

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Example Service

For 2024 resources, visit: [www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/WPCU%202024%20ENG.pdf](http://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/WPCU%202024%20ENG.pdf)

## Prelude/Preparation

*The candles are to be lit as the service starts.*

Welcome and Introduction to the Week of Prayer – Theme

*A commentator welcomes people to the celebration introducing the theme of the prayer.*

## Hymn

L: Please stand and join in singing the opening hymn as the celebrants enter in procession along the path.

*Passing near the “well”, each representative of a participating church will slowly pour the water from a jug into the bowl. This water, from different sources, is a symbol of our unity which is real, though still incomplete.*

*When the celebrating group is small, if possible, invite people to say their names and to which church they belong.*

## Opening

### Invitation to prayer

Leader: Almighty God, breathe into us the wind of unity that recognizes our diversity,

People: Breathe into us tolerance that welcomes and makes us community,

Leader: Breathe into us fire that unites what is torn apart and heals what is ill,

People: Breathe into us grace that overcomes hatred and frees us from violence,

Leader: Breathe into us life that faces down and defeats death.

People: Blessed be the God of mercy, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and makes all things new. Amen!

## Confession

Leader: In humility, as children of God and sisters and brothers in Christ, we receive God’s mercy and respond to God’s call to make new all relationships. Merciful Lord, your Spirit hovered over the waters where diversity sprouted and flourished. We confess our difficulty to live with legitimate differences. Forgive us those attitudes of mind, words and actions that do violence to unity in diversity.

People: O Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Merciful Christ, grace and joy of the multitude, listener and teacher, you give birth to new visions of hope and heal the wounds of mind and body. We confess that we have failed to listen to voices different from our own, failed to say words that bring healing and hope, and we have perpetuated exclusive attitudes to those who cry out for solidarity and fellowship.

People: O Lord, have mercy upon us.

Leader: Merciful Lord, you are the source of all creation, the Eternal and life-giving Word. We confess that we do not listen to your creation that groans and cries out for liberation and renewal. Help us to walk together and to hear your voice in all living things that suffer and yearn for healing and care. O God, fountain of mercy and grace, pour over us your pardon. May your love transform us into a source of living waters to restore the strength of your people. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

### **Gospel Proclamation**

Proclamation or dramatization of the Gospel of John 4:1-42

### **Meditation or Sermon**

**We Respond in Faith and Unity Affirmation of Faith** The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **Intercessory Prayer**

Leader: God of eternal compassion, as individuals and as community, we ask for light, so we may become more welcoming and understanding towards others and reduce the suffering in our world.

People: Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Leader: God of eternal compassion, teach your children that charity, hospitality and unity are expressions of your revelation and will for humanity.

People: Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Leader: God of eternal compassion, we beseech you, grant us peace; teach us and guide us to be builders of a tolerant and non-violent world.

People: Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Leader: God of eternal compassion, who spoke to us through creation, then through the prophets and then through your Son Jesus Christ, grant us wisdom to listen to your voice that calls us to unity in our diversity.

People: Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

Leaders: God of eternal compassion, in the name of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord who as a stranger asked for a drink from a Samaritan woman, give us living water, springing up unto eternal life.

People: Hear us, God of love! Hear this our cry!

*The local community may add other prayers.*

### **Offering**

Leader: We learn from Jesus to offer our lives as a sign of love and compassion. God, may we become living offerings dedicated to the ministry of your Word and grace.

### **Offerings are presented to the community.**

Leader: God, who are with us and walk in our midst, grant us this day the grace of your light and Spirit so that we may continue our mission and remain faithful to welcoming and listening to all, even those who are different from ourselves. Take away the violence that is in our hearts and the discriminating attitudes that exclude and devalue the human dignity of others. Enable our churches to be welcoming spaces where feast and forgiveness, joy and tenderness, strength and faith become our daily practice, our daily food, our daily movement forward in Jesus Christ.

All: Amen.

*Note: Local communities are invited to organize the offerings according to local tradition. We suggest that offerings be brought and placed on top of the colorful cloth before the altar. While the offertory takes place, a song is sung, chosen by the local organizing team.*

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Leader: With the confidence of the children of God, let us pray:

All: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who

sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

### **Benediction, Peace and Sending Forth**

Leader: May the Lord God, bless you and protect you, fill your heart with tenderness and your soul with joy, your ears with music and your nostrils with perfume, your tongue with song giving face to hope. May Jesus Christ the living water be behind you to protect you, before you to guide you, by your side to accompany you, within you to console you, above you to bless you. May the life-giving Spirit breathe into you that your thoughts may be holy, act in you so that your work is holy, draw your heart so that you love what is holy, strengthen you that you will defend what is holy. May he make his home in your heart, water its dryness, and melt its coldness, kindle in your innermost soul the fire of his love and bestow upon you a true faith, and firm hope, and a sincere and perfect love.

All: Amen.

### **Sharing Peace**

Leader: May God, who teaches us to welcome each other and calls us to practice hospitality, grant us peace and serenity as we move forward on the path of Christian Unity. As we go in the peace of Christ let us share with each other the sign of peace.

### **Postlude**

**Also visit:** [www.oikoumene.org/news/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2024-you-shall-love-the-lord-your-god-and-your-neighbour-as-yourself](http://www.oikoumene.org/news/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2024-you-shall-love-the-lord-your-god-and-your-neighbour-as-yourself)