

A Service of Prayer for the City of Baltimore

Scripture Sentence

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore, we will not fear, though
 the earth should change,
though the mountains shake in
 the heart of the sea;
though its waters roar and foam,
 though the mountains tremble
 with its tumult.
- Psalm 46:1-2

Prayer

Gracious God, we gather
to grieve painful losses and broken dreams;
to call upon your saving power and healing love;
and to pray for renewal, recovery, and restoration.
We are the sheep of your pasture, O God;
we are the work of your hands.
Gather us close to your heart and into your fold
so that we may know the comfort of your sheltering presence;
through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Hymn No. 775 I Want Jesus to Walk With Me

Prayer of Confession

Loving God,
we confess that we have not lived up to
your dreams for us.
We have let our own prejudices
cloud our ability to love our neighbors,
we have let our fears
keep us from following you
into the broken places of our city and our world.
Forgive us, and give us the courage
to listen for your call,
and to follow the risen Christ
into those places where you would lead us. **Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

When our pain is too deep for words,
God stands with us, offering grace.
When we are weary from the weight of the brokenness,
God stands with us, offering grace.
And God stands with us now, offering grace and mercy.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God,

Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path.

As we meditate upon your word,

may we find that the darkness is not so dark, and experience your presence.

Strengthen us and give us the assurance of your peace

in the knowledge that you walk beside us.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 58: 5-8a

New Testament Reading Revelation 21:1-5a

Litany for Rebuilding Community

Leader: Just as God called Ezra to rebuild the temple, God calls us to rebuild our communities,

People: **Help us to stay, not run. Encourage us to invest and take risks.**

Leader: Just as Christ endured the pain of the cross in order to secure for us the Glory of the Resurrection for all humankind,

People: **Remind us that we must enter into the pain of our communities before we may participate in the joy of new life through your Spirit.**

Leader: Just as you empowered Nehemiah to speak out for the people Israel, and gave him courage to confront those who would oppose God's rebuilding of Jerusalem,

People: **Give us power to contend even with the principalities and powers in partnership with the poor and powerless. Empower us to speak out even when we don't have permission.**

Leader: Help us to remember that just as Nehemiah shared the call of God with those he found in Jerusalem,

People: **We are to share our call with others, sometimes in joy, sometimes in anger, sometimes in sadness, so that others too may have the opportunity to respond.**

Leader: Just as you promised the prophets of old that you were in their words, and would not forsake them, though the mountains might be shaken on their foundation,

People: **Let it ever be in our minds that the hand of God is upon us and our work, that our God is a loving God, gracious and full of mercy, and that all we do in God's service will be confirmed in God's own time and manner.**

All: Loving God, merciful Lord, send us with your Spirit and confirm in us your Call, that even as we go out, we go with God, with the whole world at our side. Amen. ¹

Hymn no. 379 We Shall Overcome

Prayer

Lord Christ, at times we are like strangers on this earth, taken aback by all the brokenness, violence and division. Breathe upon us the Spirit of peace. Transfigure the deserts of our doubts, and prepare us to be bearers of reconciliation wherever you place us, until the day when a hope of peace dawns in our city and in our world. **Amen.**

Liturgy is adapted from <http://pda.pcusa.org/page/pray/#prayers> and the Office of Theology and Worship.