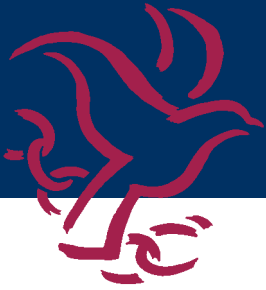


PATRIOTISM, NATIONALISM, AND THE *Christian Life*



Justice And Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ
www.uccTakeAction.org

*“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?”
He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your
heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is
the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it:
‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two
commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”*

—*Matthew 22:36–40*

PATRIOTISM: *n.* devoted love, support, and defense of one’s country;
national loyalty.

PATRIOT: *n.* (1) a person who loves, supports, and defends his or
her country and its interests. (2) a person who regards himself or
herself as a defender, esp. of individual rights, against presumed
interference by the federal government. (3) [cap.] a U.S. Army
antiaircraft missile launched from a tracked vehicle with radar and
computer guidance.

NATIONALISM: *n.* (1) devotion and loyalty to one’s own nation;
patriotism. (2) excessive patriotism; chauvinism.

DEMOCRACY: *n.* (3) a state of society characterized by formal
equality of rights and privileges.

CHRISTIAN: *n.* (6) a person who believes in Jesus Christ; an
adherent to Christianity. (7) a person who exemplifies in his or her
life the teachings of Christ.¹

REFLECTIONS BY THE REV. LOEY POWELL

The sea of red, white, and blue that blanketed our neighborhoods, car lots,
baseball fields, church-sign boards, federal and civic buildings, and
billboards around the country in the post-September 11, 2001, shockwave
has gradually diminished. The fervor of patriotism that accompanied our grief and
disbelief was expressed robustly through repeated choruses of “God Bless
America” at nearly every sporting event, but now—as time has passed—only “The
Star Spangled Banner” is sung before games.

Continued on page 5

*This is my song, O God of all the nations,
A song of peace for lands afar and mine.
This is my home, the country where my
heart is;
Here are my hopes, my dreams, my holy
shrine.
But other hearts in other lands are beating
With hopes and dreams as true and high as
mine.
My country’s skies are bluer than the ocean,
And sunlight beams on cloverleaf and pine;
But other lands have sunlight, too, and
clover,
And skies are everywhere as blue as mine.
O hear my song, O God for all the nations,
A song of peace for their land and for mine.*

Tune: “Finlandia”
The New Century Hymnal 591

COULD WE lift up a bowl of oil, reminding
ourselves that it is not a commodity we must
fight over or hoard and certainly not waste,
but is instead for reconciliation, an
anointment for the healing of the nations?

COULD WE gather around the font, and be
reminded that water is for immersing our
little ones, a reminder that every child is
precious, every child is valued, that no child
is to be destroyed? And that water is for our
own repentance, a reminder that the axis of
evil is not just “out there” but can be traced
through the heart of our own nation and our
own lives?

COULD WE take the bread, and break it,
and remember that it must always be for
sharing, never for sanction?

COULD WE lift the cup of wine, and
remember that our comfort and security
comes through the vulnerability of the cross
rather than the destructive power of
violence?

—The Reverend John H. Thomas
UCC General Minister and President

DENOMINATIONAL VOICES ON *Peace*

American Baptist

The ABC/USA biennially celebrates and affirms its witness to peace through the awarding of the Dahlberg Peace Prize, named in memory of the Reverend Edwin H. Dahlberg. Remembering this history, tradition, and calling and being mindful of the promise and invocation of our Lord Jesus' words, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God," we call on our churches and their members to enter into a time of prayer, intercession, and witness in pursuit of peace.

American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

The American Friends Service Committee urges the United States to pursue diplomatic solutions to the crisis in Iraq through the United Nations. This crisis can only be solved through the international community working together. Military force, especially undertaken alone, will only make matters worse.

As Quakers, the principle of plain speech tells us that by any other name a push for "regime change" in Iraq is simply a call to overthrow a government. We have a responsibility to support the United Nations and an obligation to live within its mandates. We believe that the sovereignty of every country should be respected.

Church of the Brethren

The Church of the Brethren General Board is deeply concerned about the possibility of war between the United States and Iraq. We know that war causes death and displacement and does not resolve deep-seated conflicts—thus it is contrary to God's will for human life. We are also troubled by our own government's attitudes toward the rest of the world, as evidenced in a growing unilateralism, the

Things To Do

IN A TIME OF WAR

The Rev. J. Bennett Guess

- ◆ Do pray for peace and nonviolent solutions to armed conflicts.
- ◆ Do create a culture where diverse opinions, ideas, and views can be expressed and respected.
- ◆ Do pray for our nation and all nations engaged in armed conflicts.
- ◆ Do pray for the leaders of nations, that they will make wise decisions that guide us in the path toward peace and not war.
- ◆ Do pray for military personnel and their families. Support them with acts of kindness.
- ◆ Do pray for our UCC-related chaplains, relief agencies, and others who care directly for those who are involved in war.
- ◆ Do pray for the church, for greater wisdom and collective clarity.
- ◆ Do conduct services of worship that call people of faith together to pray for peace, to express grief, to vent concerns, and to witness Christ's love and compassion.
- ◆ Do express your feelings and concerns with others, including your elected representatives.
- ◆ Do pray for your pastor as she or he discerns the role that she or he will take in your congregation and community as a religious leader during a time of moral crisis and national uncertainty.

***The Reverend J. Bennett Guess is
minister for communication and
mission education with the
Justice and Witness Ministries of
the United Church of Christ.***

- ◆ Do remember all who have died and will die as a result of war. Remember that regardless of nationality or religion, all are precious to God.
- ◆ Do hold candlelight vigils or other public worship services that gather the larger community to express concern and to call for peace.
- ◆ Do pray for your enemies.
- ◆ Do allow love, not hatred, to guide your worship, study, and prayer life.
- ◆ Do be mindful of the church's responsibility to be peacemakers and to engage people of faith in the difficult issues of the day.
- ◆ Do remember the forgotten ones of war—the displaced, the hungry, the powerless, those without food and water, the children, those who lose employment, and so on.
- ◆ Do conduct Bible studies that engage people spiritually and intellectually about issues of war and peace. Hold conversations about the UCC's Just Peace pronouncement.
- ◆ Do consider what Jesus said. Remember what we believe. Cling to what is distinctive and counter-cultural about being a person of faith.
- ◆ Do learn how to become a nonviolent peacemaker in your community.
- ◆ Do reassure people that where they stand politically is not an indication of where we stand in Christ. We are all brothers and sisters.

use of war-making as a means of problem-solving, an increasingly threatening posture toward our global neighbors, and an eagerness to impose its political and economic will on others. We find these attitudes to be contrary to our own Christian values of servanthood and cooperation and also believe that they will ultimately prove detrimental to the people of our nation as we relate to our global neighbors and eventually stand before our God.

The Episcopal Church, The House of Bishops

We stand with other Christian leaders who oppose a pre-emptive strike against Iraq. The leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., the Orthodox Church in America, the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Anglican Consultative Council, representing 70 million Anglicans around the world, and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, have all raised questions about the wisdom and morality of our country's pursuing this course of action.

Over the next weeks, as you debate our possible involvement in a war against Iraq, know that we are praying with you and for you.

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Iraqi leadership must cease its internal repression, end its threats to its neighbors, stop any support for terrorism, abandon its efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, and destroy all such existing weapons. . . . We join others in urging Iraq to comply fully with this latest Security Council resolution.

We recognize that not taking military action could have its own negative consequences. We are concerned, however, that war against Iraq could have unpredictable consequences not only for Iraq but also for peace and stability elsewhere in the Middle East. The use of force might provoke the very kind of attacks that it is intended to

Continued on page 5

A frequently asked question in many Christian congregations is whether or not it is appropriate to place the national flag of the United States of America in the worship space. This question touches many important theological issues.

The U.S. flag is a powerful symbol of this nation. It carries enormous emotional meaning, especially for veterans and for families that have sacrificed loved ones in wars and armed conflicts under that symbol. It can also carry great political significance for those who view the flag as a symbol of what they consider amiss with our nation. Not all of us see the flag through the same political or historical lens, so the use and display of the flag remains a sensitive issue.

Some Christian churches are identified with nations or states. For example, the Church of England is Anglican, the Churches of Norway and Sweden are Lutheran, and so forth. Sometimes these churches display flags as a part of their national identification. In the United States, of course, we have no established state church.

Yet here, too, many Christian congregations have traditionally included an American flag among the furnishings in their worship space or elsewhere in their building. In many congregations, it has been customary for the U.S. flag to stand to one side of the altar and the UCC emblem flag or the so-called Christian flag to stand on the other.

Jesus Christ, Our Centrality

When considering what should appear in our worship space, Christians should ultimately ask: *What symbols can we use that will help us focus on what is central to our faith?* And that centrality is Jesus Christ, our crucified and risen Lord.

The cross or crucifix, of course, has become the preeminent symbol of Christ across many cultures and nations. Likewise, there are other powerful symbols that focus the community on Christ: the altar where Holy Communion is celebrated; the baptismal font where Holy Baptism is celebrated; the pulpit where the Word is proclaimed in reading and preaching. Christian art—representing Christ and the teachings of the Bible through sculpture, stained glass, painting, and other artistic media—can be symbolically important.

All of these are appropriate to the worship space because they help both individuals and the gathered assembly to focus on Christ. Everything that appears in the worship space ought to focus our hearts and minds on Christ. Anything that does not direct us to Christ can easily become a distraction from Christ.

The flag of the United States is a national symbol, not a religious one. As the church of Jesus Christ, we must constantly remind one another that the church is global in its mission and calling—not provincial. As Christians, we must remember that national patriotism should never compete against our first loyalty, which is to Jesus Christ.

The Christian church includes many individual nations and states, and likewise, our U.S. churches include members who are citizens of many different nations. We are people of different political persuasions and perspectives. Our patriotism is expressed in a

are flags

appropriate?

in church

myriad of ways, and this sometimes includes dissent, discussion, and debate over national interests and policies. Yet our true oneness is in Christ, not national allegiance.

As Christians, we are called to transcend national divisions. Baptism—not the flag—affirms our unity as Christ's people throughout the world. As Saint Paul says: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:27–28).

The worship space of the congregation is not the best place to display national flags, for such display honors neither the integrity of the flag nor the sovereignty of the Lordship of Christ. We must remember that, in the prophetic tradition of our faith, our nation's interests and the teachings of the gospel can be in conflict with one another.

Responsible Alternatives

A responsible alternative to putting a U.S. flag in the worship space is to display it prominently in other suitable places. By placing flags in the fellowship or community hall, a gymnasium, or other large meeting rooms used by civic groups or for civic functions, such as voting, the flag is allowed to carry out its symbolic function for the nation without competing with the central symbols of the Christian faith.

Congregations that have war memorial chapels, plaques, or books of remembrance or the like, and wish to display the American flag might want to consider placing it near those significant places rather than in the worship space itself.

The Christian flag—as it is often called—seems originally to have been an emblem associated with the international Sunday school movement. It is not identified with any particular nation or church body. The UCC emblem flag is sometimes used to honor the congregation's history and identity as a United Church of Christ congregation.

Whenever the American flag is displayed publicly, it is very important to follow with great care the rules of protocol that have been established by civic agencies governing that display. It is possible to give great-unintended offense if these rules are not followed. A local veterans group or military post usually can supply these rules on request. These protocols apply wherever the flag is displayed, indoors or outdoors. Proper placement, lighting, care, all need to be considered carefully. ■

Copyright © 2003 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Adapted, edited, and reprinted for the United Church of Christ with permission.

Continued from page 1

I find it very telling that during the months in which President George W. Bush has been threatening to go to war with Iraq and trying to drum up public support for this effort that there has not been an accompanying resurgence in nationalistic fervor. One would think that if, in fact, the people were behind the president, that there would be more visible signs of support. War, after all, is supposed to be a rallying point for a nation's citizenry.

Instead there is disquiet among us about this war. We are unsettled, not sure what the real objectives of a war with Iraq might be, what the results will be. Many religious leaders, including many within the United Church of Christ, have spoken out clearly against a pre-emptive attack and have called on our government to seek guidance from the United Nations and to solve this conflict through nonviolent diplomacy. Support from our historical allies has been mixed at best, and public opinion is approaching an even split between those who support and those who oppose this war.

We are citizens, and we are Christians. We are members of a denomination that has declared itself to be Just Peace Church (The Twenty-fifth General Synod, 1985), affirming "the unity of the whole human community" and opposing "the use of nationalism to divide this covenant of friendship." At times like these, we can feel the rub between the calling of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the demands of an ever-increasingly complex global reality. We hear Jesus' words to love our enemies and our president's words about an "axis of evil." We hear that threats to our security are imminent while we remember the words of the Psalmist, "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in times of trouble" (Ps. 46).

The Reverend Peter Gomes, professor of Christian morals and chaplain of the Memorial Church at Harvard University, recently wrote "Patriotism Is Not Enough": Christian

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 3

prevent, could impose terrible new burdens on an already long-suffering civilian population and could lead to wider conflict and instability in the region. War against Iraq could also detract from the responsibility to help build a just and stable order in Afghanistan and could undermine broader efforts to stop terrorism.

National Council of Churches

Do all possible, without going to war, to resolve the Iraq crisis.

The United Methodist Church,
Bishop Sharon A. Brown
Christopher, the president of
the United Methodist Council
of Bishops

A pre-emptive war by the United States against a nation like Iraq goes against the very grain of our understanding of the Gospel, our church's teachings and our conscience.

Pre-emptive strike does not reflect restraint and does not allow for the adequate pursuit of peaceful means for resolving conflict. . . . To be silent in the face of such a prospect is not an option for followers of Christ.

Statement of United Church of
Christ Leaders Opposing U.S.
War against Iraq

With heavy hearts we hear once again the drumbeat of war against Iraq. As United Church of Christ leaders committed to God's reign of justice and peace in the world and to the just conduct of our nation, we firmly oppose this advance to war.

The case for a preemptive attack on Iraq has not been made. While Iraq's weapons potential is uncertain, the death that would be inflicted on all sides in a war is certain. Striking against Iraq now will not serve to prevent terrorism or defend our nation's interests. We fear that war would only provoke greater regional instability and lead to the mass destruction it is intended to prevent.

Compiled by Ron Buford, public relations and marketing manager, Proclamation, Identity, and Communication Ministry Team, United Church of Christ.

Conscience in Time of War” (*Sojourners Magazine*, Jan./Feb. 2003). He reflects,

I know that in the mighty roar of wisdom, might, and riches, the sounds of love, justice and righteousness—those things in which God delights, and in which God’s people are meant to delight—sound thin, feeble, and anemic. Yet my Christian conscience tells me that these “soft” values should prevail every time over the “hard,” even though they often do not. If I am compelled to compromise those Christian values in the service of the state, I had better be as certain as is humanly possible that such a compromise is worth sacrificing the things I hold most precious; and I certainly won’t know that, nor will you, unless there is a great deal more thoughtful discussion, debate, and dissent than there has been so far.

As Christians, we claim an identity that has no regard for national boundaries when it comes to loving our sisters and brothers. We follow the example of Christ, who expanded the definition of “neighbor” far beyond our provincial neighborhoods. We worship a God whom even the vastness of the universe cannot contain.

How then, do we love our country and our God at the same time? How do we express our patriotism and national pride if our faith prompts us to question the direction in which our elected leaders are taking us? How do we allow for differences to exist honorably between us?

One value that the religious heritage of the United Church of Christ and our country’s founding principles share is recognizing the importance of free inquiry into questions of conscience. In order to let more “truth and light break forth from God’s holy word,” the Protestant (note the root word,

protest) reformers broke with a state-identified, hierarchical, Roman church structure that demanded theological conformity. The Bible became the book of the laity as well as of the clergy. Our nation’s democratic foundations also offered protection to free inquiry through establishing the separation of church and state and assuring the rights to free speech, press, and assembly (although we must recognize the unequal granting of these rights at different points in history).

Questions of conscience take time, patience, and prayer to work through. Our spiritual and moral compass should be God’s love for all of creation, even when considering the policies of our own government. For some, the question, “What would Jesus do?” *WWJD* is central to their faith. For others, wondering what God requires of us helps to refocus the question. As Christians, our first moral obligation is to God and to the well being of God’s people.

As Gomes concludes, “If we wish to be on God’s side rather than making God into our own ally of American realpolitik, then we would do well to remember our text from Jeremiah (9:23–23). God’s values are clear; so too ought ours to be. If you love the Lord, you will love the things the Lord loves. There is no other way around it.”

The Reverend Loey Powell is minister and team leader for the human rights, justice for women, and transformation ministry team with the United Church of Christ’s Justice and Witness Ministries.

1. Definitions from Random House Webster’s College Dictionary (1999).



A SERVICE FOR PEACE IN A TIME OF WAR



This service was prepared at a time when there is threat of war. Those who have helped by contributing prayer and song have expressed their hopes that their use will not be necessitated by the event of war. Whether this service takes place at a time when war seems imminent or if a war has been declared, it is always the role of the church, the community of Christ, to proclaim the gospel and gather up the prayers of the people. In these times, the church is especially called on to proclaim its own message for the world and not necessarily to reiterate the passions of secular society. The service that follows is an effort to remind us that it is in God alone that we can place our trust, even in the most desperate of times. It is a time to pray for peace and raise prayers for all who suffer the pain of war. We are also called to remember those called to military service and their families. The service that follows might be used as it is presented for a weekly Sunday worship service or a midweek evening service. Holy Communion would be appropriate. It might also be adapted for any type of service the church wishes to hold, such as a prayer vigil for peace.

Hymn "If You but Trust in God to Guide You"
(George Neumark, 1641) TNCH 410

Opening Words

Call to Worship

Psalm 62:5-7

For God alone my soul waits in silence,
for my hope is from God.
God alone is my rock and my salvation,
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.
On God rests my deliverance and my honor;
my mighty rock, my refuge is in God.
Trust in God at all time, O people;
pour out your heart before God who is a
refuge for us.

Scriptures

(Choose from the following scriptures. More than one or all may be read.)

Matthew 5:1-19 Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of
heaven.

Micah 4:1-4 They shall beat their swords
into plowshares.

John 14:23-27 Those who love me will keep
my word. . . . Do not let your
hearts be troubled.

Luke 1:78-79 Guide our feet into the way
of peace.

Hymn "I Will Trust in the Lord"
(African American traditional) TNCH 416

Reflection

Prayers

(Choose one or more of the following prayers. See notes following for more suggestions and ways to use the prayers.)

A Prayer in Time of War (Prayer A)

One: Eternal God, in whose will is our enduring peace, we find ourselves again in the wilderness of war. With hopes dashed on the rocks of failed diplomacy among nations filled with distrust and fear, we cry out to you for mercy.

All: With memories of a fragile peace now lost, we ask for courage to face the uncertainty of a world vulnerable to unimaginable death. God, in your mercy, save us.

One: Loving God, we confess our complicity in the misunderstanding and hostility that have brought us to this tragic hour. Forgive our callousness to the hurts of others and our contempt for the heritage that shapes their lives.

All: Hear the lament of our hearts for anything and everything worthy of peace, that we have neglected on the road to war. God, in your mercy, forgive us.

One: Righteous God, in whose sacred justice both mercy and truth embrace, forbid that we fail to see in all persons, including those we now call our enemy, the grandeur of your image and likeness.

All: Across the chasm of our separation, open our eyes to our common humanity pronounced good by your voice at the dawn of creation. God, in your mercy, reconcile your people.

One: Saving God, sustain us in the things necessary for a just peace in the aftermath of this conflagration. Deliver us and all others from the use of wanton weapons of wrath that promise only to poison the earth and fan the expanding fires of human hatred.

All: Deliver us from the temptation to imitate what we say we deplore and from cowardice to embody the costly freedom we seek to defend. God, in your mercy, save us from the enemy within our hearts.

One: Healing God, guardian of those in harm's way, hold close our sons and daughters who serve our nation in this conflict fraught with contradiction. Return them soon and safely to us and the land of their hopes and dreams.

All: In obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ, we pray as well for those who are at enmity with us in this struggle and who are sons and daughters beloved in their own land. God, in your mercy, hasten the end of this war.

One: Eternal God, One in the communion of the Holy Trinity, by the power of your Holy Spirit, transform your world into the global family you created us to be.

All: **We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, whose promise we remember in faith: “Peace I leave with you: my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.” Amen.**

A Prayer in a Time of War (Prayer B)

One: God of compassion and grace, we come to you in this time of turmoil, needing your presence and guidance.

We struggle with how to deal with the terrorism in our world;

Sometimes we do not know which way to turn;
Sometimes we do not know who or what to believe.

As we seek to live in the tension of uncertainty without losing our balance, we need your presence and guidance.

We know that you love all your people and that your will for all is peace.

Teach us how to work with you for peace;

Teach us how to love one another;

Teach us how to banish fear and hate.

Be with those who make decisions about sending our military members to war and stay them from making rash decisions.

When we send our soldiers, sailors, marines, and coast guard into harm’s way, be with them and keep them in your care;

Be with our chaplains who put their lives on the line to bring your presence and grace to the women and men who must go in harm’s way.

Be with the doctors, nurses, and medics who risk their own safety and lives to bring comfort and healing skills to the wounded.

God of compassion and grace, have compassion on us when we make mistakes.

As Jesus forgave those who put him to death, we pray for compassion on those who hate us and would destroy us;

As Jesus taught us, we pray

Our Father . . .

Meditative Prayer of Intercession (Prayer C)

“Peace Be Still” (see page 10 for music setting.)

One: *(singing)* Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

One: In this time of massive events, let us pray for the many who are forgotten, unnamed families and children in the path of destruction who have done no wrong but will suffer and perhaps die.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

One: Let us pray for all those who serve in our military and for those who are called to assist them, the medical personnel and chaplains.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

One: Let us pray for all diplomats, ambassadors, world leaders, and all who continue to seek peaceful resolution to conflict.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

One: Let us pray for the agencies of compassion, who will try to feed the hungry, bind up the wounded, and find shelter for the displaced.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

One: Let us pray for all people everywhere who live in fear and for our own fear.

All: **(singing) Peace be still, peace be still, the storm rages, peace be still.**

(This phrase may be repeated several times.)

Meditative Prayer of Intercession (Prayer D)

(Spoken version of Prayer C)

One: In this time of massive events, let us pray for the many who are forgotten, unnamed families and children in the path of destruction who have done no wrong but will suffer and perhaps die.

All: **We remember them and ask for your mercy, O God.**

One: Let us pray for all those who serve in our military and for those who are called to assist them, medical personnel and chaplains.

All: **We remember them and ask for your mercy, O God.**

One: Let us pray for all diplomats, ambassadors, world leaders, and all who continue to seek peaceful resolution to conflict.

All: **We remember them and ask for your mercy, O God.**

One: Let us pray for the agencies of compassion, who will try to feed the hungry, bind up the wounded, and find shelter for the displaced.

All: **We remember them and ask for your mercy, O God.**

One: Let us pray for all people everywhere who live in fear and for our own fear.

All: **We remember them and ask for your mercy, O God.**

Litany for a Time of Turmoil (*Prayer E*)

One: God of compassion and grace, we come to you in this time of turmoil needing your presence and guidance;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: As we struggle with how to deal with the terrorism in our world,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: When we do not know which way to turn,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: When we do not know who or what to believe,

All: Hear our prayer.

One: As we seek to live in the tension of uncertainty without losing our balance;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: We know that you love all your people and that your will for all is peace. Teach us how to work with you for peace;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Teach us how to love one another;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Teach us how to banish fear and hate;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Be with those who make decisions about sending our military members to war and stay them from making rash decisions;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: When we send our soldiers, sailors, marines, and coast guard into harm's way, be with them and keep them in your care;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Be with our chaplains who put their lives on the line to bring your presence and grace to the women and men who must go in harm's way.

All: Hear our prayer.

One: Be with the doctors, nurses, and medics who risk their own safety and lives to bring comfort and healing skills to the wounded.

All: Hear our prayer.

One: God of compassion and grace, have compassion on us when we make mistakes;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: As Jesus forgave those who put him to death, we pray for compassion on those who hate us and would destroy us;

All: Hear our prayer.

One: As Jesus taught us, we pray

All: *Our Father . . .

(In the worship bulletin, all are invited to pray the Prayer of Our Savior in the words they know.)

**(or substitute the following: One: Held in the arms of God who is our Mother, let us pray with the confidence of the children of God:)*

Hymn "Lead Us from Death to Life TNCH 581

Holy Communion

Benediction



This service was developed by Arthur Clyde, minister for worship, music, and liturgical arts with the Worship and Education Ministry Team, Local Church Ministries, United Church of Christ.

NOTES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WORSHIP PLANNERS

Opening Words

Introduce the service with words appropriate to the events of the day and to those gathered.

Hymns

Alternate hymns for the service might be found in the list that follows or chosen from the congregation's own repertoire.

Call to Worship

Psalm 62:5-7: Instead of reading the psalm, consider the chanted setting in *The New Century Hymnal*, page 659, or in *The New Century Psalter*, page 96. Another version is the Taizé chant, "My Soul Is at Rest."

Scriptures

There are many scriptures that might be chosen. Use one or more of these, or choose others. The scripture readings could be followed by silent meditation or music. For

meditative music, consider using the song "Peace Be Still" by Steve Iverson, which is included here. Other suggestions might be the Taizé chants "Nada Te Turbe"/"Nothing Can Trouble" (TNCH 772) or "Confitemini Domino"/"Come and Fill Our Hearts with Your Peace" (found in various hymnals and in Taizé books).

Hymns

Here are some recommended hymns from *The New Century Hymnal* (TNCH) and *Circles of Care*. These are merely suggestions, and others can be chosen from the congregation's repertoire.

"I Will Trust in the Lord" (African American traditional, arranged by Jeffrey Radford, 1993) TNCH 416. (This text and tune is in the public domain, but the arrangement is not. If it is desired to photocopy it from the hymnal, it may be photocopied on a one-time basis from *The New Century Hymnal*, provided the following credit is present: From *The*

New Century Hymnal, copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press. Arrangement copyright © 1993 The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for this one-time use.)

“If You but Trust in God to Guide You” (George Neumark, 1641) TNCH 410. (This hymn is in the public domain. If it is desired to photocopy it from the hymnal, it may be photocopied on a one-time basis from *The New Century Hymnal*, provided the following credit is present: “From *The New Century Hymnal*, copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for this one-time use.”)

“Let There Be Light, O God of Hosts” (William Vories, 1908) TNCH 589. (This hymn is in the public domain. If it is desired to photocopy it from the hymnal, it may be photocopied on a one-time basis from *The New Century Hymnal*, provided the following credit is present: “From *The New Century Hymnal*, copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for this one-time use.”)

“O God of Love, O God of Peace (Henry W. Baker, 1861) TNCH 571. (This hymn is in the public domain. If it is desired to photocopy it from the hymnal, it may be photocopied on a one-time basis from *The New Century Hymnal*, provided the following credit is present: “From *The New Century Hymnal*, copyright © 1995 The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for this one-time use.”)

“When the Winds Rage All around Us” (Ruth Duck) *Circles of Care* 38. (This song by Ruth C. Duck is from the songbook *Circles of Care* [Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1994]. One time permission is hereby granted to those who have purchased the book to reproduce copies for a service of worship, provided the following credit is present: From *Circles of Care*, copyright © 1998 The Pilgrim Press. Words and music copyright © 1996 The Pilgrim Press. Permission is granted for this one-time use.)

Other hymns in The New Century Hymnal that might be useful:

(Please note that The Pilgrim Press does not hold the copyrights to the following in case you need to reproduce them in quantities, contact the copyright holders listed on pages 888–895 of The New Century Hymnal).

- “For the Healing of the Nations” TNCH 576
- “Lead Us from Death to Life” TNCH 581
- “This Is My Song” TNCH 591

Prayers

Five prayers are offered here. You might choose to use only one or more than one. They may be used in a variety of ways—inserted at various places throughout the service or prayed consecutively at this time with space for meditation in between. Please note that in the case of the two versions of the “Meditative Prayer of Intercession” (*Prayers C and D*), only one, not both, should be chosen, since the words are nearly the same. One is intended as a prayer with sung responses, the other is entirely spoken.

“A Prayer in Time of War” (*Prayer A*) is by the Rev. Thomas E. Dipko, who served as executive vice president of the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries.

“A Prayer in a Time of War” (*Prayer B*) and “Litany in a Time of Turmoil” (*Prayer E*) are by the Rev. Eileen Norrington, ministerial authorization coordinator, Parish Life and Leadership Ministry Team, Local Church Ministries, and a twenty-two-year veteran of the U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps.

“Meditative Prayer of Intercession” (*Prayer C, incorporating the “Peace Be Still” chant, copyright © 1998 Stephen Iverson, and Prayer D*).

Reprint Permission

The entirety of this service was written for use by the church in a time of crisis and war, and the authors of all the elements included have given permission to reprint these materials, provided the following copyright information is printed:

Copyright © 2003 Local Church Ministries: A Covenanted Ministry of the United Church of Christ, Cleveland. One-time permission is granted to reprint this service of worship. All publishing rights reserved.

Exceptions:

By special permission of Stephen Iverson, “Peace Be Still” may be reproduced in the worship bulletin for this service in time of war, provided the copyright information is given as follows: Copyright © 1998 Stephen Iverson. One-time permission is granted for use in this service. All rights reserved. A recorded version of this song and others is found on Iverson’s CD *Prayer*. For all information, contact Stephen Iverson at <weevenji@yahoo.com>.

Also, note that reprint permission given here does not extend to TNCH hymns 576, 581, and 591. Please see information on each of the individual hymns above. ■

Music setting for Prayer C:

Peace, Be Still © 1998 Stephen Iverson

The musical notation is written on a single staff in treble clef with a common time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. Chords are indicated above the staff: C, C/G, D/F#, F, Am, G, F, Am, F9, F, G, C. The lyrics are: "Peace, be still. Peace, be still. The storm ra - ges. Peace, be still."



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

