Prayers for Our Commonwealth and Our Nation

An Ecumenical Vigil sponsored by the Kentucky Council of Churches

Sunday, January 17th, 2021
5:30 p.m. EST
Kentucky Council of Churches Vigil:  
Prayers for our Commonwealth and our Nation  
January 17, 2021

Words of Welcome
The Rev. Amanda Groves  
President, Kentucky Council of Churches

Opening Sentence
I will bless the Lord who gives me counsel; my heart teaches me, night after night. I have set the Lord always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not fall.  
Psalm 16:7,8

Leader: O God, be not far from us.  
Response: Come quickly to help us, O God.

Psalm 121
The Rev. Dr. Don Gillett, Executive Director,  
Kentucky Council of Churches

I lift up my eyes to the hills; *  
from where is my help to come?

My help comes from God, *  
the maker of heaven and earth.

God will not let your foot be moved; *  
the One who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, the One who keeps watch over Israel *  
shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The Holy One watches over you *  
and is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day, *  
nor the moon by night.

God shall preserve you from all evil *  
and is the One who shall keep you safe.

God shall watch over your going out and your coming in, *  
from this time forth for evermore.

Praise to the holy and undivided Trinity, one God:  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
A Reading from the Letter to the Ephesians

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, for we are members of one another. BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Here ends the reading.

A Song of Hosea

Come, let us return to our God, * who has torn us and will heal us.

God has struck us and will bind up our wounds, * after two days revive us,

On the third day restore us, * that in God's presence we may live.

Let us humble ourselves, let us strive to know the Lord, *

whose justice dawns like morning light, its dawning as sure as the sunrise.

God's justice will come to us like a shower, * like spring rains that water the earth.

The Lord's Prayer in unison

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

The Right Rev. Mark Van Koevering, Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
The Lord's Prayer

‘Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who
trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

The Suffrages
The Rev. Philip Lotspeich, The Presbytery of Transylvania, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;
R. And grant us your salvation.

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;
R. Let your people sing with joy.

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;
R. For only in you can we live in safety.

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;
R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

V. Let your way be known upon earth;
R. Your saving health among all nations.

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;
R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;
R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Prayers
The Rev. O. Lacy Evans, African Methodist Episcopal Zion

Gracious and Merciful God,
Our Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer...
Thank You for being a God of justice who sees those most vulnerable in our society and does not look away but instead embraces each and every one of them. Open our eyes to see others the way You see them and to treat them accordingly. Move in our hearts and minds that we are able to love our neighbors as we have been instructed and to care for one another fiercely. Let us be beacons of light and hope and justice so that others will know of Your goodness, Your righteousness, Your mercy, and Your love, we pray. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

--from the National Council of Churches: 40 Days of Prayer; Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland Tune, NCC Chief Operating Officer
Prayers

The Rev. Dale Raines, United Church of Christ, Indiana-Kentucky Conference

Creator God, You desire your people to live in peace and harmony with one another. While we await the Peaceable Kingdom, we live In Hope! Hope for an equitable dispersal of the vaccine, hope for peace in our Country, and hope for the end of “ism” that separates all your people. Shalom! Amen!

--from the NCC: 40 Days of Prayer; Gerry Rickel, Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prayers

The Rev. John Odom, Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love’s sake. Amen.

Litany

Adapted from The Great Litany, Enriching Our Worship

I.
Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,
Have mercy on us.

Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,
Have mercy on us.

Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,
Have mercy on us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, One God,
Have mercy on us.

II.
From all evil and mischief; from pride, vanity and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred and malice; and from all evil intent,
Savior deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of heart and contempt for your word and your laws,
Savior deliver us.

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Savior deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money; from hardness of heart and contempt for your word and your laws,
Savior deliver us.
From sins of body and mind; from deceits of the world, flesh and the devil,
*Savior deliver us.*

From famine and disaster; from violence, murder, and dying unprepared,
*Savior deliver us.*

In all times of sorrow; in all times of joy; in the hour of our death and at the day of judgment,
*Savior deliver us.*

III.
Hear our prayers, O Christ our God.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Govern and direct your holy Church; fill it with love and truth; and grant it that unity which is your will.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Give us boldness to preach the gospel in all the world.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Enlighten your clergy with knowledge and understanding, that by their teaching and their lives they may proclaim your word.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Give your people grace to witness to your word and bring forth the fruit of your Spirit.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Strengthen those who stand; comfort and help the fainthearted; raise up the fallen; and finally beat down Satan under our feet.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

IV.
Guide the leaders of the nations into the ways of peace and justice.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Give your wisdom and strength to the President of the United States, the Governor of this state, and to all leaders throughout the Commonwealth that in all things they may do your will, for your glory and the common good.
*Hear us, O Christ.*

Give to the Congress of the United States, the members of the President’s Cabinet, those who serve in our state legislature, and all others in authority the grace to walk always in the ways of truth.
*Hear us, O Christ.*
Bless the justices of the Supreme Court and all those who administer the law, that they may act with integrity and do justice for all your people.

_Hear us, O Christ._

Give us the will to use the resources of the earth to your glory and for the good of all. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Bless and keep all your people, 

_Hear us, O Christ._

V.

Comfort and liberate the lonely, the bereaved (especially ______ ) and the oppressed. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Keep in safety those who travel (especially ______ ) and all who are in peril. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Heal the sick in body, mind or spirit (especially those who deal with Covid-19, for all healthcare workers and essential workers) and provide for the homeless, the hungry and the destitute. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Guard and protect all children who are in danger. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Shower your compassion on prisoners, hostages and refugees, and all who are in trouble. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Forgive our enemies, persecutors and slanderers, and turn their hearts. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

Hear us as we remember those who have died (especially those who have died due to Covid-19 and at the hands of violence) and grant us with them a share in your eternal glory. 

_Hear us, O Christ._

VI.

Give us true repentance; forgive us our sins of negligence and ignorance and our deliberate sins; and grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit to amend our lives according to your word.

_Holy God,  
Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One,  
Have mercy on us._
A Prayer in Times of Conflict
O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for the Human Family
O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and peoples may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

2 Corinthians 13:13