



Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

A Worship Resource Developed by Churches for Middle East Peace

(All stand)

Lucernarium: If the celebration takes place in the evening, it may begin with the ritual of light. One of the ministers takes the light from a candle already lit in the midst of the congregation (or the sanctuary lamp) and lights the various candles or candle clusters set around the sanctuary area and worship space, or lights the candles held by the participants so the light moves through the gathering. During the lighting, there can be instrumental music or a suitable hymn ending with the call to prayer chanted or spoken:

L: Light and Peace in Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

If the service is not done by candlelight (Lucernarium), the service begins with the following verse and response.

L. Bow down and worship,
the Lord our Creator!

**All: The Lord is our God,
and we are his people. (Psalm 95:7)**

Whether the Lucernarium or the ordinary prayer service format is used, the Call to Worship continues with the antiphonal recitation of Psalm 87, which celebrates Jerusalem as “Mother of nations” (Grail Translation).

L. All who sing or dance will say,

All: “I too am from Zion.”

**Side 1: Zion was built by the Lord
on the holy mountain,
and he loves that city,
more than any other place
in all of Israel.
Zion, you are the city of God,
and wonderful things
are told of you.**

Side 2: Egypt, Babylonia, Philistia,
Phoenicia and Ethiopia
are some of those nations
that know you,
and all their people say,
“I was born in Zion.”





Use of "Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem"

"Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" was developed by Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) for use by the congregations of its member churches – Catholic and Protestant. You are encouraged to reproduce it freely, use excerpts or adapt it for your use. CMEP thanks Sr. Ann Rehauer, OSF, The Rev. Dr. Jeanne MacKenzie and Fr. Drew Christiansen, SJ, for their generous assistance in preparing this resource.

Churches for Middle East Peace receives guidance and inspiration from the Palestinian Christian community and their Patriarchs and Bishops. We continue to be informed and inspired by the Memorandum of their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and of the Heads of Christian Communities in Jerusalem on "The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians."

From "On the Significance of Jerusalem for Christians," November 14, 1994

"Jerusalem is a city holy for the people of the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Its unique nature of sanctity endows it with a special vocation: calling for reconciliation and harmony among people, whether citizens, pilgrims or visitors. And because of its symbolic and emotive value, Jerusalem has been a rallying cry for different revived nationalistic and fundamentalist stirrings in the region and elsewhere. And unfortunately, the city has become a source of conflict and disharmony. It is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Israeli-Arab disputes.

"Jerusalem is a symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace for humankind, in particular the children of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims. We call upon all parties to comprehend and accept the nature and deep significance of Jerusalem, City of God. None can appropriate it in exclusivist ways. We invite each party to go beyond all exclusivist visions or actions, and without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others, in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind."

Occasions for Preaching on Jerusalem

Some liturgical seasons and feasts lend themselves particularly to Sunday preaching on Jerusalem, whether on a shared Jerusalem, solidarity with the Jerusalem churches, or interreligious harmony. Portions of the Advent cycle, for example, emphasize the ingathering of the nations in Jerusalem. Pentecost celebrates the re-creation of a new humanity united out of many nations by the power of the Spirit. The Lucan Gospel (Cycle C), with its motif of the journey up to Jerusalem, as well as the concluding chapters of the other synoptics provide frequent reflection on Jerusalem. Readings from Acts during the Easter season offer material on the Church of Jerusalem and its interaction with the growing gentile churches.

Preachers who have been pilgrims, especially those who have done solidarity or Living Stones

pilgrimages, have the opportunity to bring their knowledge of historical Jerusalem and their experience of contemporary life in the Holy Land to their congregations as a way of helping them understand the wisdom of a shared Jerusalem and the Church's stake in the Holy City.

The second lectionary reading (Year C) for the sixth Sunday after Easter includes the vision from Revelation of "the new Jerusalem." For a preacher who may want to address the topic of a "shared Jerusalem," it is important to note that May and June, because of the wars of 1948 and 1967, are months when Palestinians and Israelis are particularly focused on Jerusalem and the question of its future.



Homily Notes

The theme of a shared Jerusalem ought to be preached in the context of biblical revelation. The optional readings offer alternative ways to approach the topic of a “shared Jerusalem.” The dominant theme is God’s intention to renew Jerusalem by making it a home to all nations. These are both expectations for the Jerusalem of history (Isaiah, Luke 13) and for the Jerusalem of the end times (Revelation). The reading from Acts presents this ingathering as having already begun with the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost, emphasizing the Church’s vocation to nurture unity in the human family. Various contemporary church statements talk about the “universal religious significance” of Jerusalem as a place of encounter of humanity with God and of diverse people in peace. “Sharing Jerusalem” is a practical way to express the city’s universal significance.

Psalm 87 (Call to Worship) is of special relevance to finding an end to the conflict between Arabs and Jews because it sees “Egypt, Babylonia, Philistia, Phoenicia, and Ethiopia,” dominantly Arab countries, as children of Zion. Note especially that Philistia is the origin of the word “Palestine.” The reading from Acts also notes “Arabs” as among the people found in Jerusalem on the first Christian Pentecost. These biblical themes are comparable to the formulas used by today’s church leaders in the Holy Land when they talk about sharing Jerusalem “between two peoples and three religions.” The preacher should differentiate the use of Zion in the psalm as a home to all nations from the aspirations of contemporary Zionism, which is a Jewish nationalist movement.

A second theme is the divine love for Jerusalem (Isaiah 66, Luke 13). That love is reflected in the love of Jews, Christians and Muslims for Jerusalem. Ancient Christians, in a phrase that has become current once again, refer to Jerusalem as “the Mother Church” because the first community gathered there and it was from Jerusalem that they were sent to preach the gospel “to the ends of the earth.” A constant stream of pilgrims of the three Abrahamic religions testifies to the attachment of contemporary believers to the Holy City. A city held in affection by so many should not belong exclusively to just one religious

tradition. Jerusalem’s sacredness as the locus of humanity’s encounter with God makes it a place where all humanity and the three Abrahamic traditions ought to be able to encounter one another in peace.

A third theme is the peace of Jerusalem. This is the deepest longing of the Jewish people and of Christians, too, as they pray Psalm 122, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Tragically, the city of peace has known little peace in her long history. For the last century, she has been caught in the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians. A time is at hand, a *kairos*, one of those openings God provides in history for people to heed the divine call. Negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians could end in peace for Jerusalem and all who love her. Or, as with Jesus, the moment of salvation could pass with the lament, “It is too bad that today your people do not know what brings peace.” Receiving God’s gift of peace depends on the readiness of humans “to recognize the things that make for peace.” Those who understand have a duty to urge those who hold power to make peace to take the decisions that will allow peace to happen.

The Revelation text differs somewhat in the Roman Catholic and Common Lectionary. The Catholic reading is Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23 (“the new Jerusalem come down from heaven”). The Common Lectionary selection is Revelation 21:10, 21:22-22:5 (“The nations will live by its light”). Catholic preachers might want to take into account the longer selection from the Common Lectionary, since it prophesies “the nations will live by [Jerusalem’s] light.” It continues, moreover, its “gates will never be shut by day – and there shall be no night there...” (Rev. 21:24-25).

Revelation 21:25 opens itself to preaching on the universal religious significance of Jerusalem as a city sacred to Jews, Christians and Muslims, and to a future in which the city will not be under “closure,” and so shut for security reasons to Palestinian pilgrims wishing to visit the holy places. The theme that the divine presence draws all peoples to itself – in Jerusalem – is one that can be used with either lectionary selection.



The following are times when the Lectionary Texts provide a starting point for preachers to preach on Jerusalem.

	Roman Catholic Lectionary	Revised Common Lectionary
Year B	December 2005-November 2006	
Second Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11	Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 and Psalm 85
Christmas	Isaiah 62:1-5	_____
Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	same
Easter Evening	_____	Isaiah 23:6-9
Year C	December 2006-November 2007	
First Sunday of Advent	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Jeremiah 33:14-16
Second Sunday of Advent	Baruch 5:1-9	Baruch 5:1-9 or Malachi 3:1-4
Third Sunday of Advent	Zephaniah 3:14-18a	Zephaniah 3:14-20
Christmas	Isaiah 62:1-5	_____
Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	same
Easter	_____	Isaiah 65:17-25
Fifth Sunday of Easter	Revelation 21:1-5a	Revelation 21:1-6
Sixth Sunday of Easter	Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23	Revelation 21:10, 21:22-22:5
Second Sunday of Ordinary Time	Isaiah 62:1-5	(Second Sunday after Epiphany)
12 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	Zechariah 12:10-11, 13:1	_____
14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	Isaiah 66:10-14c	Isaiah 66:10-14
Year A	December 2007-November 2008	
First Sunday of Advent	Isaiah 2:1-5	Isaiah 2:1-5 and Psalm 122
Christmas	Isaiah 62:1-5	Isaiah 9:2-7 or Isaiah 62:6-12; Isaiah 52:7-10
Epiphany	Isaiah 60:1-6	Same
14 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	Zechariah 9:9-10	_____
January 1	_____	Revelation 21:1-6a
Additional Passages		
Isaiah 4:2-6	Joel 4:12-21	Mark 11:11-26
Isaiah 40:1-11	Jeremiah 3:14-17	Acts 15:1-6
Isaiah 65:17-21	Luke 13:31-35	Matthew 20:17-28
Zechariah 8:1-8	Luke 2:22-35	Revelation 21:9-27
Zechariah 8:20-23	Luke 19:41-44	

Psalmody

Psalm 84

Psalm 122

Psalm 137

Psalm 147

Psalm 102



Suggested Gathering and Closing Hymns

<i>Jerusalem, My Destiny</i>	GIA in <i>Gather, Gather Comprehensive</i> – Rory Cooney
<i>Jerusalem, My Happy Home</i>	Oregon Catholic Press in <i>Breaking Bread and Journey Songs</i> ; GIA Worship; World Library/Paluch in <i>We Celebrate</i> ; <i>Lutheran Book of Worship</i> ; <i>The Hymnal</i> , Episcopal <i>Lutheran Book of Worship</i>
<i>Jerusalem the Golden</i>	North American Liturgy Resources, <i>Glory and Praise</i>
<i>The Road to Jerusalem</i>	Augsburg, <i>This Far By Faith Hymnal</i>
<i>Come We That Love the Lord</i>	GIA in <i>Ritual Song and Worship</i>
<i>City of God, Jerusalem</i>	(Lucien Deiss) <i>Biblical Hymns and Psalms</i> , vol. I
<i>I Saw the New Jerusalem</i>	<i>United Methodist Hymnal</i> ; <i>With One Voice</i> , Augsburg Fortress
<i>Marching to Zion</i>	<i>Presbyterian Hymnal</i>
<i>When Will People Cease Their Fighting?</i>	<i>Lutheran Book of Worship</i>
<i>Jerusalem, Whose Towers Touch the Skies</i>	

Sung Settings for the Psalms

Psalm 122

<i>Let us go rejoicing to the house of our God</i> in <i>Gather II</i> and <i>Ritual Song</i>	(GIA)
<i>I was Glad</i> in <i>Gather II</i> , <i>Ritual Song</i>	(GIA)
<i>I Rejoiced and Glorious Things of You are Spoken</i> in <i>We Celebrate</i>	(Paluch)
<i>I Rejoiced</i> (Bob Batistini) in <i>Ritual Song</i>	(GIA)
Settings in <i>By Flowing Waters</i> , #406, 507, and 270	(Liturgical Press)
<i>Qué Alegría</i> (Jaime Cortez) in <i>Qué Alegría/I Rejoiced</i>	OCP
Three settings in Spanish – <i>Flor y Canto</i>	Oregon Catholic Press
<i>I was Glad</i> – David Haas (choral setting)	GIA
<i>I Rejoiced When I Heard them Say</i> – Steven Warner	World Library/Paluch
<i>O Jerusalem</i> – David Haas (choral setting)	GIA

Psalm 137

<i>Let my tongue be silent</i> in <i>Ritual Song</i>	(GIA)
<i>Let my tongue be silenced</i> in <i>We Celebrate</i>	(Paluch)
Respond and Acclaim 2000 series	(Oregon Catholic Press)
<i>By the Babylonian Rivers</i>	(Presbyterian Hymnal)

Psalm 147

<i>O Praise the Lord, Jerusalem</i> in <i>Worship</i> #78	(GIA)
<i>Praise the Lord, Jerusalem</i> , in <i>Ritual Song</i> #198, 199	(GIA)
<i>Praise the Lord, Jerusalem</i> in <i>By Flowing Waters</i> #410	(Liturgical Press)
<i>Bless the Lord, My Soul</i> (Haugen) in <i>Gather Comprehensive</i> #141	(GIA)
<i>Respond and Acclaim</i> 2000 series	

General Collections

<i>The Grail Gelineau Psalter</i>	(GIA)
<i>The Psalter – Psalms and Canticles for Singing</i>	Westminster/John Knox Press
<i>A Children's Psalter</i>	World Library Publications
<i>Singing the Psalms</i> , settings	Lutheran Book of Worship
cf. settings in the hymnals of the various churches	



Prayer

Gracious God,
you sustain your Church,
the new and eternal Jerusalem,
by your loving presence.
As your Son journeyed to Jerusalem
to proclaim your kingdom

and to offer the gift of his life,
guide us on our journey to you,
and gift us with life and peace.
We ask this in the name of him
whose day draws near.

Second Reading

or
or

Acts 2:1-12 – *Many religious Jews from every part of the world...*
Revelation 21:1-5a – *The new Jerusalem, the holy city...*
Revelation 21:10-14, 22-27 – *The nations will walk by the light of the city.*

Quiet Reflection

Prayer

Gracious God,
hear our prayers for your holy city, Jerusalem.
End her suffering and make her whole.
Make her your home once again,
a city of peace,
and a light to all peoples.

Foster harmony in the holy city
among Jews, Christians and Muslims
now and evermore.
We make this prayer... Amen.

(All stand for the Gospel Acclamation and the Proclamation of the Gospel.)

Gospel Acclamation

Sung Alleluia

Gospel

Luke 13:31-35 – *Jerusalem, how often I have sought to gather you...*
or Luke 19: 35-42 – *Jesus weeps over Jerusalem.*
or Luke 2:22-26 – *Jerusalem as a center of expectant prayer.*

(The congregation sits for the reflection/homily and in the Lucernarium extinguishes its candles.)

Reflection/Homily (See thematic options related to the readings in the Homily Notes)

Short period of Quiet

(The congregation stands for the petitionary and gathering prayer and the final hymn.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Petition

(Possible options are found below or you may develop your own. You may also want to use a sung setting of these such as that found in "Litany When the Church Gathers" by James Hansen – OCP Publications.)



L: My brothers and sisters, grateful for the gift of life and peace, let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and for the coming of the new and eternal city where God will be all in all:

1. **For the Church of God, that she may work and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, we pray...**
2. **For the Mother Church of Jerusalem, that she live out her vocation to build-up the peace of Jerusalem, we pray...**
3. **For political leaders, that they may take bold initiatives for peace of Jerusalem, we pray...**
4. **For zealots on all sides, that they may put aside their animosities and be still for the sake of Jerusalem's peace, we pray...**
5. **For peacemakers, that they may have courage and perseverance, we pray...**
6. **For Jews, Christians, and Muslims that they may learn to be at peace with one another in the Holy Land and (name other sites of religious conflict), we pray to the Lord,**
7. **For all those who have died attempting to bring peace to Jerusalem and the Holy Land, that they may rest securely in the bosom of Abraham, we pray...**

L. Gathering our prayers, we pray as Jesus taught us: **Our Father...** (Or you may use the following.)

God of ages,
in your sight nations rise and fall,
and pass through times of peril.
Now when Jerusalem is troubled,
be near to judge and save.
May leaders be led by your wisdom;
May they search your will and see it clearly.
If your people have turned from your way,
help them to reverse their ways and repent.
Give your light and your truth to guide all your people;
this we pray through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

or

Grant, O God,
that your holy and life-giving Spirit
may so move in every human heart,
that the barriers that divide us may crumble,
suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease,
and that, with divisions healed,
your people might live in justice and peace;
We pray in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing and Dismissal

L: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

May the God of hope fill us with every joy in believing.

May Christ's peace abound in our hearts.

May the Spirit of unity and peace draw us together to eternal life.

Closing Hymn: (See options provided in the resource list.)