



## LITANY FOR HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

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### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

*January 14, 2024*

Reader 1: Miriam hid a baby in the bulrushes, disobeying pharaoh's edict to kill the male children of the Hebrew slaves. The child grew to adulthood. Called by God, he liberated his people from Pharaoh's bondage—and Miriam sang a freedom song!

Reader 2: Jonah, called by God to preach repentance to his enemies in Nineveh, resisted. He fled from Nineveh in a storm-tossed ship. Rescued from the depths of the sea, he returned to the enemy city, preached, and witnessed the Ninevites' salvation when they turned to God.

Reader 1: Mary, the mother of Jesus, accepted her call from God with rejoicing, saying, "God has filled the hungry with good food and sent the rich away empty."

Reader 2: Paul, the apostle, journeyed over the known world founding Christian communities. Called by God, he preached reconciliation to Jew and Gentile, creating controversy among his colleagues as he pursued God's purpose of peace among estranged people.

Reader 1: Women marched together, carrying banners and demanding peace and justice. They sought peace among men and women and peace based on justice between races. Called by God, they struggled seventy years to win the right to vote in the United States so that their granddaughters could take up the work they had begun.

Reader 2: Black and white marched together in Alabama, Mississippi, Chicago, and Washington, D.C., called by God to turn the nation around. Martin Luther King was our drum major keeping rhythm as we walked toward a new day when liberty and justice would be shared in peace by all.

Reader 1: The march continues as we raise our voices with all who are oppressed, violated, and rendered invisible because of gender-identity, sexual orientation, race, age, ability, or economic status. We are called to join with all creation crying out for a just peace.

Reader 2: Christ, our peace: we hear your call; we experience your ministry through the lives of peacemakers and justice seekers. Guide us as we follow the path of shalom. We thank you for the cloud of witnesses who have known your presence in their struggles every step of the way to peace. Your promise is sure that peace is possible when we follow in the way you lead. Amen.

#### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: When we confess our sins, we accept God's invitation to clear out the noise and chaos that keep us from recognizing God's loving voice. So, as we come to confess our sin and be reconciled to God and one another, take this opportunity to let God help you declutter your heart and your mind so that you might listen and receive God's love and guidance more clearly.

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved you as our God, nor have we loved our neighbors as ourselves. Our priorities do not line up with yours, and too often we wander from your path by trying to do things our way instead of yours.

**All: Forgive us, Lord. Your servants repent.**

One: Merciful God, we confess that we are too often complacent in answering your call to enact justice. You call us to enter the flow of your justice that rolls down like water, and instead, we inhibit the work of justice by choosing not to pay attention or believe the stories of suffering and need in our midst.

**All: Forgive us, Lord. Your servants repent.**

One: Merciful God, we confess that sometimes we avoid you. We don't want to hear your voice. We don't want to receive your call. We are scared of what you might ask us to do and how letting your grace work in our lives might change us. So, we keep you at arm's length, ready to run when you seem to ask too much of us.

**All: Forgive us, Lord. Your servants repent.**

Merciful God, we confess that there are things that clutter our hearts and minds that we cannot say aloud or do not have words for, and so, we lift them to you now in silence.

SILENT PRAYER

One: Reconciling God, your steadfast love surrounds us, calling us into right relationship with you, with self, with one another, and with creation. As your reconciled and forgiven people, open our hearts to receive all that you have to say to us today.

**All: Speak, Lord, your servants are listening.**

One: Loving God, you call us by name to be your people in the world, pouring your love into us in such abundance that it overflows into the world around us. Guide us, form us, and send us as your people to live out your good news wherever we go.

**All: Call us, Lord, your servants will follow. Amen.**

*Litany Written by Caren L. Caldwell, augmented by Carol McPherson, in Touch Holiness, Resources for Worship, Updated, ed. Ruth C. Duck and Maren C. Tirabassi (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2012), 49-50. When used in worship, use the following permissions statement:  
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