



Coming to Life

Worship Aids for the Living Peace Church

Praying for transformation and courage

Undertaking thoughtful study of scriptures

Actively answering Christ's call to peace

Facilitating dialogue among differing opinions

Summer 2005

A Litany of Peace and Healing

Justice and kindness make for peace.

*Justice and kindness are for healing the hurts in ourselves,
our relationships, and in the world.*

Many people around us and in this world suffer deprivation and persecution.

*Creator God, help us prevent suffering where we can
and in ways that show your love for all creation.
Help us to care for those who suffer.*

Many people around us and in this world experience hurt,
grief, brokenness, and sorrow.

*Loving God, help us to recognize when we are part
of what brings pain, grief, and brokenness to others.
Help us to act in healthy and loving ways
with our friends and neighbors, with strangers and enemies.
Help us to love others as ourselves.
Help us to love ourselves as you love us.*

Many people around us and in this world are silent victims
and unable to bring about healing for themselves and their loved ones.

*Sustaining God, help us to speak the truth with love and humility.
Help us to advocate for justice for those unable to speak for themselves.
Guide us as we seek ways to bring healing for others
in a world filled with sickness and destruction.
Sustain us with your love and bless us with hope
for times when we feel the job is too big
and the work is never done.*

Justice and kindness make for peace and healing.

Dear God, let it begin with me.

— Scott Douglas and Mary Dulabaum, Staff
Association of Brethren Caregivers

In response to the 2003 Annual Conference resolution, "A Call for a Living Peace Church," this is a resource from the Brethren Witness/Washington Office and On Earth Peace. We will be producing 1-2 issues a year and welcome original submissions as well as resource ideas from anyone in the church. Please send them in Word or WordPerfect format via e-mail to bsayler_oepea@brethren.org.

A Ritual of Reclaiming

"I was driving home after church when I saw the yellow tape blocking the entrance to my street. A female police officer stood behind the tape. My little quiet neighborhood was changing.

"Two weeks later on returning from church, more police, an ambulance and fire trucks!! Lots of policemen!! I can't even turn onto my own street! A stabbing nearly in front of my house, across the street from our elementary school!"

When Cherie told her pastor about these incidents, he said, *"We need to reclaim your neighborhood with prayer!"* And so one afternoon, ten parishioners from the Glendale Church of the Brethren met at the spot where blood had been spilled. Psalms of lament were read and prayers offered naming the fears and the plight of the area.

Then — with Cherie as our tour guide — we walked around her neighborhood. While she told stories of the people who lived in the houses, we would pause and pray for the families and people who lived there. As we skirted the school, we paused under the shade of trees to pray for the children and teachers, janitors and administrators who sit and work and play in those rooms and on that playground.

Finally, we rounded the corner and came back to the spot. We read about Jesus speaking of raiding the land claimed by the Strong Man and reclaiming it for the kingdom with forgiving transformation (Mark 4:23-29). And we were doing the same: binding the ghost that had blighted the homes of people. We were trusting that the Spirit was with us. And so, with prayers of hope rising to the sky, we anointed the sidewalk and lawn with oil.

But we weren't done. We walked to Cherie's doorstep, read of God's hopes for the goodness of creation (Genesis 1), and with prayers and oil, anointed the threshold of her house. With prayers of hope and promise, we claimed light against the brooding darkness, asking that goodness, grace, and peace blossom in this house — and that it be sanctuary in the very midst of violence and urban decay.

— Tom Leard Longenecker, Pastor, and Cherie Anton
Glendale (CA) Church of the Brethren

Conscience Calls

Whether it whisper
Whether it shout
With quiet urgency it calls
Our land lies torn
Violence echoes everywhere
Shall we respond?
Shall we acknowledge?
The whisper
The shout
Will it go away?
The land heal?
The violence retreat?

Our Conscience calls

— Phil Jones, Director
Church of the Brethren Witness/ Washington Office
written for 2005 Christian Citizenship Seminar

Days of Tomorrow

To ponder life with conscious thought
To deal with one another as we ought
To move forward
After studying the past
To eradicate racial prejudice
And distinction of class
To equalize
Both large and small
The rich and the poor
That whosoever needs
Need no more
To respect life
As the greatest gift ever given
Remembering the Creator gave it
Because it's worth living

— Melvin Speight
Pennsylvania Death Row, Waynesburg, PA

Peace Pole Dedication Resources

At the Glade Valley (MD) Church of the Brethren, the congregation gathered at the peace pole singing and the children laid peace cranes they had made at the foot of the pole. The Children's Story during worship was about Sadako and the Peace Cranes (www.sadako.com). The following is written for five readers that represent a diversity of age, ethnicity, and gender.

Litany of Peace

- 1: Hear the prayers of our world
that touch the very heart of God.
 - 2: Are we not one? Are we not all sisters and brothers?
 - 3: Are we not all grandchildren of the same mystery?
 - 4: Do we not all want to love and be loved?
 - 5: Do we not want to work and play,
and sing and dance together?
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- 1: As sisters and brothers, may we live together.
 - 2: As women, men, children, and elders, may we live together.
 - 3: As Christians, Jews, and Muslims may we live together,
4: and reflect the goodness of God, who loves all.
 - 5: May all races work together for the common good.
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- 1: Today, this peace pole will bear witness to our hope
for the future.... A hope that is grounded in the gospel.
- All: May Peace Prevail on Earth.**
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- 2: As a sign of unity with our sisters and brothers the world over,
we will now hear their wisdom...

*Readings suggested from Prayer for a Thousand Years, ed. Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon, © 1999.
Invite congregation to respond with "May Peace Prevail on Earth" following each reading.*

Closing

- 3: Please respond with these words of our common hope,
All: May Peace Prevail on Earth.
 - 4: Today, we dedicate this peace pole to bear witness
to our hope for the future....
 - 5: A hope that is grounded in the gospel.
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- 1: Today, and every day God sets before us Life and Death.
2&3: We choose Life!
4&5: In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,
All: May Peace Prevail on Earth. Amen
- compiled by Cynthia Mason, Campus Minister
Hood College, Frederick, MD

A Litany of Dedication

This peace garden is a small place of quiet beauty.
Its quiet beauty hints at the peace we long for in the world.

The peace pole points toward the open sky which stretches over all the earth.
It draws our focus upward out of ourselves toward God.

The prayer on the pole is in different world languages.
It reminds us that the longing for peace is universal; God's promise of peace is to all peoples.

The bench invites us to sit a while, to rest, reflect, converse, and pray.
We need to be still, to let God's peace fill us.

This peace garden is an open, unprotected place, facing out to the world.
Walking in Christ's way of peace makes us vulnerable and calls us to leave our comfort zones to go out into the world as courageous disciples of the Prince of Peace.

— Lisa Krieg, Licensed Minister
Lititz (PA) Church of the Brethren

For more information about Peace Poles and worship resources, visit

- Peace Pole Makers USA www.peacepoles.com
- Global Heart www.peacepoles.org
- The World Peace Prayer Society www.worldpeace.org

Coming to Life: Worship Aids for the Living Peace Church

Litany of Confession and Prayer

(In unison) God, whose heart beats within creation, we confess our turning away from you. You give us life and freedom and we have traded it for convenience and greed. You celebrate at the birth of your children, and we have funded programs that kill your precious ones and take the food from the mouths of others. You cry out for us to follow the way of peace, and we have supported governments and policies that tear whole countries apart in violence and war. You ask us to care for each other, and we have been preoccupied with our personal insecurities. Great God, set us free! We are tired of the slavery we have created for ourselves. Give us grace enough to follow you. And through your amazing Spirit we now offer up to you this litany:

Leader: We know well the violence and conflict that is both within and without.
We pray for your loving guidance, Holy God...

People: Still the conflict and the violence we harbor within ourselves so that we might not perpetuate the same in others... (followed by several minutes of silence)

Leader: Still the conflict and violence we harbor within our families so that we might not perpetuate the same in our institutions... (followed by several minutes of silence)

People: Still the conflict and violence we harbor within our faith communities so that we might not perpetuate the same throughout the land... (followed by several minutes of silence)

Leader: Still the conflict and violence we harbor within our nation so that we might not perpetuate the same in every land... (followed by several minutes of silence)

People: Still the conflict and violence we harbor and create around the world, so that we might not destroy your most precious gifts to us... (followed by several minutes of silence)

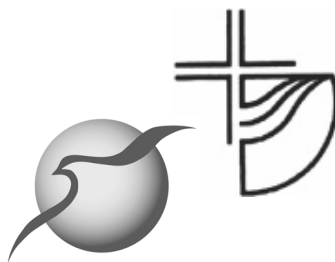
Leader: So often, God of Wholeness, we are a torn people.
We set ourselves apart based on differences, judgments and opinions.
We tear ourselves from within as we strive for independence and individuality.
So often we do not recognize our common longings for peace, for healing,
and for deep meaning within life.

People: Help and feed us in joy. In the unity of that spirit we now draw together
to sing and pray as your own dear children asking to be renewed.
Refresh us now as we open who we are to who we may yet become. Amen.

— Mark Lancaster, Coordinator
Presbyterian (USA) Hunger Program

written for "Living in Peace as Jesus Taught," Western Pennsylvania District Peace Day 2004

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