Prayer Guide for Centering Prayer on Peace with Justice

Compiled by the United Methodist Church of Libertyville, Justice and Equity team
MAY 2025

As United Methodists we believe that Christ's call is "to build peace with justice". In a world marked by conflict and injustices, we are to pray, work, and advocate both for individual works of mercy and systemic changes. The following resources are intended to guide and inspire your prayer as you center around peace with justice.

Included you will find three sections:

1. Prayers – Prayers from a variety of sources
2. Scriptures and Hymns – Quotes from the Bible and hymns
3. Words – Short quotes and excerpts from authors, past and present

All works included within this guide are quoted from their original sources. This guide and its content are not intended for commercial distribution or sale.

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Prayers

Prayer takes many forms – memorized verse, random thoughts, silent pleading. Use these prayers from a variety of sources to inspire your personal prayer.

An Exercise in Silence

Silent prayer is an ancient, effective way to face the rough edges of our hearts. Find a place to sit and still yourself. Close your eyes and breathe long, deep breaths. You should be able to feel your ribs expand and your belly rise and fall. After about ten minutes or so, you can start to feel like not just your ribs and belly are expanding, but so is your heart. Whatever tenderness, grief, and hope reside in you, you can feel them through a contemplative prayer. When you have said, "Amen," take the peace that passes understanding and the truth you learned from the Holy Spirt and go with a heart grateful to God into the rest of your day.

Becca Stevens, founder of Thistle Farms, a residential, restorative program for women coming out of addiction, abuse, and violence in Nashville, TN

National Day of Prayer 2025: Seeds of Peace and Hope

Prayer from UMC Bishop Schwerin,
Northern Illinois-Wisconsin Area

O God, whose deep sharing reveals the hope of triune giving and receiving in the life of God, by your generous mercy forgive us all that is past. By your grace, open the eyes of our faith that we may behold you in the neighbors you have given us to love and change us. Recommit us to the bonds of love that would ripple hospitality in the world.

God of all hope, walk with us as you would a pilgrim to Emmaus, opening to us your purposes and the power of the scriptures, help us to know the hope that was revealed in the breaking of the bread.

Grant us such faith that our prayers raise the hope that was in the hearts of Paul and Silas as the prison bars fell away. Give your church and world the reconciliation of Peter and Paul, that our common unity would bear witness to your great love in Jesus Christ, more than the divisions from which we repent.

Make us a Pentecost people. Move us from Babel's confusion to the peace we know in the beloved community of Jesus, as a foretaste of the peace we know when we shall see your face, in the power and love we know as Christ. Amen.

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life."
— **Anglican clergyman**

Loving God

Who understands before I form my prayer

Who hears when I call and translates my humble words into beautiful hymns of gratitude and praise.

And responds to my uncertain cry for help with assurance, peace, and palpable presence.

Here I am as fully in your presence as I am able to be

Offering my fears, my needs, my hopes, my love, and my life

For I am yours and belong to no other.

LISTEN Praying in a Noisy World by Reuben P. Job, 2014

God, set me on the path of healing again.

Turn me to the rising sun when I need to be inspired

Turn me to the wilderness when I need to be lost.

Turn me toward the world when I need to work.

Turn me toward the mountain when I need to retreat.

So that in turning I find Your loving grace all around.

Turning and Turning by Becca Stevens 2017

God,

Greater than anything I can imagine, Holiness purer and more brilliant than light

Mercy that forgives, redeems, and leads to righteousness

Love that accepts and embraces me just as I am,

Grace that sustains and molds me into more than I am,

Promised presence that will never forsake or leave me alone

I tremble in awe of such greatness and love as I walk in the light and life of your unfailing presence.

LISTEN Praying in a Noisy World by Reuben P. Job, 2014

Give me eyes to see that You are the person in front of me who is hungry, gracious Lord. When I fail to see my neighbor as myself, cure my blindness. When I fail to hear Your voice when a friend is speaking from their brokenness, give me ears to hear. When I can't feel empathy for the stranger who is afraid, kindle my heart to comfort. In all things, mold me to be more compassionate as a follower of Your ways. Remind me again that in loving one another, we all find our way to You.

A Prayer for Compassion by Becca Stevens 2017

God revealed in so many ways,

The beauty and magnificence of creation

The words of prophet, priest, and servant

The life, death, resurrection of Jesus

The power and constant presence of your Spirit

The witness of your servant saints, and

Your sustaining grace that gives me life.

I bring myself into your presence, not to tell you what to do

But to invite you to be my honored guest

As I offer to you all that I am, all that I hope to become, and invite your transforming presence

To shape me more and more into your beloved and faithful child

For I am yours and I belong to you, My faithful Savior and Guide

LISTEN Praying in a Noisy World by Reuben P. Job, 2014

O God, you are the hope of all the ends of the earth
The God of the spirits of all flesh.
Hear our humble intercession for all races and families on earth,
that you will turn all hearts to you,
Remove from our minds hatred, prejudice, and contempt for those
who are not of our own race or color, class or creed
Departing from everything that estranges and divides,
We may be brought by you into unity of spirit in the bond of
PEACE.

Church of Scotland, 20th century

God, go with us. Help us to be an honor to the church.
Give us the grace to follow Christ's word, to be clear in our task
and careful in our speech.
Give us open hands and joyful hearts. Let Christ be on our lips.
May our lives reflect a love of truth and compassion.
Let no one come to us and go away sad.
May we offer hope to the poor, and solace to the disheartened.
Let us sow living seeds, words that are quick with life,
that faith may be the harvest in people's hearts.
In word and in example let your light shine in the dark like the
morning star. Do not allow the wealth of the world or its
enchantment flatter us into silence as to your truth.
Do not permit the powerful, to keep us from professing what is right.

Prayer by Alcuin of York, adapted by Rachel Held Evans in her book "Searching for Sunday"

Wesley Covenant Prayer by John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

Teach us to pray, God, as you have always welcomed us to pray: fully human, fully yours, fully held, and fully loved.

We will tell you the truth of our lives, and of this world. And we will listen to the truth you speak back to us.

The truth of our belovedness, of your justice, of your faithfulness,

of love. And say let it be so. Let it be so in me.

Sarah Bessey. A Benediction

A Rhythm of Prayer, edited by Sarah Bessey, 2021

Lord, You have made us in Your image. Teach us to see this day, every person we meet, whether on the streets or in the mirror, as Your Incarnate face. All our journeys begin and end with you – now we need to learn how to travel close to You on our way home. Help us seek and knock to find You wherever we are. Let us feel the cloud of witnesses that assures us of Your guiding hand. Whether we lie down in green pastures or walk in the valley of the shadow of death, let us feel You leading us and holding us fast.

A Prayer for Seeking by Becca Stevens 2017

Prayer for Peace and Unity

You have called us to be one, To live in unity and harmony, and yet we are divided: race from race, faith from faith, rich from poor, old from young, neighbour from neighbour…

O Lord, by whose cross all enmity is brought to an end, break down the walls that separate us, tear down the fences of indifference and hatred; forgive us the sins that divide us, free us from pride and self-seeking, overcome our prejudices and fears, give us courage to open ourselves to others, by the power of the Holy Spirit make us one.

Opening worship of the 6th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (Vancouver 1983)

Compassionate God, speak to me in whispers and sweet silence.

This day has left me so tender a breeze could break my heart.

Be present as I take my rest and visit me with kind angels.

In my resting, strengthen my desire for courage.

Rekindle my heart to face the worries of a new day.

Inspire me with a new thought to carry me through.

Renew a right spirit within me to fight injustice.

Let my tears be a sign of compassion, not weariness.

Let my grief be a sign of my love, not my despair.

You are the Holy One who knows that in my weakness,

I find Your strength.

A Prayer When We Feel Vulnerable by Becca Stevens

Morning Prayer For Fellow-Prisoners by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.
Help me to pray
And to concentrate my thoughts on you;
I can't do this alone.In me there's darkness,
But with you there's light;
I'm lonely, but you don't leave me; (continued on next page)

I'm feeble in heart, but with you there's help;
I'm restless, but with you there's peace.
In me there's bitterness, but with you there's patience;
I don't understand your ways,
But you know the way for me.

O Heavenly Father,
I praise and thank you
For rest in the night;
I praise and thank you for this new day;
I praise and thank you for all your goodness
and faithfulness throughout my life.

You have granted me many blessings;
Now let me also accept what's hard from your hand.
You will lay on me no more than I can bear.
You make all things work together for good for your children.

Lord Jesus Christ,
You were poor and in distress, a captive and forsaken as I am.

You know all man's troubles;
You abide with me when all men fail me;
You remember and seek me;
It's your will that I should know you and turn to you. (continued on next page)

Lord, I hear your call and follow;
Help me.

O Holy Spirit,
Give me faith that will protect me
from despair, from passions, and from vice;
Give me such love for God and men
as will blot out all hatred and bitterness;
Give me the hope that will deliver me
from fear and faint-heartedness. Amen

God, we make our prayer in silence, troubled by the fears in our hearts and anxieties in this world. Forgive all that we have yet to learn and when we feel panic and are tortured by insecurity. We can be paralyzed by the thought of tomorrow and what awaits in the days ahead. We are but children stumbling in the darkness and groping for Your hand. Do not hide Your presence from us or reject us in our weaknesses and fear. Guide us in the darkness toward Your loving light and help us walk in peace. There are so many things to fear and so many fears that keep us lonely. Let us put our whole trust in You and come to wisdom and understanding – and all for love's sake.

A Prayer in Times of Fear by Becca Stevens

A P R A Y E R F O R T H E C H U R C H **by Rev. Emily Swan**

Spirit of Jesus --
Come with fire that refines,
Water that refreshes,
Wind that topples,
Breath that fills.
Kindle a global revival of empathy, justice,
and active peacemaking.
Birth a witness of Love that is bigger and better
than we inherited.
Liberate us from privilege and oppression.
Unshackle the gospel from nationalism, colonialism,
white supremacy, and every other lens
that shrouds the Good News.
Give us an abundance of grace for others and ourselves.
Grant us compassion for those who suffer.
Free us from the influence of money, power, and acclaim.
Restore our reputation for caring for the poor,
loving our neighbors, being ambassadors
of peace and stewards of the earth.
Unlock the immense resources hoarded in the Western Church
and release them for your name's sake.
Encourage us, so we do not grow cynical,
isolated, and burnt-out.
Fan our hopes, our joys, and our connections.
Allow us to rest when we need rest.
Enable us to see you in each person we encounter.
Show us mercy, in our humanity.
Let us love more fully than we thought possible.
Let us not be quick on the draw,
ready to retaliate, escalate, assassinate.
Let our collective fervor for justice
eclipse institutional concerns. (continued on next page)

Let us trust and follow the wisdom
of those who have been marginalized.
Let us persevere in creating safe places of worship
to eat bread and drink wine together. Let us stand for Love and with Love, following the way of your Son as best we're able.
Let us not fear an experiential spirituality.
Let us listen to the wondrous bodies you gave us.
Let us hear your voice
and tangibly feel you with us.
Let us discern your guidance.
Let us abide in and with you.
Show us what you're doing, so we can work together.
Move where you will, when you will,
in whatever way you will.
Come, Holy Spirit and restore your Church. Amen.

Scriptures and Hymns

The Bible and the music of our worship provide a voice for our fears, doubts, and struggles when our words fail us. Use these quotes from scriptures and hymns to inspire your prayer in this moment.

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.

Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me.

Daniel Iverson, 1926. UMC Hymnal #393

Jesus replied, "The most important one is this, Israel, listen! Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you will love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these.

Mark 12:29-31

Oh Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder, consider all the worlds thy hands have made. I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed.

When through the wood and forest glades I wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees. When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur and hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze.

Then sings my soul, my savior God to thee.
How great thou art! How great thou art!

Stuart Kline, 1953. How Great Thou Art UMC Hymnal #77

And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:3-5

And God will raise you up on eagle's wings,
bear you on the breath of dawn

Make you to shine like the sun and
hold you in the palm of God's hand.

Michael Jonas, 1979 On Eagle's Wings
UMC Hymnal #143

O God, you are my God, I seek you, My soul thirsts for you.

My flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Psalm 63:1

O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be.

Let thy goodness, like a fetter bind my wandering heart to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it. Prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, O, take and seal it. Seal it for your courts above.

Robert Robinson, 1758. Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing

UMC Hymnal #400

Make your ways known to me, Lord, show me your paths

Lead me in your truth, teach it to me

Because you are the God who saves me. I put my hope in you all day long.

Psalm 25:4-6

When the night comes, when you're all alone
When there's trouble stirring in your soul
And if your world is falling apart
Just hold on for the morning break to dawn

Come and lay your burdens down
To the place where freedom is found
At the feet, at the feet of Jesus
Come and lay your burdens down

Burdens by Jamie Kimmett, 2019

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us.

Hebrews 12:1

Surrender don't come natural to me
I'd rather fight You for something I don't really want
Than to take what you give that I need
And I've beat my head against so many walls
Now I'm falling down, I'm falling on my knees

I'm singing hold me, Jesus, 'cause I'm shaking like a leaf
You have been King of my glory
Won't you be my Prince of Peace?

Hold Me Jesus by Rich Mullins, 1986

Weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

Psalm 30:5

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my hand.

Here I am Lord by Dan Schutte, 1981. UMC Hymnal #593

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed your hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

Great is Thy Faithfulness by Chisholm/Runyan, 1923. UMC Hymnal #140

After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire.
And after the fire came a gentle whisper.
1 Kings 19:12

Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place,
I can feel his mighty power and his grace.
I can hear the brush of angel's wings. I see glory on each face.
Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place.

Surely The Presence of the Lord by Lanny Wolfe, 1977 UMC Hymnal #328

Ask and it will be given to you. Seek and you will find.
Knock and the door will be opened to you.
Matthew 7:7

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,
that saved a wretch like me.
I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
as long as life endures.

Amazing Grace by John Newton, 1779
UMC Hymnal #378

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
Colossians 3:12-13

Forgive our sins as we forgive, you taught us, Lord, to pray.
But you alone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls. Bid resentment cease.
Then, bound to all in bonds of love, our lives will spread your peace.

Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive by Rosamond Herklots, 1966
UMC Hymnal #390

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth. I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore, I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.
Psalm 119:103-105

This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine.
This little light of mine, I'm goin'-a let it shine.
Let it shine! Let it shine! Let it shine!

This Little Light of Mine, Afro-American spiritual UMC Hymnal #585

I lift my eyes to the hills. From where will my help come?
My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
Psalm 121:1-2

When the solid ground is falling out from underneath my feet
Between the black skies, and my red eyes, I can barely see
When I realize I've been sold out by my friends and my family
I can feel the rain reminding me

In the eye of the storm, You remain in control
In the middle of the war, You guard my soul
You alone are the anchor, when my sails are torn
Your love surrounds me in the eye of the storm

Eye of the Storm by Ryan Stevenson and Brian Fowler

He has told you, O mortal, what is good
and 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

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
he leadeth me beside the still waters.

He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths
of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

King James Version

Words of Inspiration and Encouragement

Our faith is fed from many streams – some secular and some nonsecular. Use these words from the past and present to help you form your prayers.

For there is always light,

If we are only brave enough to see it,

If we are only brave enough to be it

The Hill We Climb by Amanda Gorman 2021

Prayer is not meant to be complicated, complex, and left to professionals. Prayer is for all of us. It is simply offering the fears, needs, hopes, longings, and questions of our minds and hearts to God as honestly, earnestly, and accurately as we can.

LISTEN Praying in a Noisy Word by Reuben P. Job 2014

Like winter, the wilderness is always a promise. God leads us in and, one way or another, he leads us out again. Or, if he doesn't lead us out, he does something almost more miraculous: he plants trees in the desert, and he causes a river to flow there.

Placemaker, Cultivating Places of Comfort, Beauty, and Peace

By Christie Purifoy 2019

Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God

Martin Luther King

When we lift our hearts and minds to God's communicating presence, God does not begin and then cease to enter into this loving self-giving. His Son, Jesus, realized in his prayer that his Father surrounded him at every moment of his earthly existence with his Spirit. He opened himself to receive that "invasion" of his Father's goodness by yielding actively to whatever the Father was asking of him in each moment. Thus, Jesus prayed always in whatever he was engaged in.

Prayer for Jesus, was not an activity in which he engaged before he did something else. It was a permanent, ever-increasing state of being turned inwardly toward the Father at every moment in loving trust and self-surrender. Prayer became synonymous with loving surrender based on childlike trust.

George A. Maloney. *In Jesus We Trust*

Let the globe, if nothing else, say this is true,

That even as we grieved, we grew

That even as we hurt, we hoped

That even as we tired, we tried.

That we'll forever be tied together, Victorious

Not because we will never again know, Defeat

But because we will never again sow, Division

The Hill We Climb by Amanda Gorman 2021

God's ears don't play favorites. God's ears don't assess bank accounts or social status before they attune themselves to the story your tears or your fears are telling.

God's ears are here for the babies,

For the immigrant, for the refugee,

For the depressed, for the lonely,

For the dreamers

For the widow, the orphan, the oppressed and the helpless

Those about to make a mess or caught in the middle
of cleaning one up

Dirt don't scare God's ears. God is a gardener. God knows things can't grow without sun, rain, and soil.

Amena Brown *She said, "How do you know when you are hearing from God?"*
A Rhythm of Prayer, Edited by Sarah Bessey, 2020

It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without heart. Mahatma Gandhi

We all want to be brave when it counts – to be the one who steps up, leans in, and does the right thing when it matters most. We want to bring our best selves when we're called upon, to speak with clarity and conviction in a pivotal situation. You have all the raw material you need to live with courage and purpose in your decisive moment, and all the moments that precede and follow them.

How We Learn to Be Brave - Decisive Moments in Life and Faith

By Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington 2023

To compose a country committed

To all cultures, colors, characters,

And conditions of man.

And so we lift our gazes not

To what stands between us,

But what stands before us.

We close the divide

Because we know to put

Our future first, we must first

Put our differences aside

The Hill We Climb by Amanda Gorman 2021

If peace is a state of harmony, if it is a kind of wholeness or completeness, then we will never find it by running away from broken things and messy places. The work of wholeness and the cultivation of peace will carry us right on out and into the realm of chaos. It will lead us to edges. How frightened we will sometimes be. How hopeless we will sometimes feel. And yet here is where we will make gardens. Here we will eat the fruit of them. And when joy comes in the morning, as joy always does come, we will clap our hands with all the trees of the field.

Placemaker, Cultivating Places of Comfort, Beauty, and Peace

By Christie Purifoy 2019

Let gratitude be the pillow upon which you kneel to say your nightly prayer. And let faith be the bridge you build to overcome evil and welcome good.

Maya Angelou

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly…

The Man in the Arena, speech at the Sorbonne in Paris

Theodore Roosevelt April 23, 1910

Pear blossoms are falling like snow this spring
Soft petals covering passing pilgrims like unceasing prayers
Breathing in fragrant abundance.
I can't remember the cold winter's bare branches.
Pear blossoms in wide-open fields
Preach with grace that all of creation, from Eden on
Rains down love.

Love Rains Down by Becca Stevens 2017

Why must people kneel down to pray? If I really wanted to pray, I'll tell you what I'd do. I'd go out into a great big field all alone or in the deep, deep woods, and I'd look up into the sky up – up – up – into that lovely blue sky that looks as if there was no end to its blueness. And then I'd just ***feel*** *a prayer.*

L. M. Montogomery, Anne of Green Gables

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason, I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Every moment in life is in some way decisive, part of the one life we are given to live. Recognizing life's ebb and flow helps us prepare for those moments when something important is on the line. "For everything there is a season," scripture teaches us, "and a time for every matter under heaven." It takes courage to accept and fully live the lives we have been given.

How We Learn to Be Brave - Decisive Moments in Life and Faith

By Mariann Edgar Budde, Episcopal Bishop of Washington 2023

You don't have to know the right people and boast a carefully curated Instagram feed with the famous and the beautiful and the influential. You don't have to be conservative, and you don't have to be liberal. You don't have to identify with certain political persuasions of ideology on sexuality or science or socio-economics or foreign policy. You can be a social justice warrior or, you know, not.

None of that moves the meter of your belovedness. God won't say, *Okay, now I love her just a bit more because, look, she is finally out of debt or thin or powerful or influential or tireless.*

Sarah Bessey *A Reminder*

A Rhythm of Prayer, Edited by Sarah Bessey, 2020

Every decision is fraught with unintended consequences. We busy ourselves making new worlds with little thought for the old we are destroying. ***Or***, we try to reclaim a lost Eden, but the new worlds we make often seem even farther away from that elusive place. When we felled the trees, did we lose forever those places capable of touching the very depths of our God-given capacity for wonder. ***Or***, can we remake such places today?

Placemaker, Cultivating Places of Comfort, Beauty, and Peace

By Christie Purifoy 2019

We believe you are at work bringing peace. True peace – flourishing, wholeness, and well-being. We hear your words of peace and know in our minds that you are:

Lord, the God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome.

You show no partiality. You defend the cause of the fatherless, motherless, and the widow. You love the stranger.

We believe and we feel overwhelmed – sometimes it is hard to believe that you actually care about the injustice and suffering. When we don't see your work. When we sense the apathy from the church. When we feel small and forget that we were designed to be different and make things different. When we feel overwhelmed by darkness in the world – the violence, injustice, poverty, oppression, abuse.

Give us hope not to be overcome. Give us eyes to see your goodness for our world. Give us the strength to hold the pain of injustice in our world and faith that it will end. Give us courage to be honest with ourselves about how and why we are doing justice.

Rev. Sandra Maria Van Opstal *A Liturgy of Longing*