

Great Thanksgiving
(*Our God Weeps*)

Invitation:

Come.
Come, all who hunger for peace.
Come, all who choose the way of nonviolence.
Come, all who wish to repent from their participation in doing harm.
Come, all who desire to do good and embrace the Spirit of our loving God.
Come.

Confession:

There is blood on our hands and anger in our hearts. We have called your beloved children our enemy and have plotted their destruction. The weapons of our warfare are carnal and bring shame upon your holy name. We have caused you to weep. This is not the way of humility. This is not the way we should turn the other cheeks, nor have our words been prayers of grace for those who wish us harm. Forgive us for being destroyers of the peace. Give us your wisdom to take a different path in life. Renew a right heart within us so we might become your peace. Allow us to wipe the tears from your eyes. Amen.

The God of Love give us a choice: to live in a way that brings only death or to live in a way that brings life, abundant life. In the name of Jesus Christ, your path can change, follow Christ and choose life.

The God of Love give you the same choice. In the name of Jesus Christ, your path can change, follow Christ and choose life. Amen. Thanks be to God.

Thanksgiving:

Our God weeps.
We are called to embrace divine grief.
Our God loves every life.
Not just mine and yours, but all.
It is right to worship and praise our non-violent God.
This path of peace brings God joy.

God of tears,
God of sobbing cries and broken hearts,
you join with us in wanting more,
you join with us in demanding better,
you command us to change and take a more courageous path.
You are a God who returns every evil act,
with a powerful expression of compassion and sacrificial care.
You are a God whose loving touch is working unceasingly within every life.
You are intent on rebuilding your peaceable planet,
Your Eden.

We have heard your invitation to stand with you.
We have seen your struggle to turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh.
With praise on our lips we choose to join others in this struggle for peace.
We are willing to listen and learn from those who are different from us,
who may be afraid of us,
suspicious of our motives.
We will sing and dance with them before your throne
as we join the heavenly throng.
Together we will seek peace.
Together we will absorb the pain and anger to transform battlefields into flowering
gardens that can only delight your soul as we sing:

**We will sing about your love,
our weapons we have thrown into the sea.
Love is our truest strength.
It is with love we will forever sing,
for only love is forever with us.
Love is our God and will always be worthy of our praise.**

You are love and Jesus is the clearest expression of that love.
Through Christ we learn that love is not binary, it is universal.
We learn that your love casts out all fear;
that your love shines like the sun upon the just and the unjust;
that your love nurtures like the rain with kisses the faces of all alike.
Through Christ we have learned that love is inclusive, it knows no enemies,
for you hold all as beloved.
Love is why when struck, Jesus turned the other cheek.
Love is why Jesus turned none away,
and grieved when some chose to walk a different path.
Love is why Jesus chose atonement upon the cross
instead of calling forth angels to seek vengeance upon the earth.

When others were choosing places of honor,
Jesus chose the way of peace,
choosing to serve and not to be served;
choosing humility before honor,
washing the feet of friend and betrayer alike.
Jesus invites us to walk this same path of peace.

When others were choosing personal safety,
Jesus took the sacred bread of Passover,
set aside that night to remember those who still hunger for justice,
prayed a blessing over it and shared it with everyone, saying:
“Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you.”
Jesus invites us to walk this same path of peace.
When others were choosing personal safety,

Jesus took the sacred wine of Passover,
wine set aside that night to remember the cost of stubborn hearts,
prayed a blessing over it and shared it with everyone, saying:
“Drink with me, this is the cup of my blood,
which I choose to pour out as a testimony of love,
proclaiming God’s eternal covenant of grace
guaranteeing not only the forgiveness of your sins, but the sins of the world.”
Jesus invites us to walk this same path of peace.

We want to walk this path of Christ:
A path of compassion and grace,
mercy and understanding.
The path lived out in this divine mystery we now declare:

To love the world, Christ died.
To love the world, Christ lives.
To love the world, Christ will come again.

Gentle Rebuke, Love’s Direction
caress these gifts of bread and wine with your love,
revealing them to be for us the body and blood of Christ,
what it means to be beloved.

Gentle Rebuke, Love’s Direction
caress these gifts of our hearts, our minds, our bodily strength with your love,
revealing them to be for the world your church,
the sacrificed body and faithful bride of Christ,
what it means to be beloved.

Gentle Rebuke, Love’s Direction
cleanse our hearts with your love.
Change our world by first changing us.
Soften our stubborn pride and make us resilient.
Help us treat everyone as your beloved.
Lead us in the ways that make for peace.
Use us dry your tears.
We pray this with Christ with the peace of the Holy Spirit,
that we might please you by reflecting your grace
All loving God, our inspiration and our guide.
Amen.

Let us pray in the fashion Jesus taught us:

Lover of all with no exceptions, holy is your name.
May your peaceable garden be as evident on earth as it is in heaven.

**Help us share our food so all are fed.
Forgive the pain we have caused,
with the same grace with which we graciously forgive others.
Help us follow you as you lead us away from evil,
no matter how much we are tempted to follow the ways of others.
For your way is always merciful, kind and generous. Amen.**

Prayer after communion:

We are so grateful for the opportunity to join together in this holy mystery expressed through the love of Jesus Christ. In this sacrifice we have found the way of life. In this sacrifice we have been touched by the essence of true peace. This is the gift you desire to share with the whole world through our lives. Send us out to be your healing touch in the world. Make us living expressions of your good news to those who are struggling, those who are afraid, and those who need the smile of grace in their lives. Send us out with your blessing. Amen.