

**Hope and Fear Liturgy** *This grew out of two Sunday worship services at College Mennonite Church. One Sunday persons were invited to identify the fears that were a part of their life. The next Sunday they were asked to identify hopes that they carried in their lives. The third Sunday this compilation was read in the form of a Reader's Theater presentation.*

- 1: We each have our fears.  
 2: Some fear for the children's future.  
 1: A lot of us worry about our future health—about getting old.  
 2: Many of us fear that children are not learning the ways of God,  
 1: not making a commitment to Christ.  
 2: We fear that they won't become Christians,  
 1: that they won't have the strength to refuse evil.  
 2: There is so much evil here in our own country  
 1: and around the world.  
 2: Many fear violence. Evil destroys  
 1: and creates terror in everyone, even in children.  
 2: When I was a little child I wasn't afraid of society's evil.  
 I was afraid of spiders. Creepy crawly spiders, little ones, big ones, ones  
 you couldn't see. Ones you could see.  
 1: At camp there was this guy who was terrified of spiders. One night, he  
 woke up screaming: "Spiders, Spiders, Spiders, Spiders, Spiders,  
 SPIDERS! Spiders!"  
 I shiver just thinking about it.  
 2: I remember being afraid, feeling cold and shivery. Sometimes I felt stiff  
 and tight like I couldn't move—like I was trapped in a cold box with no  
 room to move.  
 1: Or sometimes fear feels so...smothering—like I'm drowning.  
 ...Once I thought I really would drown. Capsized sailboat, and me alone  
 on a lake without my lifejacket. Suddenly the water seemed COLD—  
 so...cold. Real danger. F E A R. A deep sick, cold feeling came over me.  
 I was truly afraid I would drown. I desperately wanted to live.  
 2: People do fear dying, but as I talk to my friends, I find we are more fearful  
 of the process of dying.  
 1: I guess we're all afraid of growing old, TOO OLD: afraid of helplessness,  
 unbearable pain, living too long, and losing our right mind.  
 2: Fear of being left alone, becoming weak  
 1: and helpless,  
 2: incompetent,  
 1: and out of control,  
 2: Out of control...Out of control.  
 I wonder if that's what we really fear the most—

- 1: fear of being weak and helpless, and out of control.  
 2: We can rely on our Lord to be in control.  
 1: When fear comes, I try to remember times when I felt protected by God.  
 That gives me hope.  
 2: God is still active in this world, and that gives us reason to hope.  
 1: Fear is creepy, but hope feels warm and safe.  
 2: When I sing  
 1: or listen to the children's choir sing  
 2: about God's love  
 1: and the beauty of creation,  
 2: I am filled with a feeling of hope.  
 1: When I see flowers and birds,  
 2: and take a big breath after a spring rain, I'm inspired.  
 1: Courageous action and people that speak with conviction,  
 2: they inspire us with hope.  
 1: They give a feeling of confident peace  
 that God is still active through his servants.  
 2: Yes, a joy unspeakable.  
 Our hope is in the Lord, who made heaven and earth.  
 1: Music and poetry best express our hopes and fears:  
 "What a friend we have in Jesus"  
 and "If you but trust in God."  
 2: The foundation of our hope is in Christ.  
 1: When you shudder with fear inside and feel like running,  
 2: You can count on the promises of God.  
 1: Run to the one who loves you.  
 2: God will not desert you to your foes.  
 All: God will never forsake us. It is in this that we are confident.  
 OUR HOPE IS IN THE LORD.

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*Vision of Peace (Micah 4: 1-4)*

## **Litany**

The fog clears as we enter the silent field--  
only the open throats of corpses cry out to corpses  
and the wind moans softly,  
an old woman searching  
for something lost in the grass.

**What was once a garden has become a graveyard  
where the dead, splattered by dirt and dried blood,  
could be any man, with any face.**

How are we to find our loved ones  
among these anonymous bodies  
frozen in their last moment of anguish?

**How shall we bless our own dead whose mute cries  
mix with the cries of enemies?**

God in the shape of a child pitted by shrapnel  
has risen from where he fell  
and implores us to bury them all.

**He wants us to forge our firearms  
into plowshares and pruning hooks.  
He wants us to plant a garden  
in the wasteland of racism and despair.**

Then shall we enter the paradise from which we were expelled.  
We shall sit in the shade of a fig tree  
and live without fear.

**All humanity shall be our family  
and we shall know ourselves in the stranger.**

*Lord of peace, give us the courage to open the border  
between "them" and "us."  
Help us to recognize in the face of our enemy  
the child who could be our own.*

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*Peacemaking*

## **Litany**

We live in a world of violence and injustice,  
surrounded on all sides by strife,  
confronted with people who don't care.

**We will follow Christ!**

Who called us to live in harmony with others!

Christ led by example in life, living in peace.

**We will follow Christ!**

The road will not come easy, for Satan is present.

Satan hates peace,

but the Lord our God, the Comforter, loves peace.

**We will follow Christ!**

We will follow Christ!

***God blesses the peacemakers!***

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## **Affirmation of peace** *Based on Romans 5:1-2*

Father of peace,  
**come to us now.**

Father of peace,  
**bind us to you.**

Spirit of peace,  
**move in our hearts.**

Spirit of peace,  
**in you we trust.**

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith,  
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,  
through whom we have gained access by faith  
into this grace in which we now stand.

Laura Kraybill, copyright 2000

**Affirmation of peace** *Based on HWB 408*

Today is a day of peace, and not only today, but every day,  
for each day is the Lord's.  
May justice, truth, and love deliver us.  
May swords of hate fall from our hands.  
May the Lord fill us with a new covenant of hope, love, and peace.  
Let us unite our hearts together to fulfill this covenant with our Lord,  
the prince of peace.

Jessica Lehman, copyright 2000

**Litany** *Isaiah 52:13-15a; Isaiah 53: 10b-12; Psalm 118:15-18; Psalm 16:8-11*

Behold, my Servant will prosper  
His will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.  
Just as there were many who were appalled at him—  
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man,  
And his form marred beyond human likeness—  
So many nations will shut their mouths because of him.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
Though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering,  
He will see his offspring, and prolong his days,  
And the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
After the suffering of his soul,  
He will see the light of life be satisfied,  
By knowledge of him my righteous servant will justify many,  
And he will bear their iniquities.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,  
And he will divide the spoils with the strong,  
Because he poured out his life unto death,  
And was numbered with the transgressors  
For he bore the sin of many,  
And made intercession for the transgressors.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
Shouts of joy and victory resound  
In the tents of the righteous;  
The Lord's right hand has done mighty things.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
I will not die, but live,  
and will proclaim what the Lord has done.  
The Lord has chastened me severely,  
but he has not given me over to death.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**  
I have set the Lord always before me;  
Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken.  
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;  
My body also will rest secure.  
Because you will not abandon me to the grave,  
Nor will you let your holy one see decay.  
You have made know to me the path of life;  
You will fill me with joy in your presence,  
With eternal pleasures at your right hand.  
**CHRIST IS RISEN! HE IS RISEN INDEED! HALLELUJAH!**

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