

Service for Justice and Peace

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Opening Sentences
Hymn, Psalm or Spiritual Song
Prayer
Scripture
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song
Prayer of Lament
Offering
Hymn, Psalm, or Spiritual Song
Blessing and Charge

This service is designed for use in a time of controversy or crisis, when people gather to pray for God's justice and peace in the community, church, and world. Planners of worship will want to adapt and expand on these resources according to particular circumstances and concerns.

OPENING SENTENCES

All may stand as one of the following, or another verse from scripture appropriate to the occasion (604), is said.

- 1 Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord: Ps. 130:1–2
Hear our voice and answer our prayers!
- 2 The word of the Lord is like fire in my bones; Jer. 20:9
I am weary with holding it in.
- 3 What does the Holy One require of us? Mic. 6:8
**To do justice, to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with our God.**

HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG

For hymn suggestions, see pages 603–4.

PRAYER

This or another prayer appropriate to the occasion is said (626); or a prayer of confession may be said (605).

Mighty and merciful God,
lover of justice and equity,
you call us to support the weak,
to help those who suffer,
and to honor all people.

By the power of your Holy Spirit,
make us advocates for your justice
and instruments of your peace,
so that all may be reconciled
in your beloved community;
through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SCRIPTURE

For suggested readings from scripture, see page 602.

A brief sermon or time of testimony may follow the reading of scripture.

HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG

For hymn suggestions, see pages 603–4.

PRAYER OF LAMENT

The following model for prayer is to be adapted for particular situations.

This prayer may be led at the baptismal font.

Gracious God, by day and night
we pour out our prayer to you.

We are crying out for justice,
yearning for what is right,
longing for your peace.

Come quickly to help us, O God;
save those who call upon your name.

Specific laments are spoken. After each lament, the leader and people may say:

. . . and your people cry: **How long, O Lord?**

A time of silence may follow each lament and response.

These phrases may be used as models for statements of lament:

We hear of hateful violence and senseless killing . . .

We feel the suffering, sorrow, and shame of the oppressed . . .

We fear that justice will again be delayed or denied . . .

We recognize patterns of privilege
and systems of discrimination . . .

We see your creation destroyed by carelessness and greed . . .

We weep for the victims of . . .

We grieve in the aftermath of . . .

We pray for an end to . . .

We long for a day when . . .
We learn of the death of N. . . .
We remember the deaths of N., N., and N. . . .

The prayer concludes with these or similar words:

Gracious God, keep us working and praying for the day
when your justice will roll down like waters,
and your righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Replenish our strength and stir up our hope
as we look for signs of your coming reign.

And fill us with the peace that passes understanding—
the deep peace of Jesus Christ our Savior,
in whose holy name we pray. **Amen.**

If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the Lord's Prayer (28, 144) may be spoken or sung here.

If the Eucharist (118, 624) is to be celebrated, it is included here.

OFFERING

The offering may include a collection to support work for justice and reconciliation, or symbolic expressions of solidarity or resistance.

HYMN, PSALM, OR SPIRITUAL SONG

For hymn suggestions, see pages 603–4.

BLESSING AND CHARGE

The service may end with this or another blessing and charge (151), or in silence.

Beloved people of God— *Phil. 4:8–9*
whatever is true, whatever is honorable,
whatever is just, whatever is pure,
whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable,
anything that is excellent and worthy of praise—
keep on doing these things,
and the God of peace will be with you. **Alleluia! or Amen.**