our lives free from the love of money,  
and be content with what we have.

R2 Let us break the cycle of greed and live in simplicity.

**C Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

R1 As members of the body of Christ,  
we are called to proclaim release  
to captives and victims of all forms of violence.

R2 Let us help them to live in dignity.

**C Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**

Alleluias can be found in the hymn books of various denominations.

Hymn and music suggestions can be found in the 2019 *Hymn Suggestions* resource at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca). Suitable instrumental music might also be played.

Participants write two copies of their commitments: one to be attached to their own clothing, and another to be collected.

- R1 As members of the body of Christ,  
we are called to extend hospitality to strangers.
- R2 Let us outdo one another in showing honour.
- C Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**
- R1 As members of the body of Christ,  
we are called to proclaim the good news to the whole creation.
- R2 Let us protect the life and beauty of God's creation
- C Holy Spirit, unite us in action.**
- L To make concrete our individual commitment to work together for justice, you are invited to write your commitment on two separate cards. We invite you to keep one of these cards close to your heart. The second one will be collected and brought forward as an offering.

*A song for unity and / or justice may be sung, or suitable instrumental music played, as the congregants write their commitments on the cards.*

### **Offering**

- L What does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  
*(Micah 6:8)*

We commit ourselves to acts of justice.

*The ushers collect the second cards and bring them forward to be put at the foot of the cross.*

- L Gracious God, you have shown us your compassion and care for all creation.  
Your love inspires us to offer these commitments to act justly by loving others wholeheartedly regardless of their cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Accept now our offerings and transform them into action for the unity of your Church.  
We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, who live with you as one God forever and ever.
- C Amen.**

## Sharing peace

*The leader invites the assembly to exchange a sign of peace, so that together we can proclaim our faith.*

## The Nicene Creed or other Affirmation of Faith ←

The Indonesian planning committee for this service specified the use of the Nicene Creed, but if your planning group would prefer not to use it, you are invited to choose the affirmation of faith which is most appropriate in your context.

## Prayers of the people

- L Let us raise to the Lord our common prayer  
for the Church and for the needs of all humanity.
- R From the islands and the oceans, we worship you,  
O God, the Creator of life.  
Throughout the mountains and the valleys,  
we praise you, O God, the Saviour of the world.  
With the tongues of all nations,  
we thank you, O God, the Comforter of bodies and souls.  
We come before you bearing our burdens and hopes.  
Today we ask you:
- C O God, hear our prayer and grant us your love.**
- R We pray for those who live in the midst of injustice.  
Encourage us to lift up their voices and strengthen their hope.  
We pray for those who continue to perpetuate injustice.  
May your kindness fill our hearts  
and make us agents of freedom and peace.  
We pray for every institution and person  
who stands for justice.  
Let us act justly according to your words.  
Today we ask you:
- C O God, hear our prayer and grant us your justice.**
- R We pray for the visible unity of the Church.  
Lead us to fulfil Jesus' prayer that we may be one  
and work together to manifest your Kingdom.  
Today we ask you:
- C O God, hear our prayer and grant us passion for unity.**

The Lord's Prayer may be said or sung in the form and language of the planning group's choice (or left to individual worshippers). Musical settings may be found in the hymn books of various denominations.

Hymn and music suggestions can be found in the 2019 *Hymn Suggestions* resource at [www.weekofprayer.ca](http://www.weekofprayer.ca).

**R** We thank you for the many colours, cultures, and customs that we share in this world.  
In our differences, unite us by your love.  
Enable us to act together to uphold life  
and to make this world a just and peaceful household  
for all humanity.  
Today we ask you:

**C** **O God, hear our prayer and grant us your peace.**

### **The Lord's Prayer**

### ***Recessional / closing hymn or song***

### **Dismissal**

**L** As you leave this gathering you will be given one of the commitment cards.  
We invite you to pray for the commitment written on the card.

### **Blessing**

**L** May God embrace you with love  
and make kindness flow out from you.  
May God ignite courage within you  
and transform you into agents of his justice and peace.  
May God grant you humility  
and give you perseverance to nurture unity.

**C** **Amen!**

*As the congregants leave, the ministers distribute the commitment cards.*