

# 2019 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY ECUMENICAL WORSHIP SERVICE

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

*L - Leader C - Congregation R - Reader*

## **Call to worship and welcome (Rev. Brian Colbourne, St. James United)**

- L Let us worship the Triune God.  
God, our Father, you crown your creation  
with justice and mercy,  
**C 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.**

## **Introductory words (Rev. Derek Krunys, President, St. John's and Area Council of Churches)**

- 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 # 332 "The Church's One Foundation"***

## **Prayer of confession (Rev. Colbourne)**

- 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 (Rev. Dr. Rudolph Anthony, St. Augustine's Anglican Church)**

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.**

**R2 (Rev. Fr. Wayne Bolton, St. Pius Tenth Catholic Church)**

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.**

**R3 (Rev. David Sturtevant, St. David's Presbyterian Church)**

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 # 580 "Faith of our Fathers"*

**Proclamation of the Word of God**

**First reading:** Deuteronomy 16:11-20 (**Major Barry Gray, Salvation Army**)

**Responsorial Psalm:** 82:1-8 (**Rev. Carolyn Steeves, West End Baptist Church**)

**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.**

**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 (**Very Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy**)

**Gospel reading:** Luke 4:14-21 (**Rev. Faith March-MacCuish, Executive Minister, Regional Council 15, United Church of Canada**)

**Sermon / Reflection** (**Rev. Faith March-MacCuish**)

**Hymn # 651 "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah"**

**Commitment to Justice, Mercy and Unity (Rev. Rudolph Anthony, Rev. Fr. Wayne Bolton)**

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.**

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.**

**Invitation to 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.

**Offertory Chorus**

**Hymn # 541 "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Come"**

**(The offering will be donated to L'Arche Avalon)**

**Offertory Prayer**

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 New Creed (VUp. 918) (Sr. Diane Smyth, Sisters of Mercy)**

#### **Prayers of the people (Rev. David Sturtevant)**

R 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.**

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 (Rev Derek Krunys)**  
**Hymn # 238 "How Great Thou Art"**

**Dismissal (Rev. Brian Colbourne)**

**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!**

A *A reception will be held in the hall downstairs directly after the service. Please join us.*

THE END