

## **In Other Words**

**Alternative Collects for the Church Calendar for the year 2000**

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compiled and edited by Mary Page Sims\***

**\*When I compiled the Collects there were some Sundays without prayers and there were prayers undesignated for a particular Sunday. Therefore, I inserted undesignated prayers into the Church Calendar where no Collect was designated.  
August 9, 2008**

### **The First Sunday of Advent**

Eternal God, give us grace to see the shadow side of our hearts and, acknowledging its deceptive power, move us to withdraw those projections of its darkness that forbid the seeing of our oneness with all humanity as made in your image and embraced, with us, in your compassion. Grant that we may cast away the works of darkness, putting on the armor of light, now in the time of our mortality when Jesus came among us as a servant in great humility. Win us to his vocation of servanthood that in his light we may see light and live this season of Advent in renewal of our energies as servant leaders of reconciliation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **The Second Sunday of Advent**

Cheer us, O God, in the Advent season, not with vain anticipations of a rescuing second coming of your Christ, but with the assurance of his continual presence and the gift of as many second chances as we need for the amendment of our lives and the rebirth of our hope.

Take from us all foreboding and despair of the human condition at this turning point of the new millennium. Open the eyes of our faith to see and to support the rising tide of care for the Earth, of compassion for human suffering, of concern for simplicity, and of the commitment to peace among the religions and governments of the world.

Deliver us from all irresponsibility for the affairs of the world in the name of religion. Set our hearts on the beckoning work of personal and global transformation that we be not found wanting in our zeal for a nobler community of life for all that lives. In the name of Jesus Christ, servant sage and our redeemer. *Amen.*

### **The Third Sunday of Advent**

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with the great might of your love come among us; and because we are hindered and hardened by our want of compassion, let your bountiful grace and mercy help us. Open our hearts to the love for which we are made that we may be renewed in love for you, for ourselves, and for all others with whom we share the gifts of life in your exquisitely interwoven world; through Jesus Christ, servant lover and redeemer of the world. *Amen.*

### **The Fourth Sunday of Advent [December 19, 1999]**

God of our ever-recurring Christmas, we join our hearts in giving thanks for the remembered glow of Christmas past — when, in the youth of our years, the world seemed more local and life less blemished. Though some circles of our love have since been broken, suffer us not to lose heart in Christmas present. Cheer us by the goodness of old loves holding and by the marvel of new loves found.

By the grace of love ever-reborn lift us to hope for all our Christmases yet to come. Shape us as peacemakers in all our relationships, trusting the good to overcome evil, and truth to conquer falsehood, and forgiveness to cancel alienation.

Multiply the servants of peace in all places of your dominion that new circles of love may widen and advance to embrace a world become too small for love's refusal; in the name and power of the Prince of Peace. *Amen.*

### **The Nativity of Our Lord: Christmas Day**

Hear our joy, O God, in knowing that exalted power is poured out in the lowliness of a life born to command by serving – to rule by loving – and to gain all hearts by giving.

Great giver of Christmas, we honor you with the return gift of ourselves in love and thanksgiving — and claim thereby the vocation of servanthood in the pattern and power of Jesus, born at this time to witness to the power that spins the stars. *Amen.*

### **The First Sunday after Christmas**

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,  
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."  
And he replied "Go out into the darkness and put thine hand into the  
hand of God. That shall be to thee better than light and safer than a known way."  
So I went forth and finding the hand of God, trod gladly into the night.

Knowing not O God what the year ahead may bring, only that in relation to the earth we must grow in the courage to change, lest we lose the living legacy of your creation, move us more and more in the new habits of stewardship that forecast a human community of caring across the world. Increase among us patience and hope while we struggle to change, even though there may be resistance in places of privilege and power. Suffer us not to lose heart but to trust in the changeless presence of the quickening hand in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

### **The Second Sunday after Christmas**

Creator God of all that is and of all the years of time's duration, behold and bless our worship and the musings of our hearts. Keep us company with your Holy Spirit as we seek to be born anew in service to your world. Multiply among your people everywhere a resolve to live gratefully and responsibly as participants in the cosmic community of life.

Join our hearts to all hearts in all places of your dominion that godly faith may grow and hope flourish, and love never fail. *Amen.*

### **The First Sunday after the Epiphany**

Almighty God, whose power is revealed as Servanthood in Jesus Christ, the light of the world: Grant that your church, illumined by your Word and Sacraments may shine as Servants to the world in the radiance of Christ's glory -- that your love for all life may be known and cherished as the power to overcome estrangement -- from you our God, from ourselves as your beloved, and from one another across all boundaries; through Jesus Christ and his abiding Spirit. *Amen.*

### **The Second Sunday after the Epiphany**

Servant God, whose power and servanthood in love is revealed in the figure and light of the loving Christ, make us always ready to receive your revelation and follow your will in all we do.

As wise men of old detected your presence in the stars may we detect your presence in all that lives. May our gifts to you be ones of compassion and commitment to your vision of peace on earth. *Amen.*

### **The Third Sunday after the Epiphany**

Eternal God from whom comes all life and love, we thank you for the living emblem of your power and presence in Jesus Christ, servant Savior and light of the world. Grant us grace to follow him in servanthood as our life's vocation. In calling us to this worshipping fellowship, guide our efforts to discern your will as we decide how best to respond as a house church gathered in the name of Jesus. *Amen.*

### **The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany**

Take from us, O God, the spirit of fear — all the dread and subtle timidities that prohibit obedience to the high summons of our hearts.

By your Holy Spirit of love, infuse us with the love that conquers cowardice and powers the courage to speak and to live our truth in quiet confidence.

Call us to our best as works in progress that we may grow in authenticity as we grow in age — in the authority of a forthright humanity that authors the best in others — as Jesus in his divine authority authors us in freedom and gentle boldness of heart. *Amen.*

### **The Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany**

Set us free, O God, from our bondage to our fears and lovelessness and open before us the vistas of freedom in that life of servanthood and abundance that you have shown us in Jesus, who is our link with you through faith in him and a life of serving in his name and power. *Amen.*

### **The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany**

Almighty God, whose power is revealed as servanthood in Jesus Christ, the light of the world, grant that your church, illumined by your Word and sacraments, may shine as servants to the world in the radiance of Christ's glory — that your love for all life may be known and cherished as the power to overcome estrangement — from you our God, from ourselves as your beloved, and from one another across all boundaries; through Jesus Christ and his abiding Spirit. *Amen.*

### **The Seventh Sunday after the Epiphany**

Holy God, brighten our hearts with the awareness of your presence. Instill in us the gift of wisdom that we may see the tapestry of your designing, made manifest in Jesus. As followers of your Son may we too surrender our lives to your service and thereby fulfill our heart's longing. *Amen.*

### **The Eighth Sunday after the Epiphany**

Holy God, author of our ancient dream of peace and our vintage hope of a finer world, suffer us not to abandon the vision of your prophets and apostles, whose calls for social justice and kinship with all life still ring in the record set down so long ago and preserved to us in scripture.

Bewildered though we be by a world still soiled by injustice and imperiled by human cunning and violence, grant that we lose not heart. Buoy us by the goodness we behold in people of every station in life. Prosper the prophetic and selfless servant words of all who strive for the relief of the poor, the comfort of the suffering, the disarmament of the nations, and the healing of the breach between humanity and our home in the Earth; through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### **The Last Sunday after the Epiphany**

Find us, O God, in whatever state of soul we bring to our circle of worship today:

If it be lassitude or confusion or a heavy heart, grant us some fresh energy of spirit in the hearing of Scripture and one another.

If it be unbelief or doubt or loneliness, grant that, like Elijah, the sounds of our silence may comfort and assure us of your presence.

If it be that we bring a fearful heart, hearten us anew by the sharing of our stories and insights.

If, in good heart, we bring high hope and eager expectation, grant that such gifts among us may be the girding of all our souls. Or if it be simply love of God and fondness for one another that we bring, confirm in us the power of such love that our

worship may rekindle a love of life and send us forth in joy as servants of our servant Lord, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### **The First Sunday in Lent**

Spare us, O God, of all morbid preoccupation with our sins and the wickedness of the world. Though there be abundant cause of gloom in our own and the world's waywardness, deliver us of all despair of the human condition.

Set our hearts on the promise of your mercy and ignite our resolve to order our lives to the power of love. Grant us to discern confession, not as self-condemnation, but as an invited claim on divine forgiveness. Make of us conduits of the tender toughness of your grace, forgiving others by your power at work in us that we be not in the bondage of ill will toward anyone to whom we refuse forgiveness.

Fix in us habits of hope that assure us of your presence in every mood and moment. And make of our worship today a reencounter with the light that shines in every darkness and shows forth "the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 C or. 4:6) *Amen.*

### **The Second Sunday in Lent**

Eternal God, whose glory it is always to have mercy, be gracious with us whose vagrancy of spirit and failure to love leave us limping and ashamed. Restore us to the nobility of our inborn goodness and by our confession and worship remake us in the beauty of our created humanity. Forgive us and set us free of all that hinders our love of life and our joy in serving as ambassadors of the servant Christ. *Amen.*

### **The Third Sunday in Lent**

Eternal God, whose exercise of almighty power is devoted to empowering the fullness of life in all that lives, teach us by that graciousness in your rule of the universe to treat with grace all with whom we share life's pilgrimage — from the creatures who loved life long before our emergence in the planet to all who bear your image with us in our humanity — that our worship in this lovely corner of creation may radiate peace far and near as we are freed of all that hinders our own peace in service to our servant Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### **The Fourth Sunday in Lent**

Loose our hold, O God, on all that passes: our vigor of body and youth's fair countenance; our early fulfillments in family attachments that seemed eternal; our expectations of achievements that once appeared an ever-rising area of personal accomplishment; our nation's long-ago simplicities of streetcars and singular

downtowns and winding ribbons of two-lane roads and innocence of global networks of invasive communications and challenges.

Bind us to your love that knows no passing and that promises hidden new beginnings in all that ends. Cheer us in any darkness of spirit with the hope that fired the hearts of prophets, apostles, and poets — such a poet who held fast to your fidelity in a moment of hardship and wrote:

“All which I took from thee I did’st but take,  
Not for thy harms,  
But just that thou might’st seek it in my arms.  
All which thy child’s mistake fancies as lost,  
I have stored for thee at Home.  
Rise, clasp my hand, and come.”

(The Hound of Heaven, by Francis Thompson)

### **The Fifth Sunday in Lent**

Eternal God, whose boundaries of law are set for our fulfillment and whose bountiful mercy is ever-present for our forgiveness, move our hearts to such penitence as lays claim upon your mercy and such compassion as puts to flight all unmercifulness toward others — in the pattern and power of Jesus Christ, servant Savior of the world. *Amen.*

### **The Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday**

Ever-growing God of love and patience, on this festival Sunday of our Lord’s historic rebuke of the power of conquest, prosper the hope that ours is the turning point in time when the nations respond to the shift in human consciousness from political structures of self-serving to a world embracing servanthood.

Turn us from the pride of marching military to the nobler march of mutuality, respect, and healing for the Earth; through Jesus Christ, bold challenger and redeemer of all human striving. *Amen.*

### **Easter Day**

Scatter our unbelief, O God, this Easter morning. Assure us of the truth of Resurrection by the measurements of historical fact and the invincibility of love.

We know not how or even whether a re-embodied Jesus appeared and addressed those who loved him, but we know that from his undoubted dying there rose, endured, and grew through all the centuries since a patchwork based of sisters and brothers in Christ with arms around the Earth.

We know, too, from our deepest experience that, of all the powers that prevail, love is the most unconquerable. Your love in Jesus of Nazareth, enduring the calculated

brutality of crucifixion, pled forgiveness for his crucifiers. Gladly we claim in their forgiveness our own — and rejoice to give you thanks for life restored by the mercy that redeems and rules the world.

The Lord is risen. The Lord is risen indeed. *Amen.*

### **The Second Sunday of Easter**

Eternal God, in the wake of our Easter recollection we give you thanks for the known and unknown pilgrims whose gifts of spirit and intellect wrought the Scriptures as data for our recollecting. Though old in time the books of our ancient Bible prove ever new as challenge and invitation. Though uneven in their worth to our pilgrimage, they endure as resources to our joy in believing and often as surprises to our understanding and appreciation.

Grant us patience where we understand not, hope that we may yet comprehend, and large gratitude for what does speak to us, and heal our hearts, and chases darkness, and cancels all in ourselves and in the world that separates us from the everlasting arms of your love in Jesus Christ, risen and present evermore. *Amen.*

### **The Third Sunday of Easter**

Servant Son of God, Jesus Christ, source of our clearest glimpse of eternal good and maker of our readiness to commit all that remains unclear to your eternal goodness, increase in each of us we pray, the gift of faith that we may walk serenely in all uncertainty. We would leave all our yesterdays and all our tomorrows in your merciful embrace, asking only that each today finds us unafraid, trusting your promise that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom. *Amen.*

### **The Fourth Sunday of Easter**

Eternal God, whose Spirit was and is fully in the man Jesus from whose selflessness in love of you rose a servanthood to others in complete command of himself, we pray that loving you through him we may be shaped more and more to his quality of self-command. May we thus be made to grow daily in our call to be servants in the strength and tenderness of the Servant Christ. *Amen.*

### **The Fifth Sunday of Easter**

Eternal God, whom to know is to be called to servanthood; grant us so to grow in the knowledge and love of Jesus as the way, the truth, and the life, that we may faithfully follow in his footsteps that lead us daily into life eternal. In Jesus' name we gather and offer all our prayers. *Amen.*

### **The Sixth Sunday of Easter**

What good, O God, are the counsels of perfection in Scripture that we love one another except as they reflect the true and foundational character of our souls.

Grant that we be not persuaded by our angers and fears, nor by the violence and vengeance of public behavior, that humanity is drawn to darkness at the core – only shadowed by impulses that we may not comprehend and must not deny.

Lift us to the light and remake us to the image of our making, shaped by our creation for love and for love writ large in public justice and care of the planet.

Grant that we see human cruelty as deviate from our design, and human suffering as drawing us deeper in trust that the suffering of the Christ is emblematic of the love that will never let us go.

Turn us again to the large loving that refuses to discriminate and heals us of personal fear and cancels despair of the human condition – and that makes the peace for which all hearts are made and remade in Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **The Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Grant us eyes of the heart, O God, that we may, in all encounters, see beyond appearances. Gird us to see ourselves from inside out, that as we grow in age we may grow in gratitude for the gift of life in your divine design – whatever our station, shape and size. And from thanksgiving for ourselves may there grow the grace of seeing others in the beauty of our shared humanity as children of God.

So may our created and reclaimed oneness with one another be a mounting power for peace and justice in a world ever-becoming too small for enmity toward ourselves and all others. Remake us in the image of our making, obedient to the capital commands of love as co-workers with Christ in the redemption of the world. *Amen.*

### **The Day of Pentecost: Whitsunday**

Merciful God, on this day of celebrating the Spirit's gift of your unfailing presence across all boundaries, within and without, we thank you for the freedom of our forgiveness and for the liberating power of the Spirit to be ourselves forgivers.

Open our hearts to receive your Holy Spirit that we may claim the priesthood of all believers in every impulse and act of forgiving – both of ourselves and others.

Open our minds to understand that the sins of any we retain are retained in us as blaming and bitterness – and that the sins we forgive, in ourselves and others, are released in us for our freedom and joy. *Amen.*

## **The First Sunday after Pentecost, Trinity Sunday**

Eternal and triune God, as there is that primary person hidden in each of us, hidden even to ourselves, so may we trust the mystery of your hiddenness to us. As there is that second person in each of us whom we reveal and trust to those we love, so may we see and love the light of your countenance in the Christ. And as there is that mystic third of each of us who remains a vivid presence for those who receive the person we disclose, so may we be girded by your abiding from whose embrace of mercy there is no way to run.

Grant us to be born anew in believing as we celebrate this day the ancient mystery of the Trinity, made manifest in the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

### **Proper 1**

Baptize us over and again, gracious God in the faith of our forbearers that we may live and grow in confidence of our identity as your beloved sons and daughters. In the face of the inequalities of our gifts and graces, grant us to walk in the light of the love that cherishes us equally, neither demeaned nor applauded for the unchosen bestowals of our birth.

And from such confidence in our own value grant us inward eyes to see all others, whatever their origins or endowments, as worthy with us of the cost of crucifixion -- certain in the knowledge that naught shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

### **Proper 2**

By your guiding mercy O Lord, awaken your church to the perils of complacent conformity to the culture of greed and self-service that sees not the sacredness of the earth nor honors the flourishing of species that also cherish life and that perish forever under the assaults of human heedlessness.

Arouse your people to repent of our plunder of the planet, its seas and soils and atmosphere. Move us to rejoice in the swiftly emerging recovery of an ancient awareness of your divine presence in all that our eyes behold and all that feeds our necessity.

God help us to change  
To change ourselves and our world  
To know the need of it  
To deal with the pain of it  
To feel the joy of it  
To undertake the journey without knowing the outcome  
The art of gentle revolution  
In the name of Jesus, Servant Savior of the World. *Amen.*

### **Proper 3**

Eternal God whose murmurs of life and love we know now to be hidden in the heart of the earliest atoms of creation and which emerged to our recognition in the prophets and poets of the human pilgrimage, we acknowledge again with joy the climax of love's emergence in our recognition of Jesus as Servant Savior of the world. We repent of our part in the sins that violate your commandments to return your love with love for one another. We claim the promise of your forgiveness and pray to be reshaped each day to the image of Christ as servants to the vision of peace across all boundaries and as stewards of the earth as home for all that lives. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **Proper 4**

Eternal God, author of all that emerges to human understanding, keeper of the mysteries that outrun the pace of all human discovery; bend our hearts to gratitude for your creation and move our wills to humility and care in our use of it.

Enlarge and extend the perception of human kinship with all that lives – from atoms to stars – that our dominion in creation may be turned from ruthlessness to stewardship and our energies from aggrandizement to servanthood.

Prosper the labors of all who strive to unite the human family in the preservation and peace of the earth.

"And the glorious majesty of the Lord our God be upon us: prosper thou the work of our hands; O prosper thou our handwork." *Amen*

### **Proper 5**

Servant Sovereign God, we pray that as of old your presence may be to us as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night and that our yielding to your guidance may issue in the works of servanthood as expressions of our moral freedom and our personal powers. Through Jesus Christ, Servant Savior of the World. *Amen.*

### **Proper 6**

Holy God, almighty in self-giving love, all powerful in your greater readiness to hear than we to pray, and to give us more than we either desire or deserve: pour upon us the abundance of your mercy that in being forgiven we in turn may be forgivers and so claim the high freedom of relief from all grievances that hold us in bondage to bad feeling, ill-will and blaming. Grant that your mercy may make us merciful in the image and likeness of him who is perfectly free, your Servant Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

## Proper 7

Touch us, O God, where we need to be touched. If it be the need to endure, gird us for endurance and soften us to see your presence in every storm.

If it be the need to believe, open our minds to the miracle of life and the gift of so many mornings in our pilgrimage.

If it be the need to hope, open us to behold all that is behind us of your goodness in gifts of family, friends, privilege and many rescues – that seeing your faithfulness in the past we may be stirred to trust your fidelity in all that is to come.

If it be the need to love, open our hearts to one another and to the truth of Scripture that as we are reconciled to you by our forgiveness in Christ Jesus, so we are given the ministry of reconciliation in all our encounters.

By the powers of faith, hope and love, mold us as peacemakers in a world become too small for strife. *Amen.*

## Proper 8

“Lord, take over all the remaining years of my life.  
Take my feeling, take my understanding and my will.  
All that I am and all that I possess: my home, my family, my money, my career.  
You have given them to me; to you I give them back entirely,  
And henceforth to your will and guidance I surrender them.  
Give in return but love of you, and with it give your strength,  
And I am rich enough and ask no more.” *Amen.*

The Rt. Rev. Cuthbert Bardsley,  
Bishop of Coventry following WWII

## Proper 9

In the nick of time, O God, the leading edges of our learning teach us that your creation is a mystic web of interwoven wonder – that all things are connected like the blood that unites a family – that the life pulsing in each of us is part of a vast harmony of unbidden breath reaching across the cosmos and into the undiscovered depths of the earth – that what we do as the earth’s high consciousness we do to ourselves.

In the nick of time, O God, move us to respect and cherish our neighbors in all creation according to your command, seeing that in such loving and forgiving we lose ourselves and secure the earth against the violence of vengeance and greed and war.

In the nick of time, O God, open us to the truth that love is not an option but the necessity that warms the world. By your love in sages and saints and in Christ Jesus, deliver us from all that hinders us in our vocation to love. *Amen.*

## **Proper 10**

Make us messengers of your peace, O God, at this turning point in the long pilgrimage of life. Shape our souls to the image of your Christ, that we be not compounders of exclusion, fear and strife, but bringers of compassion, hope and the courage of good cheer.

While there is time in our brief and passing moment, enlarge our embrace of love for all the neighbors in our circles of encounter. Grant that we may aspire to inspire before we expire.

Show us your mercy, O Lord  
And grant us your salvation. *Amen.*

## **Proper 11**

Eternal God source and sustainer of the interwoven world, we bless you for the love poured out upon us through Jesus and for all the blessings of this life.

For this community of worship and soul-sharing we add our gratitude. Confirm in each of us our hope to grow in discipleship to the Christ of our enlarging allegiance.

Keep us faithful to the call of Servanthood that our brief presence here may contribute to the building of a finer world of peace and justice and abundance of love for all who follow us in the long odyssey of life.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

## **Proper 12**

Lord of all the waters and waves of life, come to us in their turbulence. Be our captain in every tempest and the bringer of peace. Grant us recognition of your presence in every weather, that we be not afraid.

Guide us this day in our search of Scripture that we doubt not its truth as the record of human experience and imagination in encounter with your Spirit in prophets, kings, apostles and the Christ.

Spare us from contending, in our hearts and with one another, between myth and fact that your holy word be not a proud and partisan weapon but a healing balm. Calm the fevers of our fear by the gift of discernment that welcomes your piloting presence in all our little boats, through our strong sailor and deliverer, Jesus Christ.  
*Amen.*

### **Proper 13**

Eternal God, maker of mountains and user of mountains for revealing your lordship in moments of mystic encounter, we offer you our thanks for granting us keen moments of knowing your presence – as you did to Moses of old on a mountain and to the friends of Jesus on the mount of his transfiguration.

May we be transfigured into the people you have created us to be, sensitive to your ever-present guidance and filled with gratitude, that in surrendering to your will we find joy and trusting in your mystery we find our home. *Amen.*

### **Proper 14**

Enlarge the boundaries of our love, O God. In every human heart advance the truth that, across all the chasms of fracturing fear, we are made members of one another.

If it be that our time is a turning point in the long stretch of evolving life, we here offer our lives as participants in the turning – for the sake of a world awaking to the interwoven wonder of your creation.

Awaken us from the selfish sleep that hinders the birth of an expansive love that grasps our interdependence with all life. Cleanse our consciousness of bitterness and anger and wrangling, together with all malice. Give us grace to grow in tenderness of heart and kindness to one another, forgiving one another as we are forgiven in Christ Jesus.

Make us imitators of God as beloved children, alive in love as God in Christ loves us. *Amen.*

### **Proper 15**

In your mercy, O God, you have fashioned us for mercy lest our falling short of all we wish we were should overwhelm us with remorse and thanklessness.

Cleanse us of our proud perfectionism and make us merciful with ourselves and all others, beckoned by aspirations to do what's best, forgiven of what we deem our worst, cheered to be your cherished children and glad to be alive in this hour of the lengthening pageant of life; through Jesus Christ, Servant Savior of the World. *Amen.*

### **Proper 16**

Holy God, author of the long arrow of advancing life in creation, maker of all the turning pages of the history we know and have yet to discover, prompter of the changes and chances of our momentous era, open the eyes of our faith that we trust both ancient Scripture and our own Spirit-guided wisdom to know your will for the ordering of our lives.

In particular we implore the light of love to discern your will in making and keeping the bonds of marriage. Grant that in outgrowing the inequities of male dominance in the patterns of our common life we shape anew the bonds of matrimony to the mutuality of husband and wife in freedom and honor. Grant us in marriage to be to one another servants of our separate callings in unseparated and steadfast fidelity and forbearance.

In thanksgiving for the enabling gifts of love in marriage and in unmarriage, we take joy in the communion of saints in this living circle and in the life to come. *Amen.*

### **Proper 17**

God of peace, take from us all that hinders peace in our hearts – our capitulation to the counterfeit lures of pride and competition for status, our blaming, begrudging and blindness to the longing for love and recognition in all human hearts.

From the riches of your mercy and the tender goodness of sharing in worship, grant us the power of self-giving – first to you, O God, that from you may come the power to see in all others our created kinship in the many faces of humanity.

Forsaking all that makes for war, in any dimension or relationship, make us instruments of the peace that reaches out with healing for a stricken world – ready at this turning point of time for a whole planet at peace.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth – as it is in heaven. *Amen*

### **Proper 18**

Eternal and merciful God who has taught by your servant and son to pray for the coming of your kingdom, forgive us of all that hinders it coming. Grant that we, refusing to abandon hope of a finer world, draw upon the strength and virtues of this community in shaping our lives as vessels of the kingdom's mighty gifts of love and peace.

We here offer our lives anew to Jesus Christ, that in the power of his servanthood we may be daily fashioned in his likeness as servants of the goodness and courage that lifts all hearts. *Amen.*

### **Proper 19**

Merciful God in whose divine economy only the merciful may know the rebound of mercy for themselves, only the forgiving can experience the exaltation of inner freedom that comes of granting others our forgiveness; we pray for the grace to withdraw from any bitterness that keeps us imprisoned in a vengeance that belongs, not to us, but only to you in your divine wisdom that keeps the balance of justice and compassion.

Help us to claim the rich health of a forgiving spirit. Use us as servants in the mystic network of spiritual influence to bring peace to a world grown too small for the active violence of hatred or the passive violence of indifference to the suffering of others. In this circle of worship make of our Prayers for the People a great engine of compassion that in your command of the cosmos it may become a balm of healing across all boundaries.

And if there be suffering in our struggle to forgive, let it be a participation with Christ in his suffering forgiveness from the Cross, and so be made sharers with him in the salvation of the world. *Amen.*

### **Proper 20**

Ever-living God, author of time and eternity, grant us to cherish each moment as a gift of being and to relish our being as an odyssey of endless becoming – in this life and the life to come.

In your sovereignty make of our time in the long human adventure a moment of turning from our prodigal waste of things earthly and our miserly hold on the mercies of heaven. Turn us from greed to grace, that the earth may be prized as the living soil of life and heaven's gift of love be ours to share in making peace.

Raise up a new humanity to match the challenge of this hour and make of us who gather here in worship eager participants in the cost and joy of Servanthood in the pattern and power of Jesus Christ with whom to live is life and with whom to die is gain. *Amen.*

### **Proper 21**

We pray for the day of nonviolence, O God,

For the patience to await its coming,  
For the strength to practice its strategy of love for enemies,  
For the hope that discerns its emergence in challenging the cultures of weaponry and in the rising tide across the world of nonviolent conflict resolution,

Make us servants of the peace that alone will preserve humanity and the world.

Shape our souls and our actions to the pattern and power of the Prince of Peace,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

### **Proper 22**

Life-giving God, creator of the first flash of the universe, fashioner of its fluorescence into galaxies, suns and our fire-born earth, maker of the long links of life from which the human project emerged, prompter of our ceaseless quest for knowledge and meaning, patient lure of love that has opened us now to our astonishing oneness

with all that was and is and is to come, grant us to trust your love as the maker of this miracle of interlocking life, put to flight our pride and fear, that we may find our fulfillment in obedience to the commandment of love given us in your revealer, Jesus Christ, Servant Lord of Life. *Amen.*

### **Proper 23**

Holy God, author of the ancient dream of peace and our vintage hope of a finer world, suffer us not to abandon the vision of your prophets and apostles, whose calls for social justice and kinship with all life still ring in the record preserved to us in Holy Scripture.

Bewildered though we be by a world still soiled by injustice and imperiled by human cunning and calculated violence, grant that we lose not heart. Buoy us by the goodness we behold in people of every gift and station in life. Prosper the prophetic words of all who strive for the relief of the poor, the comfort of the sorrowing, the disarmament of the nations, and the healing of the breach between humanity and the Earth. Fashion us, O God, in the image of Jesus, your servant son, the Prince of Peace. *Amen.*

### **Proper 24**

Keep, O God, your worshipping communities in ever growing faith and trust, that we may see new horizons of servanthood in the cries of creation and the suffering of others. Restore our souls to quiet power by your Grace, that we may speak your truth with confidence and work for justice and peace with compassion in the pattern of Jesus, our Servant Lord. *Amen.*

### **Proper 25**

Servant Sovereign God, you have made us in your image with the gifts of freedom and creativity, promising us life in return for love, power in return for service, fulfillment in return for faith, eternity in return for a daily dying to our vanity and vagrancy; retrace your image in each of us as we offer ourselves anew to your promise. Forgive us of all that hinders a life of love and service, of faith and hope of eternity; through Jesus Christ, Servant Savior of our souls. *Amen.*

### **Proper 26**

Eternal God, giver of life and death, who in the living and dying of Jesus became the way, the truth, and the life of the world, move us to commit anew to the power of friendship and forgiveness by which all life is lifted from violence to compassion, from vengeance to love, from strife to reconciliation, from anxiety over goods to glad trust in goodness, from the fevers of self-serving to the composure of servanthood; through Jesus Christ, servant sovereign of our souls, whom to love is to live eternally. *Amen.*

### **Proper 27**

Gracious Father and Mother God, grant that we may cast away the works of personal and public darkness, putting upon ourselves the armor of light, now in the time of our mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came to illumine the world and call us to lives of Servanthood after the manner of his ministry, that at our departing we may rise with him to the life immortal through him who is sovereign in power with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

### **Proper 28**

Holy God, whose passion brings forth creation and whose governance sets the boundaries for its life, grant to us as servant stewards of your living planet such a wholesome balance of order and ardor that makes us faithful to the demands of law and open to the graces of love. Especially we pray to be open to your Spirit's gifts of soul-nourishment in listening and speaking which takes place in community. We ask this through Jesus Christ, Servant Lord of Life. *Amen.*

### **Proper 29**

Great growing God, source of life's goodness and its goal, without whom nothing in all the living cosmos is sustained and fulfilled, increase among us the advancing care for our home planet that the sweetness of life may flourish for all that lives.

Have mercy upon us who in ignorance or habitual self-serving continue indifferent to the Turning Point through which the human pilgrimage now moves. Prompt more and more of your people to join the quest for a life of servanthood in the pattern and power of Jesus Christ, servant image of the fact of God. *Amen.*