

TOGETHER WE PRAY:

Christian Prayers for Unity

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In what ways might Christians of different traditions come together to celebrate the beginning of the third millennium of Christ's birth? A small group of men and women from different Christian denominations came together to discuss this great jubilee. They concluded that the best contribution to the event would be to encourage prayer in keeping with the Lord's Command (John 17). To that end, we asked ecumenical leaders in Christian Churches in Massachusetts to provide a passage from Sacred Scripture and a brief prayer which reflected the desire, need and affection for unity. This booklet is the result of that request. In the form of thirty-one days of prayer, the booklet allows the user to take one page a day and reflect on the Scriptural passage and say the accompanying prayer. Each month the prayers may be repeated, thus helping to set the passages of Sacred Scripture and prayers in the memory of the user. In addition a litany and a hymn composed especially for this booklet are included to encourage the use of the prayer book by groups and congregations, where appropriate. We pray that this work may serve the cause of unity and lead all who use it to visible unity in Christ.

Mrs. Carolyn L. Bronkar, Attleboro Area Council of
Churches

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LITANY

LEADER: IN PEACE LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: FOR HEAVENLY PEACE AND THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: FOR THE PEACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD, FOR THE WELFARE AND UNITY OF GOD'S HOLY CHURCHES, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: FOR OUR RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND GOVERNMENTAL LEADERS AND THOSE IN PUBLIC SERVICE, FOR ALL THE CLERGY AND THE LAITY LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: FOR THIS CITY, FOR EVERY CITY AND LAND, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: THAT HE WILL BLESS THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD MILLENIUM OF HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: THAT HE WILL RENEW US IN HIS SPIRIT AND MAKE US ZEALOUS IN OUR PERFORMANCE OF HIS COMMANDMENTS AND TEACHING, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: THAT HE WILL DELIVER US FROM ALL TRIBULATION, WRATH AND NECESSITY, AND THAT HE WILL GRANT US HEALTH, LONG LIFE, AND PEACE, LET US PRAY TO THE LORD.

RESPONSE: LORD, HAVE MERCY.

LEADER: FOR UNTO YOU IS DUE ALL GLORY, HONOR AND WORSHIP, TO THE FATHER AND TO THE SON AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, NOW AND EVER AND TO THE AGES OF AGES.

RESPONSE: AMEN

ETERNAL GOD TRANSCENDING TIME
CMD

SUGGESTED TUNES: (listed alphabetically)
ELLACOMBE, FOREST GREEN, KINGSFOLD,
RESIGNATION,
SALVATION, ST. MATTHEW, THIRD MODE
MELODY

1. Eternal God transcending time,
yet mindful of the fears,
the hopes, the questions raised for us
by these new thousand years:
so guide us through our pilgrim days
that we may find a home
where justice, truth, and mercy meet,
fulfilled in your shalom.

2. Incarnate God revealed in time,
true Word in flesh retold,
who marked the years from birth to
death,
then rose to break death's hold:
by your becoming one with us,
help us to know and claim
the unity of all baptized
in your redeeming name.

3. Life-breathing God enlivening
time,
awaking heart and tongue,
inspiring prophets, bringing hope,
consoling old and young:
draw us to those denied your gifts
by bias, want, or strife,
convert our wills and form through us
new channels of your life.

4. Great Triune God, so bless the
time
entrusted to our care,
that all our varied ministries
may form a common prayer;
then, when time ceases, bring us
where
divisions are undone,
that in your presence, joined in
praise,
at last we may be one.

Carl P. Daw, Jr.

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I remember the days of old, I think about all
your deeds, I meditate on the works of your
hands.

Psalm 143:5

OLORD GOD OF OUR FATHERS, WE PRAY TO
YOU TO KEEP OUR MINDS ENLIGHTENED
LIKE THAT OF YOUR SERVANT DAVID, WHO
MEDITATED ON ALL THE WORKS OF YOUR
HANDS AND UTTERED: I REMEMBER THE DAYS
OF LONG AGO (PSALMS 143:5). WE EARNESTLY
BEG YOU TO MAKE US REMEMBER THE DAYS OF
LONG AGO, WHEN YOUR HOLY SPIRIT
DESCENDED ON THE DISCIPLES IN THE UPPER
CHAMBER. LET YOUR SPIRIT ALWAYS POUR ON
US HEAVENLY GRACE, AND INSPIRE US WITH
CHRIST'S LOVE SO THAT WE MAY WORK
TOWARD THE REUNIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.
AMEN.

HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP KHAJAG BARSAMIAN
PRIMATE, DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

... that they may all be one ... that the world
may believe... John 17:21

DEAR LORD, SOMETIMES I DON'T KNOW ABOUT
THIS UNITY THING. I'M SO COMFORTABLE IN
MY TRADITION. I CAN'T IMAGINE DOING
WORSHIP IN ANY OTHER WAY.

I KNOW THERE ARE MANY WHO PROFESS
YOU BUT WORSHIP YOU IN OTHER WAYS – EVEN
CALL YOU BY DIFFERENT NAMES! I THINK I NEED
YOUR HELP TO SEE THAT THEIR WAY OF NAMING
YOU AND WORSHIPPING YOU AND SERVING YOU
IS EQUALLY O.K. IN YOUR SIGHT.

TEACH ME, O GOD, THAT BY OPENING
MYSELF TO OTHERS I MAY BETTER UNDERSTAND
MORE OF YOU.

AS FOR THIS UNITY THING, HELP ME TO
SEE THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS READY TO RECEIVE
YOUR CHILDREN ... IN WHATEVER WAY EACH
MAY COME TO YOU. AND AS I WORK ON
RECOGNIZING ALL CHRISTIANS AS KINDRED
SPIRITS, MAY I COME TO TRULY BELIEVE "WE
ARE ONE IN THE SPIRIT ... ONE IN THE LORD."

CAROLYN L. BRONKAR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
ATTLEBORO AREA COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES

You gave your good Spirit to instruct
them... Neh. 9-20a

Thank you Lord for the wonder of your Spirit
that still hovers over your creation.

Ignite, inflame, and kindle our hearts. Sooth us
and be an overflowing fountain welling up within our
lives.

Purify, strengthen, heal, instruct, and melt our
hearts in ways pleasing to you.

Capture our thoughts and empower us.
Awaken mighty hope and blow your winds of renewal
throughout your church and the world.

So work in our hearts and lives, our churches
and our lands that our testimony in this next
millennium would be our unity and not our divisions,
Christ and not our creeds, your power and not our
plans, your work and not our earthly wisdom. Blow
wind of God ... Amen.

Rev. Dennis W. Cheek, Ph.D., Senior Pastor,
New Beginnings Christian Fellowship (Assemblies of God)

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4:1-6

One, O Lord, we pray that you would make us one;

One in all humility, honoring one another's gifts, respecting each other's differences;

One in all gentleness, touching the hearts of those in need of you;

One in patient love, bearing with each other in great things and in small;

One in our efforts to maintain the unity of your Spirit in the bond of peace.

O, that we may be one,

United in one body through your Spirit,

Confessing one hope by your calling,

Sharing one faith, one Lord, one baptism.

Make us one, O Lord, make us one!

Amen.

Rev. Dr. Edward R. Dufresne, Executive Minister
Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford

Everything written before our time was written for our instruction, that we might derive hope from the lessons of patience and the words of encouragement in the scriptures. May God, the source of all patience and encouragement, enable you to live in perfect harmony with one another according to the spirit of Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and voice you may glorify God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, as Christ accepted you, for the glory of God. Romans 15: 4-7 (New American Bible)

O God, you who are the creator and source of all things, look kindly upon this your special creation, the earth and all its fullness - as we approach the beginning of a new millennium. With hopes and dreams renewed, we seek the courage to learn from our past, to correct our faults and failures, and to derive patience and encouragement from your Holy Scriptures which remind us of the great love and example you have shown us in the gift of your only Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ.

As there is a season for all things, you have given us this great season of a new millennium to renew ourselves in your service and our oneness in You our God.

May we live in harmony and peace with all peoples. May we work to establish your kingdom of justice, love and peace. May we show to those in need your goodness to ourselves.

Then having served you faithfully here on earth, may we enjoy the blessedness of your company in that kingdom which has been prepared for us from the beginning of time. "As scripture has it, 'Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles and I will sing to your name.'" (Romans 15:9)

Most Rev. Thomas L. Dupre, DD, JCD
Bishop of Springfield

When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. John 10:4

Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. All the saints greet you especially, those of the emperor's household. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Philippians 4:21-23

Lord, must it be every "saint," every soul whom you have called, that I must greet with the love of Christ?

Will you not excuse me from some who think differently, and who practice strange customs or teach a truth I have not known?

But already, Lord, I know the look in your eyes -- how anxious is your heart lest I take my own directions and go off from the flock kept safe by your hand.

Yours are the everlasting arms. They are strong to embrace all; they hold each of your Sheep. In those everlasting arms are my peace, safety, and home.

I *will* greet every saint in Christ Jesus. Lord, help me now. Amen.

Rev. Robert Dvorak, Superintendent
The East Coast Conference
Evangelical Covenant Church

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born Of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7

O GOD OUR FATHER, WHO HAST BIDDEN THE LIGHT TO SHINE OUT OF DARKNESS, WHO HAST AGAIN WAKENED US TO PRAISE THY GOODNESS AND ASK FOR THY GRACE; ACCEPT NOW THE SACRIFICE OF OUR WORSHIP AND THANKSGIVING. MAKE US TO BE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT AND OF THE DAY, AND HEIRS OF THY EVERLASTING INHERITANCE. REMEMBER, O GOD, THY WHOLE CHURCH WHO STAND IN NEED OF THY GRACE. POUR OUT THE RICHES OF THY MERCY, SO THAT WE, BEING REDEEMED, AND STEADFAST IN FAITH MAY EVER PRAISE THY WONDERFUL AND HOLY NAME; THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, AMEN.

REV. HERBERT L. EDDY, PRESIDING ELDER
NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE, BOSTON-HARTFORD DISTRICT
AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one...John 17:22

ABBA, FATHER, WE YOUR CHILDREN COME BEFORE YOU BROKEN, HURT, SPLINTERED. WE NEED YOUR HEALING. GIVE US THE COURAGE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE HARM WE HAVE CAUSED BY OUR DIVISIONS. GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO MAKE AMENDS TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS. GIVE US THE GRACE TO FORGIVE THOSE WHO HAVE HARMED US AND BRING US ALL TO FULL UNITY WITH YOU AND WITH EACH OTHER. IN THE DEPTHS OF OUR SPIRITS, WE REJOICE IN THE PRAYER OF YOUR SON OUR LORD JESUS: "I HAVE GIVEN THEM THE GLORY THAT YOU GAVE ME, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE AS WE ARE ONE."
AMEN.

MOST REV. JOHN ELYA
MELKITE DIOCESE OF NEWTON

For God shows no partiality.

Romans 2:11

LORD OF MERCY, YOU DESIRE IN US A LOVING SPIRIT YET WE HAVE BETRAYED YOU AND TURNED EACH TO OUR OWN WAY.

WE CLAIM PARTICULAR RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES WHICH WE HAVE DENIED TO OTHERS.

OUR PRIDE AND VANITY OVERWHELM US WITH VISIONS OF OUR SPECIAL PLACE IN YOUR HEART.

SURELY WE HAVE NEED OF A GREAT REPENTANCE. FORGIVE US AND HELP US TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE ONE GOD FOR ALL OF YOUR PEOPLE, IMPARTIALLY OFFERING TO REDEEM US THROUGH THE UNIFYING LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST.

GRANT US THE HUMILITY TO UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE EQUALLY EMBRACED AND CALLED TO WITNESS OUR RECONCILIATION FOR THE HOPE AND HEALING OF YOUR WORLD.
AMEN.

REV. ANN GEER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF GREATER SPRINGFIELD

O H MERCIFUL GOD, WE ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY THAT YOU ARE THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE OF US ALL REGARDLESS OF CREED OR FAITH, THE GOD WHO IS THE EMBODIMENT OF LOVE AND WISDOM. THESE ARE WONDERFUL ATTRIBUTES BY WHICH YOU FASHIONED THE PEOPLE OF THIS EARTH MAKING US ALL IN THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF YOUR DIVINE SELF.

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNIVERSAL AND ENCOMPASSING LOVE, NOT JUST FOR EACH OF US BUT FOR THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF THIS PLANET EARTH, AND FOR EVERYTHING WHICH MOVES UPON IT. THEREFORE, DEAR ALMIGHTY AND DEAR GOD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, HELP US TO LOVE THE GOOD WITHIN EACH OTHER; TO BE TOLERANT AND UNDERSTANDING OF ONE ANOTHER'S DIFFERENCES. HELP US TO BE PATIENT WITH OTHERS WHOSE ISSUES TEND TO DIVIDE US. HELP US TO STRIVE TOWARD A COMMON GOOD, REALIZING THAT DOCTRINE WITHOUT LOVE WOULD DIVIDE US.

LET US CONSIDER OUR DIVERSITY OF BELIEFS AS A GIFT FROM GOD INTENDED TO ACCOMMODATE TO THE SPECIFIC WANTS AND SPIRITUAL CAPACITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL. FOR ALL OF THE ABOVE WE EARNESTLY PRAY THAT YOU HEAR OUR PRAYER SO THAT WE MAY, WITH YOUR HELP, CONTRIBUTE TO MAKE THIS WORLD A BETTER PLACE AND TOGETHER BE ABLE TO LOOK TOWARD YOU IN HARMONY AND PEACE. AMEN

RAFAEL M.J. GUIU, GENERAL SECRETARY THE MASSACHUSETTS
CHURCH OF THE NEW JERUSALEM (SWEDENBORGIAN)

I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord
God, who is and who was and who is to
come, the Almighty. Revelation 1:8

O God, the beginning and the end, the one who is, who
was, and who is to come, we praise you for your
faithfulness to us in all generations. Grant us humility
to repent of those ways in which we have turned away
from your purposes for us and for your church. Grant
us courage to walk into the new millennium with
confidence and hope. Grant us hearts for mercy and
wills for justice. Grant us faith that trusts that you are
leading us into the future; through Jesus Christ our
Lord, whose redeeming love sustains us.

Amen.

Bishop Susan W. Hassinger
Boston Area
The United Methodist Church

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation!

2Corinthians 5:16-6:2,

Our God in ages past, reconciler of our present, and hope of our future, we join our voices in praise of your glory. Make this a time of holy turning. As you, in the Cross, have turned toward humanity for reconciliation, by the power of your Spirit may we turn toward you and the vision of your new creation. Gather all your people into the healing mind and heart of Christ, that we may be sent as the boldest of ambassadors, bringing hope to all the world, in Jesus' name. Amen

Bishop Robert L. Isaksen
New England Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:8b-10

HOLY ONE, LOVING GOD, GRACIOUS LORD, YOU CALL YOUR CHURCH AND ALL ITS MEMBERS TO BE RECONCILED WITH EACH OTHER IN TRUTH AND IN LOVE. WHEN WE PAY ATTENTION, WE SEE SIGNS ALL AROUND US OF YOUR PROMISE FOR THE FULLNESS OF TIME. WE SEE THEM IN FRIENDSHIPS THAT TRANSCEND BARRIERS. WE SEE THEM IN HOSPITALITY TO STRANGERS. WE SEE THEM IN COMMON RESPONSES TO THE NEEDY. WE SEE THEM IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLES OF THE OPPRESSED. WE SEE THEM IN SHARED PRAYER. BUT WE ALSO SEE OUR BROKENNESS, OUR FEARS, OUR RESISTANCES. SOMETIMES EVEN WHEN WE WANT TO CHANGE, WE DO NOT KNOW HOW. SHOW US, LOVING GOD. CONFORM US EVER MORE FULLY TO YOUR WILL. DRAW US TOWARD YOUR PURPOSE AND YOUR FAMILY. GATHER UP ALL THINGS IN YOU. THIS WE PRAY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST WHO MAKES US ONE. AMEN.

REV. DIANE KESSLER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

I in them and you in me, that they may
become completely one, so that the world
may know that you have sent me and have
loved them even as you have loved me.
John 17:23

O GOD, GIVER OF UNITY IN CHRIST,
CORRECT OUR IDOLATROUS
LOYALTIES TO TEMPORARY STRUCTURES AND
INSPIRE US TO MAKE VISIBLE AND BELIEVABLE
THE GOOD NEWS OF RECONCILIATION,
THAT YOU HAVE MADE US ONE PEOPLE.
TO YOU BE THANKSGIVING AND GLORY
THROUGH OUR OBEDIENCE, IN CHRIST OUR
LORD.

AMEN.

CHARLES F. LAMB
CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

"This is what Yahweh asks of you, ONLY THIS, to act justly, to love tenderly, and to walk humbly with your God."

Micah 6:8 (paraphrase)

Creator God, Grant us wisdom to understand the simplicity of your message to us, and strength to carry it out in our lives. Help us to realize that you do not call us to be perfect people, but only to try to follow your ways. May we always strive to be fair, and not to be bound by unjust laws. May we love with a tender heart, and not judge others by our standards- May we give honor and glory to you, and not to ourselves, as we walk humbly with you each day of our lives.

Amen.

Marilyn Lariviere
President, Massachusetts/Rhode Island
Church Women United

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" The Lord replied, "If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

Luke 17:5-10

Father in Heaven, You sent your son Jesus Christ to teach us the way to you. By the power of your Word in our hearts, deepen our faith in Him. Teach us to be His faithful disciples, obedient and united. Strengthen within us the faith which is the foundation of the Church so much that we are compelled by the gift of your love to draw all men and women, from every nation and every people, closer to you. Teach us never to cease in this holy task, and give us courage that seeks to overcome all obstacles through the power of your grace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Bernard Cardinal Law
Roman Catholic Archbishop of Boston

The one who testifies to these things says,
"Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come
Lord Jesus! Revelation 22-20

In those days of the first year of your Nativity, O Christ, we were among the many united in ignorance of the mysterious way and miraculous manner of your first arrival to your creation as a newborn. Then, we only dimly knew of our sins and isolation from you. Or, we were among the chosen flock whose expectation of your incarnation was nurtured by prophets; or by distant others whose poignant rituals awaited our ultimate redemption through your saving life, death and resurrection.

At the brink of a second millennium, we, your Body the Church, stood United in spirit and in truth, fresh with memories of martyrdom and mission, of Pentecost and councils, of Transfiguration and theocracies. Oh, how we prayed that subsequent schisms and our painful failings would remain historic lessons, only to melt away "like wax before a flame:" a kiln for our souls.

On the threshold of a third thousand years, we now offer our humble efforts to reawaken, renew and restore the unity for which we yearn and know is pleasing in your sight. We were unworthy of your coming as a child. Let us be wisely accountable when you come again as Judge. For the union we seek is not ours to achieve, but only to recognize: a reflection of your own indivisible, eternal and life-giving love. The world awaits you. Come, then, and find us not wanting. Amen.

Very Reverend Archpriest Arthur E. Liolin Chancellor
Albanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America

...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.

Ephesians 3:17-18
(New International Version)

LOVING FATHER, WE WANT TO GRASP HOW WIDE AND LONG AND HIGH AND DEEP IS THE LOVE OF CHRIST, TO KNOW THIS LOVE THAT SURPASSES KNOWLEDGE, SO THAT WE MAY BE FILLED TO THE MEASURE OF ALL THE FULLNESS OF GOD. WE BELIEVE THAT YOU WILL REVEAL THE TRUTH OF YOUR WORD AS WE ARE KNIT TOGETHER IN LOVE WITH ALL THE SAINTS. WE TRUST THAT YOU WILL STRENGTHEN US WITH HOLY SPIRIT POWER AS CHRIST DWELLS IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH FAITH. DO IMMEASURABLY MORE THAN WE COULD EVER ASK OR IMAGINE SO THAT YOU WILL BE GLORIFIED THROUGH A UNITED CHURCH, FIT FOR WORSHIP AND WITNESS, BOUND TOGETHER IN LOVE. FOR YOUR DIVINE PLEASURE AND FOR THE EXPANSION OF YOUR KINGDOM WE PRAY. IN CHRIST JESUS, THROUGHOUT ALL GENERATIONS, FOREVER AND EVER!

AMEN.

REV. STEPHEN A. MACCHIA
PRESIDENT, VISION NEW ENGLAND

For we do not proclaim ourselves; we
proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves
as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the
God who said, "Let light shine out of
darkness," who has shone in our hearts to
give the light of the knowledge of the glory of
God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have
this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be
made clear that this extraordinary power
belongs to God and does not come from us.

2 Corinthians 4:5-7

Creating God, you who are bringing light into
the darkness of the world, continually show us
the face of Christ, so that we may live out our
mission knowing that is not the cultures of church
life, but surely your transforming love and justice
which we speak and work among all peoples.
With Christ .

Amen

The Rev. Dr. George P. Magnuson
General Presbyter
The Presbytery of Boston, Presbyterian Church (USA)

The spirit of the lord is upon me for he hath
anointed me to preach...

Luke 4:18-19

(The Orthodox Study Bible)

OLORD OUR GOD,
WHO IS WITHOUT BEGINNING AND ETERNAL,
WHO FILLS THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WITH
ALL THAT IS GOOD,
BLESS WITH YOUR GENEROSITY THIS THIRD
MILLENIUM OF YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.
MANIFEST THYSELF UNTO US;
GRANT US HEALTHFUL SEASONS;
FILL OUR LIVES WITH YOUR PRESENCE;
GUIDE THE YOUNG;
HEAL THE SICK;
SUSTAIN THE ELDERLY;
ENCOURAGE THE FAINT-HEARTED;
QUIET THE NATIONS;
PUT AN END TO SCHISMS;
SO WE MAY WITH ONE VOICE AND ONE HEART
GLORIFY AND PRAISE YOUR ALL HOLY AND
MAJESTIC NAME, FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT,
NOW AND EVER AND TO THE AGES OF AGES.
AMEN.

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN METHODIOS,
METROPOLITAN OF ANEON, PRESIDING HIERARCH OF THE
GREEK ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF BOSTON

God's love was revealed in our midst in this way: He sent his only Son to the world that we might have life through him. Love, then, consists in this: not that we have loved God, but that He has loved us and has sent his Son, as an offering for our sins. Beloved, if God has loved us so, we must have the same love for one another. I John 4: 9-11 (New American Bible)

O GOD OF ENDLESS AGES,
FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT:
A SCORE OF CENTURIES AGO, BUT IN OUR
OWN HISTORY AND AT THE RIGHT MOMENT,
YOU MADE YOURSELF VISIBLE TO US.
INSERTING YOURSELF INTO TIME, ITSELF YOUR
OWN CREATION, THE REVELATIONS OF EVERY
PRIOR AGE WERE SEEN IN BRILLIANT LIGHT:
YOU BECAME ONE-WITH-US IN THE PERFECT
SELF-EXPRESSION OF THE INCARNATION.
IN JESUS, YOU HAVE SHOWN US NOT ONLY
WHO YOU ARE, BUT WHO WE ARE: BROTHERS
AND SISTERS TOGETHER AS THOSE YOU HAVE
CREATED AND REDEEMED.
FILL US, O GOD, WITH SUCH AWE AT YOUR
INFINITE LOVE FOR US AND SUCH WONDER AT
YOUR LOVING-KINDNESS AND MERCY
THAT WE OURSELVES WILL BE MOVED TO
MANIFEST SUCH GRACE AMONG ONE
ANOTHER. IN THAT WAY, GRANT US HEARTS
THUS READY AND PREPARED TO MARK THE
DAWN OF THE THIRD MILLENNIUM OF GRACE
WITH HUMILITY, UNDERSTANDING AND
COMPASSION.

AMEN.

+ MOST REVEREND SEAN O'MALLEY, OFM CAP.
BISHOP OF FALL RIVER

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12-17

GOD, HELP ME TO FORGIVE;
TO FORGIVE MYSELF AND THE ONE WHOM I
FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FORGIVE: IMAGES OF GOD
BROKEN IN TIME. CLOTHE US WITH
COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS,
AND PATIENCE SUCH THAT IN IT BECOMES OUR
VERY BEING.

SHOW US WHAT RECONCILIATION MEANS:
CALLED TO MIRROR THE PEACE OF CHRIST,
YOUR SYNTAX AND SEMANTICS; BEARING,
FORGIVING, LOVING UNTIL THE ONENESS THAT
CHARACTERIZES YOU, OH GOD, CHARACTERIZES
US.

GRANT THE COURAGE REQUIRED OF
RESTORATION: THAT CHRIST'S PEACE MIGHT
RULE AND CHRIST'S WORD INDWELL SO THAT
WE MAY, BY THE STRENGTH OF THE SPIRIT, BE
THAT WORD, SINGING PSALMS, HYMNS, AND
SPIRITUAL SONGS WITH GRATITUDE FOR ALL
YOU ARE DOING IN US AND AMONG US.

Rev. Rodney Lawrence Petersen, PhD
Executive Director, The Boston Theological Institute

May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15: 5-6

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST! THE JUBILEE 2000 IS UPON US! LET US CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF CHRIST'S BIRTH AS WE GIVE GLORY TO GOD 'FROM WHOM EVERYTHING IN THE WORLD AND IN HISTORY COMES AND TO WHOM EVERYTHING RETURNS'. OUR CREATOR MADE ALL OF US TO KNOW, LOVE AND SERVE OUR GOD AND WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE REDEMPTIVE LIFE OF JESUS, TOGETHER WE PRAY THAT WE SEEK A MORE PEACEFUL UNITY AMONG ALL PEOPLES AND THAT WE MAY BE UNITED FOREVER WITH THE ETERNAL ONE WHEN OUR HUMAN PASSAGE IS OVER.

LET US PRAY: GRACIOUS AND GLORIOUS GOD, MAY THIS JUBILEE BE A TIME OF PRAISE, OF HEALING, AND OF THANKSGIVING AS WE CELEBRATE 2000 YEARS OF CHRIST AMONG US. ENABLE US TO EMBRACE MORE FULLY THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIUNE GOD WHO CALLS EACH OF US TO A LIFE OF HOLINESS AND SERVICE AS WE EXPERIENCE THE DEPTH OF YOUR FORGIVING LOVE. WE PRAY THAT THIS CELEBRATION LEAD US TO LOOK FORWARD IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM TO DEEPER LOVE AND UNITY, AMONG ALL PEOPLES. WE ASK THIS IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN.

MOST REV. DANIEL P. REILLY
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3-9

Holy Host of all who gather at your table, Holy Giver of food for soul and body, Holy Lover of each home and household, give me the grace to call to mind my sisters, brothers, cousins, all my kindred, in the great family of faith. Help me to remember them when I pray alone or with my parish. May our common prayers be praise to thee and strength for our salvation, and this we ask who is our common life, our common blood, our common soul, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Carl Scovel
Minister of King's Chapel
Boston MA

And God said, 'Let there be light in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so.

Genesis 1. 14-15

MANY OF US WHO LIVE HERE ON CAPE COD WERE ATTRACTED BY GOD'S NATURAL WORLD- BY THE PULL OF THE TIDES, THE CLARITY OF THE STARS, THE CRASH OF THE OCEAN WATERS, THE SMELL OF PINES THAT SURVIVE NO MATTER WHAT.

HOLY GOD, REMIND US ALL THAT THE UNITY OF YOUR WORLD MEANS *ALL* OF YOUR WORLD. REMIND US THAT YOU ASKED US, FROM THE VERY BEGINNING, TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR ENTIRE CREATION: THE LAND, THE WATER, THE PLANTS AND ANIMALS-AND, THE PEOPLE. THE TIDES RISE AND FALL BECAUSE OF YOU. THE WIND BLOWS, STRONGLY OR SOFTLY, BECAUSE OF YOU. THE BIRDS, THOSE VULNERABLE ONES IN DANGER OF EXTINCTION AND THOSE THAT PREY ON OTHERS, ARE HERE BECAUSE OF YOU. THE GREAT WHALES OF THE SEA, THE SMALL BUNNIES OF THE BACKYARD, THE NEWLY ARRIVED COYOTES, ARE YOUR DOING.

YOU CREATED US, TOO, IN A WHOLE SPECTRUM OF RACES, COLORS, FAITHS, ABILITIES - OUR DIVERSITY IS BEYOND IMAGINING. EVEN THOUGH WE ARE AS GRAINS OF SAND ON THE SHORE, REMIND US THAT YOU VALUE EACH AND EVERY PART OF YOUR CREATION, AND THAT WE ARE CALLED TO DO THE SAME. IN YOUR NAME, AMEN.

THE REV. SUSAN R. SCRIBNER
CAPE COD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

...for in him {Christ} all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers – all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Colossians 1:16-17

Oh Christ, as you hold galaxies and sub atomic particles together amid all the forces of division and chaos, so hold me together. Hold your Ecumenical Church together, hold your broken world together. Show me what steps you call me to take today to cooperate with the new creation you are seeking to bring in the sphere of my influence. Teach me to trust in you with all my heart, in communion with all your people, that your Kingdom may come and your will be done on earth as in heaven ... through me ... through your whole ecumenical and global church this day and through all eternity. To you Holy Trinity One God be all praise, honor, glory and worship now and forever. Amen.

Rt. Rev. GORDON SCRUTON, BISHOP
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN MA

Jesus was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and his brothers appeared; they were standing outside and were anxious to have a word with him. But to the man who told him this Jesus replied, "Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?" And stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother."

Matthew 12:46-49 (The New Jerusalem Bible)

GRACIOUS AND LOVING GOD:

HELP US SEE AND UNDERSTAND CHRIST'S VISION OF UNITY THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE FAMILIAR LIMITS OF BIOLOGICAL FAMILY, THOSE WHO ARE LIKE US; HELP US MOVE PAST THE BOUNDARIES OF DENOMINATION, RACE, CULTURE AND CLASS. POUR OUT YOUR POWER AND LOVE TO LEAD US FROM WHAT IS COMFORTABLE AND FEELS SAFE INTO NEW PLACES OF FREEDOM AND PROMISE, INTO NEW CONNECTIONS AND RELATIONSHIPS, AND HELP US UNDERSTAND THAT ALL OF YOUR CREATION IS OUR FAMILY, WE PRAY IN CHRIST'S LOVE FOR US ALL. AMEN.

RT. REV. M. THOMAS SHAW, SSJE, BISHOP
THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MASSACHUSETTS

So then, remember that at one time you Gentiles by birth, called “the uncircumcision” by those who are called “the circumcision” - a physical circumcision made in the flesh by human hands - remember that you were at that time without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

Ephesians 2:11-22

DEAR GOD IN HEAVEN,
AS WE COME TO THE END OF THIS CENTURY,
WE ARE SO AWARE OF THE TROUBLES AND
CONFLICTS WHICH ARE A PART OF DAILY LIFE
FOR MANY PEOPLE. OUR MINDS ARE TROUBLED
BY REPORTS ON THE EVENING NEWS AND IN
OUR NEWSPAPERS OF VIOLENCE AND STRIFE.
ANCIENT HATREDS STILL ERUPT INTO VIOLENT
ACTS. IN FAR TOO MANY HOMES, HOSTILITY AND
VIOLENCE HAVE REPLACED LOVE AND RESPECT.
IN THE SECRET PLACES OF OUR HEARTS, ALL OF
US HARBOR ILL WILL AND ANGER TOWARDS
OTHERS. FOR ALL OF THIS, WE SEEK YOUR
FORGIVENESS.

WE ASK YOU TO COME TO US IN FRESH WAYS,
LIKE DEW ON THE MORNING GRASS. COME TO
CLEANSE OUR HEARTS AND PLACE IN OUR
MINDS THE GUIDANCE WE NEED AND THE
WISDOM THAT WILL TEACH US THE WAYS OF
PEACE AND UNITY. TEACH US HOW, THROUGH
CHRIST, THE DIVIDING WALLS OF HOSTILITY CAN
BE BROKEN DOWN. WE DESIRE PEACE AND
UNITY. WE WANT TO ENJOY THE NEW HUMANITY
YOU HAVE PROMISED TO US IN WHICH WE CAN
LIVE TOGETHER AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN
YOUR HOUSEHOLD, O GOD, WITH YOU AS THE
HEAD. SHOW US THE WAY, WE PRAY. AMEN.

REV. DR. LINDA SPOOLSTRA, EXECUTIVE MINISTER
The American Baptist Churches of Massachusetts

Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Matthew 11:28-30

O GRACIOUS GOD, WHO CAME INTO OUR WORLD IN JESUS TO BOLDLY ANNOUNCE, YET AGAIN, THAT WE ARE YOUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS, FORGIVE US FOR BEING SLOW OF HEART TO BELIEVE YOUR WORDS OF INVITATION AND ACCEPTANCE TO US AND TO ALL HUMANKIND.

WE THANK YOU THAT YOUR GRACIOUS, INVITING WORD CUTS THROUGH THE BARRIERS OF GENDER, RACE, CLASS AND DENOMINATION. MAY WE REALIZE AFRESH THAT THERE IS NOTHING THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF OUR BEING ENABLED TO LIVE, ALONG WITH YOUR PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, AS FULL MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY OF FAITH.

HELP US TO TAKE THE NEXT STEPS OF RESPONSE, FIRST FOR OURSELVES IF WE HAVE SOMETIMES FELT EXCLUDED, AND THEN TOWARD OTHERS, MAKING THEM FEEL WELCOME EVEN AS YOU HAVE FIRST WELCOMED US.

We pray this with joy and hope in your all-embracing love. Amen

THE REV. DR. DONALD A. WELLS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE MASSACHUSETTS BIBLE SOCIETY

I want all of them to be one with each other, just as I am with you and you are one with me. I also want them to be one with us. Then the people of this world will believe that you sent me.
John 17:21 (Contemporary English Version)

GOD, FORGIVE US FOR ALL THOSE WAYS IN WHICH WE DENY OR IGNORE THIS PRAYER BY CHOOSING TO LIVE IN ISOLATION FROM OTHERS BAPTIZED IN YOUR NAME.

AS OUR WORLD BECOMES MORE OF A GLOBAL VILLAGE, TRANSFORM OUR HUMAN TENDENCY TO FUNCTION WITHIN OUR OWN CIRCLES.

EACH TIME WE ENCOUNTER AN ISSUE OR A CHALLENGE, HELP US TO INFORM OUR NEIGHBORING CHRISTIANS OF OUR DESIRES, INVITING EACH TO JOIN IN SEEKING TO KNOW YOUR WILL, MANIFESTING THAT UNITY FOR WHICH YOUR SON PRAYED, PROCLAIMING YOUR LOVE FOR ALL HUMANKIND, EMPOWERED BY YOUR SPIRIT, UNTIL WE ARE ALL FED AROUND YOUR TABLE.

ALL WHICH WE PRAY THROUGH YOUR SON, JESUS, OUR SOVEREIGN REDEEMER.

AMEN.

THE REV. K. GORDON WHITE, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
MASSACHUSETTS COMMISSION ON CHRISTIAN UNITY

I am grateful to God – whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did – when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, but it has now been revealed through the appearance of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

2 Timothy 1:3-14

Loving God, we marvel at your goodness. You give to us gifts beyond our imagining for the building up of the body of Christ, your Church, and for the betterment of the entire human family. Indeed, we can envision how wonderful this world would be if all your children used these gifts as you intended. We confess that we do not for a variety of reasons.

Pour out your Holy Spirit anew on all your people. Stir us up. Make us bold to witness to our oneness in you. By Your grace may the dimly burning embers become the flames which purge our divisions and illumine the Way in which we as one people walk with you, O Triune God.
Amen

REV. BENNIE E. WHITEN, JR., MINISTER AND PRESIDENT
MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

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