WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
January 18-24, 2021

On behalf of the Wisconsin Council of Churches and each of the participants involved, we welcome you to this ecumenical gathering of voices to mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. You might ask, what does it mean to talk about, work and pray for Christian Unity today? For us, it’s about honoring what unites the church across time and space—being able to come together for common efforts spanning differences in denomination, tradition and life experience; finding the places where we have shared values and hopes; offering hospitality and generosity when faced with varied practices.

The outline of this prayer service comes from an ecumenical monastic community in Switzerland; you can learn more about this on the post about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on our website, wichurches.org. More information about participants is available at the end of this guide. Following the opening, there are three vigils, each with their own take on the theme of Unity. You’ll find a liberal use of silence and a meditative spirit throughout.

As you follow along with this worship guide, the parts in bold print are intended for you to join in. We invite you to sing along with the psalms and hymns. We hope you’ll enjoy this opportunity to pray with a wider expression of the church.

PRELUDE
Drum Improvisation, Ms. Trish Bailey
McFarland United Church of Christ

INVITATION TO PRAYER

OPENING HYMN
Sing A New Church
NETTLETON
WORDS OF WELCOME

L: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

C: And also with you.

L: Brothers and sisters and siblings in Christ, this year’s theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, is “Abide in my love... you shall bear much fruit.”
It is God’s desire, and expressed by Jesus, for us to come and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit which will bring life to all. Faced with the difference of “the other”, we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in his love, and so bear much fruit.

In our prayer today, we remember the call of Christ, as we turn to Christ’s love, the center of our life. The path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in God’s love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

In peace we pray to the Lord: Lord, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person. And yet, often the differences in others makes us afraid. We withdraw into ourselves. Our trust in you is forsaken. Enmity develops between us. Come and direct our hearts toward you once again. Grant us to live from your forgiveness so we may be together and praise your name.

C: Amen.

TE DEUM

Mr. Kirby Metoxen, Church of the Holy Apostles
Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac

LITANY OF PRAISE

The Rev. Rodger Patience, Church of the Holy Apostles
Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac

L: Let all God’s people join in praise!
   We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples.
C: Praise and glory to you!

L: We sing your praise among suffering and tears.
C: Praise and glory to you!

L: We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding.
C: Praise and glory to you!

L: We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions.
C: Praise and glory to you!

L: We sing your praise in the midst of life and death, the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.
C: Praise and glory to you!
PSALM 103/God Can Only Give Faithful Love  
Pastor Felix Malpica & Ms. Cherie Norquay  
Faith Lutheran Church (ELCA)  
South Central Synod of WI

JOHN 15:1-17  
The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays, Solomon Community Temple UMC  
Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Church

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.
As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

INTERCESSIONS
Rev. Fr. Avedis Kalayjian, St. Mesrob Armenian Church
Armenian Church in America

L: God of love, through Christ you said to us: “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation and grow in a life ever more complete.

C: The joy of our heart is in God.

L: God of life, you call us to give praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, resting upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

C: The joy of our heart is in God.

L: God who gathers, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at parish meetings and local ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate you with joy.

C: The joy of our heart is in God.

L: God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of your love in our homes and workplaces. May we pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

C: The joy of our heart is in God.

ABIDING IN GOD’S LOVE
The Rev. Rob Ater, Immanuel Presbyterian Church
Presbytery of Milwaukee

SILENCE
1. Come and find the quiet center in the
   crowded life we lead, find the room for hope to
   enter, find the frame where we are freed: clear the
   chaos and the clutter, clear our
   eyes, that we can see all the things that really
   shades to show the sun, raising courage when we're
   matter, be at peace, and simply be.

2. Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the
   heat and slows the pace, God it is who speaks and
   names us, knows our being gives us grace, making
   ravel, celebrate the space we gain: there's a
   place for deepest dreaming, there's a
   time for heart to care, in the Spirit's lively
   shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.

3. In the Spirit let us travel, open
   to each other's pain. Let our loves and fears un-
   enter, find the frame where we are freed: clear the
   names us, knows our being gives us grace, making
   ravel, celebrate the space we gain: there's a
   place for deepest dreaming, there's a
   time for heart to care, in the Spirit's lively
   shrinking, finding scope for faith begun.
I appeal to you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there is quarreling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.
R: Holy Spirit, you create and recreate the Church in all places. Whisper in our hearts the prayer of Jesus, addressed to the Father on the eve of Christ’s passion: “that they may all be one...so that the world may believe.”

C: Óyenos Señor, Óyenos Señor,
listen to your people, Óyenos Señor

R: Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us, may suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls separating us fall.

C: Óyenos Señor, Óyenos Señor,
listen to your people, Óyenos Señor

R: Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

C: Óyenos Señor, Óyenos Señor,
listen to your people, Óyenos Señor

R: Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

C: Óyenos Señor, Óyenos Señor,
listen to your people, Óyenos Señor

R: Holy Spirit, you never abandon people who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

C: Óyenos Señor, Óyenos Señor,
listen to your people, Óyenos Señor

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SHARING A SIGN OF PEACE
Ms. Ellie Kosek, Madison Mennonite Church

AN OFFERING OF MUSIC
Mr. Michael Fischer, First Presbyterian Church (Wausau)
Winnebago Presbytery

While we are not in the same geographical location as one another to offer tangible or visual signs of greeting, we invite you to offer physically distanced signs of peace. Please take a moment during the music to offer peace to those on the event stream or on your social media feed (tag us with #WPCU2021 #wichurches). This is also a good time to pick up your phone and text someone, or send a brief email with a message of Christian peace.
THIRD VIGIL • THE UNITY OF ALL PEOPLES AND ALL CREATION

PSALM 96/Praise and Thanksgiving

Mr. David Melby-Gibbons, Milwaukee
Moravian Church

1. Praise and thank-giving let ev-’ry-one bring
2. All peo-ple, join us and sing out God’s praise.
3. May we go out from here God’s love to share.

REVELATION 7:9-12

Mr. Dean Daniels, Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!” And all the angels stood round the throne and round the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.”

HOMILY

The Most Rev. Jeffrey Haines
Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Milwaukee

SHORT SILENCE

INTERCESSIONS

The Rev. Kelsey Beebe
Union Grove United Church of Christ
THE LORD’S PRAYER

We invite you to join in the prayer with the words most familiar to your own heart.

Our Creator, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

COMMISSION

Ms. Rhonda Hill, All Peoples Church (Milwaukee)
Pentecostal-Lutheran

L: Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression. We say together:

C: Pray and work so God may reign. Throughout your day let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest. Maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ. Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes: joy, simplicity, mercy.

BLESSING

Bishop Katherine Finegan
Northern Great Lakes Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

L: Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in God’s love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

C: May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in faith, so we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. + In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

FINAL HYMN

In Christ There Is No East or West

MCKEE

Mr. Maurice Cotton, Milwaukee
St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church
1. In Christ there is no East or West,
in Christ no South or North;
their high communion find;
theirs high communion may be!

2. In Christ shall true hearts ev'rywhere
in Christ meet South and North;
what e'er your race may be!
in Christ meet South and North;

3. Join hands, then, people of the faith,
But one great family of love
All children of the living God
One joyful, human family

4. In Christ now meet both East and West,
throughout the whole wide earth.
close binding human kind.
are surely kin to me.

throughout the whole wide earth.

Text: John Ockenfels, 1908; alt. Words adapted by Grace Moore, Nancy Kindy, and Ruth Duck, ©1981 The Pilgrim Press. All rights reserved.
CREDITS

With gratitude for the collaborative team for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021: The Rev. Lois Buchholz (United Church of Christ Congregational, Osseo), Mr. Dean Daniels (Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee), Ms. Lynn Lemberger (Holy Wisdom Monastery), Mr. Craig Richter (student at Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Hales Corners), The Rev. Kerri Parker (Wisconsin Council of Churches Executive Director).

Compilation of submitted videos by the Rev. Breanna Illene, Content Curator/Ecumenical Innovation Coordinator for the Wisconsin Council of Churches. Give thanks for your technical crew!

This prayer service adapted from the text for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity jointly published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Council of Churches, through its Commission on Faith and Order. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 was prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp, Switzerland. The theme that was chosen is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family. For further information on the international ecumenical text, visit https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity.

Prelude
Drum Improvisation by Ms. Trish Bailey, McFarland UCC

Virtual Choir

Barbara Dick
Wellspring United Methodist Church
Soprano

Jenny Hartlaub
North Shore Presbyterian
Soprano

Julie Gaulke
Christ Church Episcopal, Whitefish Bay
Soprano

Anne Stone
Grace Episcopal Church
Alto

Carmen Shaw
First Presbyterian Church, Oshkosh
Alto

Cherie Norquay
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Alto

Jane Ferris
Grace Episcopal Church, Madison
Alto

Janet M. Irvine
Trinity Episcopal Church, Janesville
Alto

Sherri Hansen
Holy Wisdom Monastery
Alto

Dean Daniels
Archdiocese of Milwaukee Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Affairs
Tenor

Peter B. Irvine
Trinity Episcopal Church, Janesville
Tenor

Michael Ferris
Grace Episcopal Church, Madison
Bass

Pastor Felix Malpica
Faith Lutheran Church, Janesville (ELCA)
Bass

The Rev. David Simmons
St Matthias Episcopal Church, Waukesha
Bass

Tom Ludwig
McFarland United Church of Christ
Bass

Arranging, Direction, Orchestration and Audio
The Rev. David Simmons, St. Matthias Episcopal Church, Waukesha

Piano, Video Compositing and Editing
The Rev. Don Fleischman, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church and St. Francis House, Madison

Video Preparation
Julie Gaulke, Christ Church Episcopal, Whitefish Bay

“Sing a New Church Into Being”
Lyrics by Delores Duffner, OSB, Copyright 1991, The Sisters of St. Benedict
Tune: Nettleton, Original Harmonization by Gerre Hancock
Te Deum

Mr. Kirby Metoxen, Oneida Tribal Councilman
Member, Oneida Singers; Parishioner, Church of the Holy Apostles

Church of the Holy Apostles is the oldest Native American mission of the Episcopal Church, dating to the early 1700s in New York state. The first party of the Oneida who made the journey in the 1820s were the first Episcopalians in what is now Wisconsin.

Mr. Metoxen sings the Te Deum in the Oneida language. The Te Deum is usually sung at Christmas and Easter and whenever the bishop makes a visitation to the parish. It has also been sung at every ordination of a bishop in the Diocese of Fond du Lac. The English text follows.

English text: Te Deum laudamus, from the Book of Common Prayer

You are God: we praise you;
You are the Lord: we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father:
All creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and Seraphim, sing in endless praise:
Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you;
Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.

You, Christ, are the king of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
you did not shun the Virgin’s womb.
You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God’s right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.

Psalm 103/God Can Only Give Faithful Love

The Rev. Felix Malpica, Faith Lutheran Church ELCA
Ms. Cherie Norquay, ELCA, piano
Text: Psalm 103; Taizé Community
Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications Inc., agent

Come and Find the Quiet Center

Mr. Steven Jensen, organist; Ms. Kathryn Henry, chancel choir, soprano
Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Milwaukee
Lyrics by Shirley Erena Murray, Copyright 1992 Hope Publishing Company
Music Arr. Copyright 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship (Admin Augsburg Fortress)
Tune BEACH SPRING

Psalm 85/Dona Nobis Pacem

Ann Baltes, Bill Rosholt, vocalists
Grace Rosholt, violin
Lynn Lemberger, organ
Text: traditional
Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications agent. All rights reserved

Óyenos Señor

Text and music ©1988, 2002, Bob Hurd. Published by OCP. All rights reserved.
Ms. Kim Mandelkow, Office of Worship, Archdiocese of Milwaukee, piano and vocals
Passing of the Peace

Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing
Words by Robert Robinson
Traditional American Melody
Performed and Arranged by Michael Fischer
Arrangement ©2000 Lillenas Publishing Company (SESAC)
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Psalm 96 / Praise and Thanksgiving

Mr. David Melby-Gibbons, guitar and vocals
Text: Edith Thomas & Marie J Post
Tune: LOBET UND PREISET
St 2,3 ©1987 by CRC Publications
Harm ©1987 by CRC Publications

In Christ There Is No East or West

Mr. Maurice Cotton, piano
Music Director, St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church
Words: John Oxenham (1852-1941), Used by permission of Desmond Dunkerly
Tune McKEE, Traditional Spiritual Melody, Arr. By Harry T. Burleigh, 1866-1949

MC KEE was originally an Irish tune taken to the United States and adapted by enslaved African Americans. The spiritual was adapted into a hymn tune by famous African-American composer and songwriter, Harry T. Burleigh. The recording we hear today is from the sanctuary of St. Mark African Methodist Episcopal Church in Milwaukee. St. Mark AME is the oldest African-American congregation in Wisconsin.

Readers and Speakers (in order of appearance)

The Rev. Kerri Parker, Executive Director, WI Council of Churches
The Rev. Breanna Illene, Content Curator & Ecumenical Innovation Coordinator, WI Council of Churches
Dr. Peter Bakken, Justice & Witness Coordinator, WI Council of Churches
The Rev. Rodger Patience, Oneida, Episcopal Diocese of Fond du Lac
The Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays, Milwaukee, Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Church
Rev. Fr. Avedis Kalayjian, Racine, Armenian Church in America
The Rev. Rob Ater, Milwaukee, Presbytery of Milwaukee
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The Rev. Kelsey Beebe, Union Grove, Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ
Ms. Rhonda Hill, Milwaukee, Greater Milwaukee Synod ELCA
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