

Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend



**St Paul's, Ivy Episcopal Church
December 14, 2015**

Leader: Let us begin in the name of the Creator, and of the Redeemer, and of the Sustainer. *Amen.*

Gracious God, you sent your Son Jesus into the world to show us the way to a true and lasting peace. Open our minds and hearts that we might hear his message of peace and unity, and allow it to take root in our lives. We ask you this in his name. *Amen*

People: Today we stand together to express our unity and our commitment. We stand as one people against the violence that has touched every corner of every part of our country. And we commit ourselves to journey on the path towards a more perfect peace— peace in all of our homes, our towns and our cities—to a place where the sound of gunfire is stilled and the laughter of children fills the air.

Lord, Make Us Servants of Your Peace



1. Lord, make us ser - vants of your peace; Where there is
2. Where all is doubt, may we sow faith; Where all is
3. Lord Je - sus Christ, may we not seek To be con -
4. May we not look for love's re - turn, But seek to
5. Al - though we die, we live, re - born Through death's dark



hate, may we sow love; Where there is hurt, may
gloom, may we sow hope; Where all is night, may
soled, but to con - sole, Nor look to un - der -
love un - self - ish - ly, For in our giv - ing
night to end - less day; Lord, make us ser - vants



we for - give; Where there is strife, may we make one.
we sow light; Where all is tears, may we sow joy.
stand - ing hearts, But look for hearts to un - der - stand.
we re - ceive, And in for - giv - ing are for - giv'n.
of your peace, To wake at last in heav - en's light.

Text: Based on a prayer attrib. to St. Francis of Assisi; James Quinn, SJ, 1919–2010, © 1994, Used by permission of Selah Publishing Co., Inc.
Tune: O WALY WALY, LM; English melody; harm. by Martin West, b.1929

The congregation is seated for the readings

A reading from the Prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 2:1-5

The word which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem: It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised above the hills, and all the nations shall flow to it and many peoples shall come and say: "Come, let us go up to

the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God

The psalm, *prayed together in unison*

Psalm 18:1-6

¹ I love you, O Lord, my strength.

² The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge; my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

³ I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; so I shall be saved from my enemies.

⁴ The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me;

⁵ the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me.

⁶ In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears.

A reading from Paul's Letter to the Romans

Romans 12:14-21

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." No, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by doing so you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good."

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Response: Thanks be to God

Kyrie Eleison, *Hildegard of Bingen – solo chant*

The congregation is invited to stand

Leader: O guiding Shepherd and Refuge from the raging storm, we seek the comfort and consolation of your warm embrace and sheltering care from the violence that swarms around and within us. Everywhere we turn we're told in no uncertain terms that vengeance and war are the cure for the wrongs waged against us. We are a culture prone and addicted to violence and in need of a disciplined recourse of withdrawal from this dangerous drug.

People: Lord, help us and rescue us.

Leader: Rescue us from ourselves; our self-absorbed anxieties that overwhelm us with destructive behavior and suicidal tendencies. Release us from a fear and hatred of others that garner our need for guns as a means of protection and insulation from them.

Breathe in us your Spirit that radiates life and hope; that enables us to interact positively with others and live as emissaries of your peace.

People: Enable us to take delight in you, O Lord, for you are the desire of our hearts.

Leader: Nurture our children in your ways; feed them abundantly by your wisdom and truth. Reorient their coordination from violent video games; suppress their greed for gangster rap; harness their hunger to humiliate and degrade others because of their gender, race or sexual orientation; and free their minds, mouths and bodies of derogatory terms and foul gestures, for these also are destructive weapons.

People: Lord, help us and rescue us.

Leader: Grant us, O God, the will to turn all weapons of individual or mass destruction into tools of global sustainability and medical advancement. Inspire in us the courage to rid our streets of gang warfare and stray bullets; to rid our homes of domestic violence and accidental shootings; to rid our neighborhoods of police brutality and our highways of racial profiling; to rid our bodies and environment of toxic abuse and our world of international conflict. Grant every soul a faith in you that affirms your likeness in all humanity and creation, and that never again uses religion as a sword severing anyone from an ultimate sense of worth and dignity. Enable us again, O God, to worship you with an ever-burning faith that melts the metal of all vengeance, weaponry and war. Make us instruments of your justice, compassion and peace that your realm may come, and your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

People: Enable us to take delight in you, O Lord, for you are the desire of our hearts.

Leader: Blessed are you who come in the name of the Lord. Amen

Contributed by Rev. Arnold I. Thomas

Litany of Remembrance

Leader: Let us remember all who have been harmed by violence. We acknowledge the strength of those who survived and of those still struggling to heal. For their sake and for ours, we commit ourselves to building each other up and to healing – together.

People: Let us remember the families and loved ones of those who have died from gun violence. We acknowledge their pain and their deep grief. They too, are part of our community, and need our love and help towards healing.

Leader: Let us remember the perpetrators, and the families of those who commit violence. We acknowledge that their lives, too, are devastated and their hopes dashed. For their sake and for ours, we remember that pain goes in many directions from each act of violence.

People: We will stand up to violence. We stand together expressing our unity, our connection to each other and to the divine; our hope for healing and for transformation. Let the Spirit of our Creator move through us. Help us to transform and heal our communities. And let us begin by transforming ourselves.

Contributed by Pat Long and Vandy Bradow

The lighting of candles

Leader: We light these candles to represent the memory of all of people whose lives have been cut short from senseless acts of gun violence. Though these candles will only burn for a time, the light and love that they brought into their world will remain strong forever.

We light these candles to represent our hope as we face the future. Although our lives have been marked by pain and loss, and although pain will remain, we hope for a future that also has joy and happiness.

We light these candles to represent the peace that we seek in our lives. May we find comfort and solace in the midst of the difficulty and pain.

During the chant the congregation is invited to come forward lighting a candle in remembrance of those killed or wounded by guns.

**Dona nobis pacem Domine /
Give to Us Your Peace**

Ostinato Refrain



Do - na no - bis pa - cem Do - mi - ne.
Give to us your peace, O Je - sus Christ.

Text: Psalm 85: Taizé Community, 1982
Tune: Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
© 1982, 1983, 1984, Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent

Leader: May the light of these candles remind us of the tenacity of the human spirit that always seeks life and love even in the hardest of life's moments.

Confession

Leader: Let us confess our need for God's healing grace.

The congregation is invited to kneel

Leader and People: God of all mercy, we confess that we have sinned against you, opposing your will in our lives. We have denied your goodness in each other, in ourselves, and in the world you have created. We repent of the evil that enslaves us, the evil we have done, and the evil done on our behalf. Forgive, restore, and strengthen us through our Savior Jesus Christ, that we may abide in your love and serve only your will. Amen.

Leader: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The congregation is invited to stand for the closing prayers

Leader: Giver of Life and Love, you created all people as one family and called us to live together in harmony and peace. Surround us with your love as we face the challenges and tragedies of gun violence. For our dear ones, for our neighbors, for strangers and aliens, and those known to you alone, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: God of Righteousness, you have given our leaders, especially Barack our President, and Terry our Governor, the members of Congress, the judges of our courts and members of our legislatures, power and responsibility to protect us and to uphold our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. For all who bear such responsibility, for all who struggle to discern what is right in the face of powerful political forces, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: God of Compassion, we give you thanks for first responders, for police officers, firefighters and EMTs, and all those whose duties bring them to the streets, the lobbies, the malls and the homes where the carnage of gun violence takes place day after day. Give them courage and sound judgment in the heat of the moment and grant them compassion for the victims. For our brothers and sisters who risk their lives and their serenity as they rush to our aid, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: Merciful God, bind up the wounds of all who suffer from gun violence, those maimed and disfigured, those left alone and grieving, and those who struggle to get through one more day. Bless them with your presence and help them find hope. For all whose lives are forever marked by the scourge of gun violence, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: God Who Remembers, may we not forget those who have died, more than 30,000 this year, in the gun violence that we have allowed to become routine. Receive them into your heart and comfort us with your promise of eternal love and care. For all who have died, those who die today, and those who will die tomorrow, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: God of Justice, help us, your church, find our voice. Empower us to change this broken world and to protest the needless deaths caused by gun violence. Give us power to rise above our fear that nothing can be done and grant us the conviction to advocate for change. For your dream of love and harmony, Loving God,

People: Make us instruments of your peace.

Leader: All this we pray in the name of the One who offered his life so that we might live, Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

- Contributed by the Rt. Rev. Stephen T. Lane, Episcopal Bishop of Maine

Dismissal

Leader: Now, go forth from this place with renewed inspiration to do the work of God. Seek good, not evil, love goodness, and establish justice.

This the greatest offering we can make; letting justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.

Go in peace, with love for our neighbors and love for Jesus Christ our Lord.

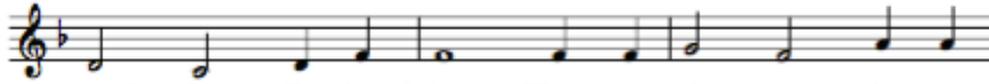
People: Thanks be to God

~ adapted from a benediction by Phyllis Tenney

Healing River of the Spirit



1. Heal - ing riv - er of the Spir - it, Bathe the
2. Well-spring of the heal - ing Spir - it, Stream that
3. Liv - ing stream that heals the na - tions, Make us



wounds that liv - ing brings. Plunge our pain, our sin, our
flows to bring re - lease, As we gain our selves, our
chan - nels of your pow'r. All the world is torn by



sad - ness Deep be - neath your sa - cred springs.
sens - es, May our lives re - flect your peace.
con - flict; Wars are rag - ing at this hour.



Wea - ry from the rest - less search - ing That has
Grate - ful for the flood that heals us, May your
Sav - ing Spir - it, move a - mong us, Guide our



lured us from your side, We dis - cov - er in your
Church en - act your grace. As we meet both friend and
wind - ing hu - man course, Till we find our way to -



pres - ence Peace the world can - not pro - vide.
stran - ger, May we see our Sav - ior's face.
geth - er, Flow - ing home - ward to our Source.

Text: Ruth Duck, b.1947, © 1996, The Pilgrim Press
Tune: BEACH SPRING, 8 7 8 7 D; *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; harm. by Ronald A. Nelson, b.1927

*Many thanks to the local Episcopal Peace Fellowship chapter,
Charlottesville Coalition for Gun Violence Prevention and
the Presbytery of the James Public Policy and Witness Purpose Group.*

If you would like to be involved in local efforts to reduce gun violence,
please email Rev. Gay Lee Einstein at ccgvp1@gmail.com

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