

EIGHT DAYS OF PRAYER 2021

Racial Equity Committee (REC)
www.presbyterianwomen.org/antiracism

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

An Invitation

Khayla Johnson

2020–2021 Racial Equity Committee co-chair
(along with Kate Trigger Duffert) of PW's churchwide board of directors

On January 6, 2021, the world stood still and watched the events at the US Capitol. What happened that day left everyone in shock, appalled, some angry, some in disbelief, many unprepared, many brokenhearted, and even some were not surprised. This day's emotion is still staring us in the face and pushing everyone to engage with them. So we are left with broken hearts and loud cries, asking what we can do? In light of these emotions, we began to think of ways to respond to the ongoing crisis that would be meaningful, intentional, and real.

On behalf of Presbyterian Women's Racial Equity Committee (REC), we invite you to join Presbyterian Women for Eight Days of Prayer. We invite you to spend 5–10 minutes each day in prayer for the days leading up to and surrounding the inauguration.

We know from scripture that God always reminds us to pray no matter the circumstance. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God." (Philippians 4:6). Also, prayer is more than a simple act. Instead, it is intentional and intimate communication with God, and it is powerful.

Each day we will share a prayer prompt with you. We hope you would spend time in prayer, releasing the emotions, anxiety, and letting the Spirit breath peace across our nation.

We know that the events for that day will have a lasting impact on our country, but we know a God who can do all things, and we hope this is a start to our journey of reconciliation.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15

Day One

JyungIn (Jenny) Lee

2018–2021 churchwide moderator of Presbyterian Women

Merciful God,

We ask you this day to give us strength and peace. On January 6, the people in this nation experienced the unthinkable. We watched helplessly and in shock, the violence, vandalism, desecration, and invasion unfolding for hours in our nation's capital.

We, as a nation, used to claim ourselves as a “shining democracy” on a hill. People around the world have risked their lives to come to the US to live, and many are still hoping and aspire to come for our democratic government. We are shocked and saddened. We are in deep grief, realizing that what we held on high so proudly was so fragile. Something pierced deeply into our hearts.

Help us, O God. Cleanse our hearts. Help us get rid of any hatred toward others, the notion of superiority, and self-righteousness that reside in our hearts. We long to have our hearts and minds filled with love. Love, which is not arrogant. Love, which does not insist on its way. Love, which is kind and rejoices in the truth.

Help us rebuild our hearts and the nation's heart. Help us remember whose we are by remembering our baptism and the commitments we made through our baptism. Lead us to love our neighbor by doing justice and by sharing the grace you poured upon us while walking humbly with you, O God.

Amen.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16

Day Two

Khayla Johnson

2020–2021 co-chair of the Racial Equity Committee
of PW's churchwide board of directors
(adapted from the *Book of Common Worship* © 2018)

Holy God,

You watch over our going and our coming in, and your Spirit upholds us in every circumstance. Your Son, Jesus Christ, is our Alpha and Omega, and our hope and trust is in him. In our despair, we turn to you. We wait for the Lord, and in your word, we trust.

Lord, in our waiting, we pray for a country divided. We pray for this day when we are more like strangers on this earth than ever before, taken aback by all the violence, the harsh oppositions. We pray for the lives lost, for the lives threatened, and the lives left in disarray. We pray for our leadership at every level, for the president, for congress, for law enforcement, and for leaders across the country. We ask that you come like a gentle breeze; you breathe upon us the Spirit of peace. We ask that you calm our hearts and quiet minds that we may see clearly a path forward. We ask for healing and comfort in these times. We wait for you, Lord, and in your word, we trust.

Our help comes from you, O Lord, you who made heaven and earth. In the midst of grief, you are our comfort. In the wake of uncertainty, you are our rock. In the wake of tragedy, you are our hope. So even as we weep, we praise you and place our trust in you. We pray in the name of the one who suffered and died and was raised for us, our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

Day Three

2013 Busan Assembly of the World Council of Churches
The Book of Common Worship © 2018

Lord, our God, creator of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible,
the source and sustainer of life,
you who holds in unity and harmony
the multiple parts of the entire cosmos,
we thank you and praise you for your love,
for your wisdom, for your kindness and mercy.
Give us courage and strength to follow your way
and to be your witnesses to the end of the earth
so that the world may know your love.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are our way to life, justice, and peace.
In you we are called to find our unity.
Come into the brokenness of our lives and our land
with your healing love.
Help us to be willing to bow before you
in true repentance
and to bow to one another
in real forgiveness.
By the fire of your Holy Spirit,
melt our hard hearts
and consume the prejudice and pride
which separate us.
Fill us, O Lord, with your perfect love
that casts our fear
and bind us together in the unity
that you share with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Make us instruments of your love, O God,
agents of your justice and peace.
Strengthen us to work for unity and harmony
between people of every race, color and creed.
Enable us to respect all of your creation
and to love one another as ourselves,
that we may serve one another
in humility, simplicity and joy;
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

MONDAY, JANUARY 18

Day Four

Jimmie Hawkins

Director of the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness in Washington, D.C.

(*The Presbyterian Outlook*, January 7, 2021)

A prayer for the nation's way forward

God of justice, love and hope,

So many Americans, and people around the world, have hearts that are saddened and minds that are in shock.

This country has been an inspiration on the right of people to self-governance, and yet on Wednesday all of that fell apart. American democracy has been a model for numerous countries and changed the course of world history. But today democracy is under brutal attack and we are in danger of self-destruction and implosion from within.

Help us to come together as a nation and realize that any political and ideological differences are negligible and can be overcome. Lead us as only you can to live in acceptance of each other's differences and united by our common allegiance to you and to nation. Help us to go forward with a new determination to learn from our mistakes, to overcome our divisions and advance to being a better nation.

Please use the United States as an example of a country that is determined to become more compassionate, just and democratic. A nation where justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. A nation determined to promote peaceful engagement for all people.

Amen.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19

Day Five

Kate Trigger Duffert

2020–2021 co-chair of the Racial Equity Committee
of PW's churchwide board of directors

God of parted seas and turned tables,
you have revealed to us over the centuries just how broken we are.
We hear it in words that deny the humanity of others.
We feel it in the grief of losing relationships to division.
We see it on flags that bear your name, but carry out sin.
Give us justice.
Call us into the work of repairing our world by reckoning with who we have been
and are becoming.
Give us peace.
Stir us into compassion, reminding us that we belong not only to you
but are responsible for one another as siblings in your beloved family.
Give us imagination,
to see what may be.
Give us strength,
to admit what has been.
Give us love,
to bind us together.

Amen.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 20

Day Six

The Book of Common Worship © 2018

For Those Who Work for Justice

God of power and might,
we pray for people everywhere who long for freedom,
who are ready, eager to do as you have commanded.
bring down oppression's rule;
overturn unjust laws;
break the chains of those still enslaved;
banish every form of human trafficking.
Compel us, without delay, to enter a new place
where all lives are honored and all voices are heard.

God of tenderness and compassion,
who washed the disciples' feet, one by one.
We pray for people whose feet are tired
and dusty from hard labor;
for those whose backs are bent by care and worry;
for those laid low by illness or guilt or grief.
Wash away, we pray,
the tiredness of our bodies and souls.
Hold gently in your healing hands
the broken places in our lives and relationships.
Be our company in isolation,
our source of hope in despair,
and the way forward at every dead end.

God of all good gifts,
thank you for setting a table of welcome
for everyone;
for making room whether we are faithful
or faithless or failures.
We pray that all who are hungry will find enough to eat
and clean water to drink
as we share and live more responsibly.
Teach us to sit down with enemies,
sharing common meals and common hopes.
Make us true servants of yours
for the sake of the world.
Teach us to love as you love
for the sake of the world.
We pray for faith that is worth handing on
to yet another generation
for the sake of the world you love.
In Christ's name we pray.

Amen.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21

Day Seven

Thom M. Shuman © 2021

Imagination beyond compare:
Open our eyes to that future
Of wonder, inclusion, and love
You are weaving in our midst,
Even as it seems that our way
of living together seems to be unraveling.

Wordsmith for times when we have none”
May we not only speak of justice
But work side by side with the forgotten,
May we not remain silent when others
Offer words of anger, bitterness, and falsehoods
But sing of compassion which embraces all
Whisper of acceptance to all who feel rejected
Loudly proclaim that love will endure long after
Hate has blown away like chaff in the wind.

Artist of the ages,
Gather up the shattered pieces
Of hope which lie in legislative chambers,
Of peace trampled by the feet of the angry,
Of grace crumpled and tossed aside by the cruel,
And craft stained glass windows
To fill the cracks in our hearts.

Amen.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 22

Day Eight

The Book of Common Worship © 1993

For Our Country

Almighty God,

You have given us this good land as our heritage.

Make us always remember your generosity
and constantly do your will.

Bless our land with honest industry,
sound learning,
and an honorable way of life.

Save us from violence, discord, and confusion;
from pride and arrogance,
and from every evil way.

Make us who come from many nations
with many different languages
a united people.

Defend our liberties
and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government
the spirit of wisdom,
that there might be justice and peace in our land.

When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful;
and, in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail.

We ask all this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.