

A CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

PRESBYTERIAN PEACEMAKING PROGRAM
A MINISTRY OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY COUNCIL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (U.S.A.)

This liturgy addresses concerns for torture. It could be used as the Advent candle is lit on the Sunday closest to Human Rights Day—December 10. A separate candle could be used. Place the candle in a prominent location with olive branches or barren grapevine around it.

OPENING WORDS (Based on Matthew 3:1-12 in *The Message*)

One: There is thunder in the desert!
Another: Make way for God's arrival
One: The streams are spilling over!
Another: Reorder your lives
One: The hills are being leveled!
Another: Make your actions count
Together: The reign of God is here!

LIGHTING THE CANDLE

Today we light a special candle in honor of Human Rights Day. As we anticipate Christ's coming light, our hope is not only for ourselves, but for all humanity. We live in abundance and hope comes easily. We light this candle for those whose hope is faint at best; for those whose basic human rights are or have been denied.

Say the following as the candle is lit.

We light this candle

For those in prisons;

For those held by governments who deny them basic human dignity;

For survivors of torture—emotional, spiritual, or physical;

For those who compromise their consciences and humanity by humiliating and torturing;

For those who remain in the guilt of silence after truth has been spoken.

Together we affirm: The light of Christ is for you.

Hold the candle for all to see and say

We hold you, our suffering brothers and sisters, at the heart of our worship. Remind us through this candlelight, of our need and yours for peace with justice. We honor your presence with us.

A SUSTAINED MOMENT OF SILENCE

A HYMN

Sing a hymn such as:

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People, *Presbyterian Hymnal*, #3

O Come, O Come Emmanuel, *Presbyterian Hymnal*, #9

A CLOSING PRAYER

God for the entire world,
We pray for our brothers and sisters
Throughout your world
Who endure torture
Physically, spiritually, emotionally.
In their pain
May they experience your presence and care
Binding their wounds
Supporting them.
We pray for our brothers and sisters
Throughout your world
Who inflict torture
Physically, spiritually, emotionally.
May they experience your presence and care
Binding the wounds they bear
Wounds they receive as they wound others.
Open them to see the dignity of each person.
Strengthen them to seek ways
To break free from violence.
We pray for our brothers and sisters
Throughout your world
Who authorize torture
Physically, spiritually, emotionally.
Break the hold of fear and anger upon them.
Inspire them to seek other ways to advance their causes.
We pray for ourselves.
Inspire us to take responsibility to act to end acts of torture
That violate our sisters and brothers
And degrade us and our values.
Guide us to pray and study,
Dialogue and speak,
Come together and advocate
For an end to torture.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ,
Whose life, death and resurrection
Reveals that God's love
Is indeed stronger than torture and fear.
Amen.

Visit www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/worship/worship.htm#rightsday for information about Human Rights Day.

Visit www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/actnow/actnow.htm#stoptorture for a bulletin insert that summarizes the policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on stopping torture and other resources.

