

A Prayer Service for Peace and Justice, June 7th, 2020

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Gladstone, NJ

Rev. Dr. Kent R. Walley, Rector

Welcome and Invocation

"God Bless America"

Stephen Walley, Baritone

Introductory Remarks – Why We Are Here

Rev. Dr. Kent R. Walley

A Litany for National Confession and Repentance

adapted from Isaiah 58

Leader: Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins.

People: Day after day they seek me, and delight to know my ways, says the Lord. As if they were a nation that practiced Righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God;

Leader: They ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

People: "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?"

Leader: Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers.

People: Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist.

Leader: Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself?

People: Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

Leader: Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?

People: Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Leader: Lord, forgive us our sins, known and unknown.

People: Forgive us the things we have done that we should not have done, and for the things left undone that we should have done.

Leader: Lord, forgive the offenses of Your people, the wrongs and injustice done in our land.

People: Lord we are sorry for being silent when we should speak, and for inaction when we should reach out in love.

Leader: Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.

People: Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.

Leader: The Lord says to His people: If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil,

People: if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted,

Leader: Then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

People: The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.

Leader: Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.

Prayers for the Oppressed and for Social Justice

From the Book of Common Prayer

Leader and People together: **Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. Protect and defend those members of the law enforcement community that seek to uphold the common good and fairly defend freedom and justice. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Leader:

Heavenly Father, in your Word you have given us a vision of that holy City to which the nations of the world bring their glory: Behold and visit, we pray, the cities of this land. Renew the ties of mutual regard which form our civic life. Send us honest and able leaders. Give wisdom and guidance to all our leaders in government. Enable us to eliminate poverty, prejudice, and oppression, that peace may prevail with righteousness, and justice with order, and that men and women from different cultures and with differing talents may find with one another the fulfillment of their humanity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

All:

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Prayers for Peace Within the Human Family

From the Book of Common Prayer

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Leader:

Eternal God, in whose perfect kingdom no sword is drawn but the sword of righteousness, no strength known but the strength of love: So mightily spread abroad your Spirit, that all peoples may be gathered under the banner of the Prince of Peace, as children of one Father; to whom be dominion and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

All:

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

An Excerpt from the Writings of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Prayers for George Floyd and His Family – Remembering all those who lost their lives because of racial injustice

A period of silence will take place followed by the tolling of the church bell 46 times, one for each year of George Floyd's life.

The Commendation and Prayers for the Bereaved

All: *Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

Leader: You only are immortal, the creator and maker of mankind; and we are mortal, formed of the earth, and to earth shall we return. For so did you ordain when you created me, saying, "You are dust, and to dust you shall return." All of us go down to the dust; yet even at the grave we make our song: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

All: *Give rest, O Christ, to your servant with your saints, where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.*

Leader: Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant George. Acknowledge, we humbly beseech you, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive him into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Reading from Revelation 7:9-17

Prayers for Christian Unity and Mission

From the Book of Common Prayer

O God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Savior, the Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to take to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions; take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. Amen.

Pledging Ourselves to the Work of Love – A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we 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. Amen.

“Lift Every Voice”

Stephen Walley, Baritone

1 Lift ev'ry voice and sing, Till earth and heaven ring, Ring with the harmonies of liberty; Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies, Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us; Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun Of our new day begun, Let us march on till victory is won.

2 Stony the road we trod, Bitter the chast'ning rod, Felt in the days when hope unborn had died; Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over away that with tears has been watered; We have come, treading our path through the blood of the
slaughtered; Out from the gloomy past, Till now we stand at last Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.\

3 God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by thy might, Led us into the light, Keep us forever in the path, we pray. Lest our feet stray from the places,
our God, where we met thee; Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget thee, Shadowed beneath Thy
hand, May we forever stand, True to our God, true to our native land.

Author: James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938); Composer: J. Rosamond Johnson (1873-1954)

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Blessing and Dismissal

Celebrant: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People: *Thanks be to God.*