

RESOURCES FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

UM BOOK OF WORSHIP, PAGES 423 and 428

A LITANY ON THE TRAGEDY OF GUN VIOLENCE

(Written for the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day)

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." We celebrate and give thanks for the life and witness of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Who proclaimed a vision of all people living together, and bore witness to the power of nonviolence,

We gather, to remember his words, his commitment, his life and to rededicate ourselves to addressing the evil of gun violence -

Which claimed his life and which continues to plague our country and the world.

Some 30,000 Americans die by guns each year in the United States;

And we grieve.

An average of eighty people is killed by guns every day, including eight children;

And our hearts break.

Guns kill some 1,000 people each day in the developing world;

And we mourn.

An American child is twelve times more likely to die by a gun than are the children who live in all twenty-five industrialized nations combined;

And we weep.

The annual economic cost of gun violence in America is estimated to at least \$100 billion.

Medical costs, decimated families, the court system, our jails and prisons, and security measures in airports, schools, and public buildings all contribute to this sum;

And sorrow sweeps over us.

Since John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, more Americans have died by gun fire within our own country than American servicemen and women who were killed in all our wars of the 20th century;

And we pray.

Faced with gun violence,

We grieve for those are killed and those whose lives are forever changed; we seek to comfort for those who have lost loved ones; we pray for a change of heart for those who resort to violence.

Faced with gun violence, may we

Educate; Organize; Advocate; and in all the ways we can, work for that day when weapons of destruction are transformed into instruments of healing.

May it be so.

May we so do.

The Rev. W. Mark Koenig, Coordinator, Presbyterian Peacemaking Program

Liturgical Resources in Response to Violence

"God shall redeem their lives from oppression and violence" (Ps. 72:14)

The Promise of God's Reign

The Third Song of Isaiah; Isa. 60:1–3, 18, 19

*(which can be sung using #177 from *The Psalter—Psalms and Canticles for Singing*)*

**Refrain: The Lord will be our everlasting light; *
and God will be our glory.**

R

Arise, shine, for your light has come; *
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you,
though darkness covers the earth *
and dark night is over the nations.

R

But upon you the LORD will rise, *
and the glory of the LORD will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light; *
and rulers to the brightness of your dawn.

R

No longer will violence be heard in your land, *
nor ruin or destruction within your borders.
You will name your walls Salvation, *
and all your gates Praise.

R

No more will the sun be your light by day, *
nor by night will you need the brightness of the moon,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light, *
and your God will be your glory.

R [*Book of Common Worship*, 581]

PASTORAL PRAYER

O Lord, our God, victim of violence on a cross,
look with compassion upon all involved in shootings this week in America and around the
world.

Comfort those traumatized by these horrendous events.

Wrap your Everlasting Arms around those who mourn.

Heal those whose hearts and minds are terrorized.

Strengthen those medical personnel who minister to the wounded.

Protect the law enforcement officials to risk their lives for our safety.

Calm all whose memories of violence are triggered by this shooting.

Bring the gunmen to repentance and redemption,
and deal tenderly with his confused family and friends.

Hear our cries of lament as we seek to understand the incomprehensible,
and deliver us from the evil of violence in any form.

Through Christ we pray. **Amen.**

PASTORAL PRAYERS

Almighty God, you have made us and all things to serve you,
now prepare the world for your rule.

Come quickly to save us, so that wars and violence shall end,
and your children may live in peace, honoring one another with justice and love.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer. [Book of Common Worship (BCW), 175]

Renew our nation in the ways of justice and peace.

Guide those who make and administer our laws to build a society based on trust and respect.

Erase prejudices that oppress others and imprison those who hold them.

Free us from crime and violence.

Guard our youth from the perils of drugs and materialism.

Give all citizens a new vision of a life of harmony.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer. [BCW, 319]

O God, you love justice and you establish peace on earth.

We bring before you the disunity of today's world:

the absurd violence, and the many wars which are breaking the courage of the peoples of the world; militarism and the armaments race, which are threatening life on the planet; human greed and injustice, which breed hatred and strife.

Send your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

Teach us to be compassionate toward the whole human family;

strengthen the will of all those who fight for justice and for peace;

lead all nations into the path of peace, and give us that peace which the world cannot give.

Amen. [A Prayer from Zaire, BCW, 797-98]

COLLECTS

O God, bring our nation and all nations to uphold justice and equity,

that poverty, oppression, and violence may vanish and all may know peace and plenty; in the name of Jesus Christ, the ruler of all. Amen. [BCW, 694]

From earthquake and tempest; from drought, fire, and flood;

from civil strife and violence; from war and murder;

and from dying suddenly and unprepared,

Good Lord, deliver us. [BCW, 788]

PEACE MAKING HYMNS

(from The Faith We Sing)

2169, "God, How Can We Forgive"

2170 "God Made From One Blood"

2171 "Make Me a Channel of Your Peace"

2172 "We are Called"

2177 "Wounded World That Cries For Healing

(from Glory To God, new Presbyterian hymnal)

372 "O For a World"

376 "When All Is Ended"

378 "We Wait the Peaceful Kingdom"

God We Have Heard It

HERZLIEBSTER JESU: Johann Crueger, 1640 (Ah, Holy Jesus)

God, we have heard it, sounding in the silence:
News of the children lost to this world's violence.
Children of promise! Then without a warning,
Loved ones are mourning.
Jesus, you came to bear our human sorrow;
You came to give us hope for each tomorrow.
You are our life, Lord God's own love revealing.
We need your healing!
Heal us from giving weapons any glory;
Help us, O Prince of Peace, to hear your story;
Help us resist the evil all around here;
May love abound here!
By your own Spirit, give your church a clear voice;
In this world's violence, help us make a new choice.
Help us to witness to the joy your peace brings,
Until your world sings!

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