

## **Days of Prayer and Action for Colombia**

### **Lutheran Prayers and Litanies**

*Below find prayers, litanies, and responsive readings that may be useful for Lutheran services, vigils and gatherings as part of this partnership.*

#### **Prayer for Colombia**

"We pray for the peacemakers in Colombia, the churches, and all people who in countless ways seek to right the wrongs, heal the wounded and sick, speak the truth, and protect the vulnerable. We give thanks for those who are empowered by their faith to be peacemakers. We ask that you would protect them from all harm and danger. God, give us strength as we seek to be voices for peace in Colombia, strengthen our efforts to bring forth the words of truth, compassion and peace that we receive from our Colombian brothers and sisters. Bring us all to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly in your ways, through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Source: Lutheran World Relief, 2003

#### **Prayer of Commitment (to be said in Unison)**

English:

The journey toward peace is one in which the end is not known at the beginning. The journey cannot be made by flying over the conflict, or driving past it. Those paths are tempting, but in the end futile. Only by walking through conflict with the people who are living it - sharing the dust and fatigue, stumbling and starting again, weeping with those who weep, and rejoicing with those who rejoice - can transformation be reached.

So, we commit ourselves to talking together and with people around the world on the footpaths to Truth and Mercy, Justice and Peace.

En Español:

La jornada hacia la paz es una jornada cuyo final no se conoce al comienzo. Esta jornada no se logra ignorando o soslayando los conflictos. Vano es el final de esos caminos de tentación. Solo caminando en medio del conflicto junto con los que sufren; compartiendo el polvo y la fatiga, tropezando y levantándonos nuevamente, llorando con los que lloran y regocijándonos con los que se regocian...solo así se alcanza la transformación.

Nos comprometemos a caminar juntos con los que alrededor del mundo caminan la senda de la verdad, la compasión, la justicia y la paz.

Source: Footpaths, Center for the Transformation of Conflict, Eastern Mennonite University

## **PRAYERS FOR OPENING AND CLOSING**

### **Opening Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. We gather today to pray for the people of Colombia, in the midst of the darkness of their internal strife. We light this candle to break the darkness; and as we pray, discuss, learn, and listen together we look to God's word to break the silence brought by distance, ignorance and denial. Where one people suffer, we all suffer; where one people rejoice, we all rejoice.

All: Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray...

All: We gather, in God's presence and by God's grace, to pray for the people of Colombia. For more than fifty years Colombia has been embroiled in war, exacerbated in recent years by millions of dollars earned from drug trafficking, paramilitary lawlessness, and guerrilla warfare. The people of Colombia are tired of war and violence, and they cry out for peace. Millions of children, men and women, young and old, march for peace, pray for peace, work for peace...yet peace does not come. Let us open our hearts and minds together in silent reflection, asking for God's power and intervention for peace for the Colombian people. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray.

Women: For the children, who grow up knowing only a climate of war and violence, we pray that as your child, Jesus, came as the Prince of Peace, and in his adult life denounced violence and hatred, let us pray that this climate of fear, horror, death and destruction may soon pass, so that they might enjoy life in all its fullness. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Men: Particularly for the child soldier and the young draftees, male and female, we pray that those who conscript them will cease the abuse of their young bodies and minds for purposes of war, using drugs to make them behave more violently, and brain-washing methods to distort their understanding of themselves and others. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

All: For the mothers and fathers of children forced into war, victims of so much violence; we pray that families may be reunited to rebuild dreams and unity within communities, to rebuild homes, and to rest assured that war will be no more. We hear the cries of the mothers and fathers, grandparents, sisters and brothers, for the children lost to war, despair, hopelessness, and for those who flee the country in search of opportunities and peace of mind not possible in a country at war. Lord in your mercy,

Leader: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For the millions of people displaced in Colombia by the war, we cry out. We pray for those whose homes and villages have been and even today are being destroyed by guerrilla forces, paramilitary and military armies. We pray for those families and communities who are intimidated by all sides, and often forced to collaborate with one side or another, making them vulnerable to allegations of collaboration with the enemy.

We pray for those who have been driven out and are now being forced from their land where they have eked out livings, adding to the growing populations of the unemployed and underemployed in urban areas which further tear them apart socially. For these uprooted, the marginalized, the homeless, the excluded, let us pray.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: All these and other concerns of our hearts today we bring before you, O God, who

asks us to place our trust in you.  
All: Amen.

### **Opening Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. We give thanks today for those visionaries among us who dream dreams and see new visions and new possibilities. For those who do not despair, but inspired and empowered by their faith become peace-makers, bringing healing and hope to broken hearts, broken lives, broken communities and broken institutions. We give thanks also for Jesus, the peace maker, who came and lived among us. And we give thanks for your Spirit who empowers and emboldens us to become peacemakers in our time and in our place.

All: Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Leader: We pray for those policy makers who are content to find easy answers and who are unwilling to look at the more difficult issues of poverty and injustice. Give them new eyes to see and new hearts to understand. Lord in your mercy.

Leader: We pray for those farmers in Colombia who this week have lost their crops of vegetables

and who no longer have food for their animals to eat and who have no source of income now to provide for their families because of aerial fumigation. As they consider leaving their homes to join the countless numbers of internally displaced help them to find shelter, food, and health care at the hands of caring individuals and communities. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: These and all other concerns of our hearts we commend to you, oh God of judgment and mercy.

All: Amen.

### **Opening Prayer**

Leader: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Leader: Let us pray. Today we remember the churches of Colombia and their leaders. We pray to

God that they may continue to find strength and hope amidst so much despair. Thank you God for their courage, patience, wisdom, and unfailing love for you and all people as they hold up the light of hope and life in the midst of darkness.

All: Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Leader: Let us pray. We continue to lift up our prayers today for human rights workers, journalists,

health care workers, humanitarian aid workers, and for all those who in countless ways seek to right the wrongs, heal the wounded and sick, speak the truth, minimize the violence, and protect the vulnerable. We give you thanks, and ask that you would protect them from all harm and danger. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For the Colombian and international peacemakers seeking the ways of peace and the management of conflict. We pray that they may be given wisdom, patience, and courage for their tasks. Those who make war must be those who make peace. Open the

hearts and minds of those who now see each other as enemies. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: For the nations of the world, we ask your guidance, that they may accompany the Colombian people with compassion and wisdom. Convince us all to turn our swords into plowshares, and to wage war no more. Lord in your mercy.

All: Hear our prayer.

Leader: The prayers of the people are invited...

Leader: These and all other concerns of our hearts we commend to you, oh God of the nations. Bring us all to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly in your ways, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Source for all Opening and Closing Prayers: Lutheran World Relief

### **Responsorial**

Responsorial: They who do justice will live in the presence of God. (Psalm 15)

Reader: They who show no condition in sharing the gifts of their treasure, who live not off the poor: They will stand firm forever.

Responsorial: They who do justice will live in the presence of God.

Source: Catholic Relief Services, A Service of Prayer and Support for our Neighbors in Colombia

### **Litany for Sending Forth (Recommitment)**

Group I: We have come to end the violence

Group II: We have come to end the silence

Unison: Yes we will!

Group I: We have come to break the terror

Group II: We have come to stem the flood of intimidation

Unison: Yes we will!

Group I: We have come to heal the wounded

Group II: We are here to help each other

Unison: Yes we will!

Unison: We will create a new world that is safe, just and joyful

YES WE WILL

Now is the time

The end of terror, the triumph of courage

We are the ones we have been waiting for

Source: Colombia Mobilization, Sept. 2001

### **Litany: A Prayer for the United States and Colombia**

Leader: "And the leaves of the tree shall be for the healing of the nations."

Speaker I: For the healing of the poor, whose bodies suffer from malnutrition and disease, and whose hearts ache when there is no food for their children,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker II: For the healing of the rich, who are bound up in protecting their possessions, and do not experience the life-giving freedom found in sharing,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker III: For the healing of members of armed groups, who struggle to come to terms with the violence they have seen and done, and who see no way out,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker I: For the healing of those who have lost trust in their neighbors, believing they do not have their best interests at heart,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker II: For the healing of those who have given in to cynicism, who see injustice as inevitable,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker III: For the healing of those who no longer have hope, who have been waiting for signs of spring for far too long,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker I: For the healing of policymakers, who continue to seek security through arms and peace and through violence,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker II: For the healing of the land, water and sky, which have been degraded by those who see God's creation only as a resource to be exploited and not as a gift to be cared for,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Speaker III: For the healing of both the United States and Colombia, countries who have seen parts of their populations as expendable, leaving scars that are still visible,

All: We pray to you, O Lord.

Leader: Thank you, God, for your vision of restoration and healing, revealed to us in Scripture. We long for people of all nations to find rest together in the shade of your healing tree. AMEN.

Source: Mennonite Central Committee, For the Healing of the Nations

### **Voices That Sing and Ask**

Our Father

Tell me who can explain to the children here

So much violence

So much sadness

Why there is nowhere to play

Why the rivers are drying up

Why the television only shows

War and people crying.

Source: Martha Santanilla, Mennonite Central Committee

### **Responsive Reading**

Reader I:

Look at the old ones

See the power in those old eyes and frail, cupped hands

Breathe it in

Know it is your own power, too

You are one of them

They live in you as you in them

and you marvel at them

How did they survive?  
How did they stand it?  
Reader II:  
We struggled  
We held out our hands and touched each other  
We remembered to laugh  
We went to endless meetings  
We said no  
We put our bodies on the line  
We said yes  
Reader I:  
They wait  
You realize they are waiting for you  
and you wonder what it is they want  
you to do  
And you think maybe they want you to ask  
them something  
So you say  
Tell me, old ones  
How did you do it?  
How did you change our world?  
And they smile  
Listen  
Hear what they say to you  
Reader II:  
We invented, we created  
We walked straight through our fears  
We formed the circle  
We danced  
We spoke the truth  
We dared to live it

Source: United Church of Christ and Colombia Mobilization, Sept. 2001

### **WEAVINGS - To be led by four speakers**

Speaker I: God of Colombia and the United States, we bring our threads of confused thoughts to your all-powerful and all-caring presence.

Speaker II: We pray for the people of Colombia, who are experiencing the inauguration of a new phase of violence and tension.

Speaker III: We pray for the people of the United States, whose taxes provide military aid for the government of Colombia.

Speaker IV: We pray for the people of faith of Colombia, who live in Christ's peace as they teach nonviolence and comfort the families displaced by violence.

Speaker II: We pray for the leaders of Colombia and the United States, that they hear your creative solutions to the increasing economic and humanitarian crisis in Colombia.

Speaker III: We pray for the armed groups of Colombia, that they discover their common humanity and desire for peace with their country folk.

Speaker IV: We pray for the nonviolent seekers of dignified life and peace with justice, that they feel your courage and perseverance coursing through their veins.

ALL: WEAVE US TOGETHER, GOD, ONE PEOPLE, ONE CARE, ONE HOPE.

Speaker I: God of us all, we are drained by the years of terror and the murders of your workers for peace. Our hearts overflow with

Speaker II: Despair for the continuing death and destruction,

Speaker III: Indignation at the executions of your sacred, peace-seeking workers,

Speaker IV: Incomprehension of how humans treat one another, and

Speaker II: Frustration with our own sense of helplessness.

Speaker I: God of love, give the people of Colombia and the people of the United States,

Speaker III: Hope for a kinder Colombia

Speaker IV: Belief that positive change is possible

Speaker II: Faith to withstand more disappointment, and

Speaker III: Strength to continue to witness for justice.

ALL: WEAVE US TOGETHER, GOD, ONE PEOPLE, ONE CARE, ONE HOPE.

Source: Janna Bowman with MCC in Bogotá, 2002

### **Matthew 5: 1-16**

"Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when men revile and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trodden under foot by men.

'You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.'"