

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – Week 2

Second week of Lent – [Readings are from Thursday, Feb. 29](#); we used translations from [The Inclusive Bible](#) for this prayer service.

Welcome

*We'll be remembering tonight: **all the members of the Pax Christi community who have recently passed.**
We invite you to type their names into the chat.*



Opening song: *Lead Me, Guide Me*

(Catholic Classics, Vol. 7: African American Sacred Songs © 2003 GIA Publications, Inc.)

**Refrain: Lead me, guide me along the way;
For if You lead me, I cannot stray;
Lord, let me walk each day with Thee.
Lead me, O Lord, lead me.**

Opening Prayer:

LEADER: We ask forgiveness for our complicity in the violence and suffering present in our world and we repent of the violence and selfishness present in our own hearts.

Our first response will be, “Forgive us we pray.”

For hardness of heart... **ALL: “Forgive us we pray.”** (Repeat after each line.)

For wasting our gifts...

For wanting too much...

For wounding the earth...

For neglecting the poor...

For trusting in weapons...

For ignoring racial injustice...

For refusing to listen...

For exporting arms...

For desiring dominance...

For wanting to win...

For lacking humility...

For failing to risk...

For failing to trust...

For failing to act...

For failing to negotiate...

For failing to hope...

For failing to love...

For our arrogance...

For our impatience...

For our cowardice...

For our pride...

For our silence...
For our complicity...

Our next response will be, "Change our hearts."

That we learn compassion... **ALL: "Change our hearts."** (Repeat after each line.)
That we embrace nonviolence...
That we act in justice...
That we live in hope...
That we might be strong...
That we do your will...
That we might be peace...

ALL: Amen.

First reading: *Read by Olga Sarabia, Ambassador of Peace, Peace Pair*

A reading from the book of Jeremiah...

Cursed are those who trust in human ways, who rely on things of the flesh, whose hearts turn away from God. They are like stunted vegetation in the desert with no hope in the future. They stand in stony wastes in the desert, an uninhabited land of salt.

Blessed are those who put their trust in God, with God for their hope. They are like a tree planted by the river that thrusts its roots toward the stream. When the heat comes it feels no heat; its leaves stay green. It is untroubled in a year of drought, and never ceases to bear fruit.

The human heart is more deceitful than anything else, and desperately sick – who can understand it? I search into the heart, I probe the mind, to give to each person what their actions and conduct deserve.

The word of God. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel reading: *Read by Sr. Jane Morrissey, SSJ, Ambassador of Peace and Peace Pair*

A reading from the gospel of Luke...

Once there was a rich person who dressed in purple and linen and feasted splendidly every day. At the gate of this person's estate lay a beggar named Lazarus, who was covered with sores. Lazarus longed to eat the scraps that fell from the rich person's table, and even the dogs came and licked Lazarus' sores. One day poor Lazzarus died and was carried by the angels to the arms of Sarah and Abraham. The rich person likewise died and was buried. In Hades, in torment, the rich person looked up and saw Sarah and Abraham in the distance, and Lazarus resting in their company.

"Sarah and Abraham," the rich person cried, "have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am tortured by these flames!" But they said, "My child, remember that you were well off in your lifetime, while Lazarus was in misery. Now Lazarus has found consolation here, and you have found torment. But that's not all. Between you

and us there is a fixed chasm, so that those who might wish to come to you from here can't do so, nor can anyone cross from your side to us."

The rich person said, "I beg you, then, to send Lazarus to my own house, where I have five siblings. Let Lazarus be a warning to them, so that they may not end in this place of torment."

But Sarah and Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the prophets. Let your siblings hear them."

"Please, I beg you," the rich person said, "If someone would only go to them from the dead, then they would repent."

"If they don't listen to Moses and the prophets," Sarah and Abraham replied, "They wouldn't be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead!"

The gospel of our God. **ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

A reflection from this year's Lenten reflection booklet, by Frida Berrigan
Read by Samantha Leuschner, Pax Christi Young Adult Caucus and Peace Pair

"They are like a tree planted beside the waters that stretches out its roots to the stream: It fears not the heat when it comes, its leaves stay green; In the year of drought it shows no distress, but still bears fruit."

God Magic. The tree that bears fruit in the midst of drought.

2023 was the hottest year on record. 2024 promises more of the same. Violent storms, wild (and not so wild) fires, oppressive heat, vicious floods, and killing drought across this massive nation. The ravages of climate catastrophe are no longer theoretical or off over the horizon. They are here.

I take short cold showers. I yell at my kids to turn off the lights. I bike or walk more often than I drive. I don't eat much meat. I grow a lot of the food we eat. I have barrels set up to catch what rain does fall so that I am watering my garden with that instead of treated water. I try.

But I keep coming back to the fact that the United States military is the world's biggest polluter.

Neta Crawford, in her groundbreaking expose *The Pentagon, Climate Change, and War: Charting the Rise and Fall of U.S. Military Emissions* (MIT Press, 2022), puts the blame for 80 percent of U.S. oil and gas on the Pentagon.

So, it is not enough for me to be eco-pure. I must also be working to disarm the war machine as a way of greening the planet. Seed bombs not cluster bombs. Pollinator pathways not terminator drones. Tree plantings not surgical strikes. Happy Lenten Leap Year!

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question: ***Where do you see individuals or communities that "still bear fruit" in the midst of drought? How are you invited to "bear fruit" this Lent?***

After our prayer service is over, we encourage you if you are with others, to share your answer to tonight's question. If you aren't with others but would like to share in a small group after tonight's prayer, we'll send everyone into breakout rooms with a few other people to share. We'll take now just about 3-4 minutes of silence to reflect quietly.

(In preparation for the Prayers of the Faithful, feel free to enter into the chat any prayers you have that you want those of us on this call to lift up over the coming week.)

Prayers of the faithful

Our response is: **God of peace, hear our prayer.**

Closing prayer

(adapted for tonight from *The Fire of Peace* and *Our Prayers Rise Like Incense: Liturgies for Peace* by Pax Christi USA)

**O God, we believe that peacemaking means bearing fruit, even in the midst of drought.
It means planting seeds even though we may never see the flower.
It means never losing sight of the vision promised by you.
We hold fast to your word that one day swords will be beaten into plowshares.
May we, as peacemakers, stake our lives on that promise.
We ask this through your life-giving Spirit.**

Amen.

(In 1-2 minutes everyone who wants to stay on the call will be sent to breakout rooms to discuss tonight's reading, reflection and Lenten question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 15 minutes.)