

## Overcoming Community Violence Worship Materials



### Reading: Matthew ch.13.33

*Before the time of worship, a bowl of bread dough is prepared (for convenience ready-mixed flour and dried yeast might be purchased, and blended with water according to the maker's instructions – or, alternatively, this meditation might be conducted using play-doh).*

*Each participant is invited to take a little dough and knead it while reflecting on the following ideas:*

Imagine the love God growing in your heart, like bread rising...

Imagine that love reaching out into your local community...

Imagine the justice of God growing in you, like bread rising...

Imagine that justice at work in your community, bringing reconciliation and peace...

Imagine waiting for the mercy of God, as we wait for the bread to rise...

Imagine that mercy spreading through our community as we listen to each other...

*When all the bread is kneaded, and set aside in a warm place to rise, the group may gather to share five minutes of silence together, acknowledging that yeast takes time and patience to do its work. (If time allows the bread may be baked and shared later)*

Leader: Lord, we are confronted daily with strife, injustice, and oppression; and yet we say and do little or nothing, as if we did not care.

Response: *Yet we do care. We care. But we are afraid, and uncertain.*

Leader: We do not know how to bring your message of peace to our families, to friends, to strangers. We are afraid of alienating them, of provoking hostility, of appearing naïve.

Response: *And yet we know it is not naïve to want security based on love and justice rather than false security based on arms.*

Leader: Lord, please guide us to hear and to bear your peace message more faithfully and more convincingly. Help us to understand our neighbours' fears, and our own, without being immobilised by them.

Response: *Use us, even in our insecurity and weakness. Save us from despair. We want to do your will, but we often stray.*

*(from a service "Peace Built on Justice" held in Columbia University, New York, USA, March 1982)*

God of liberation,

Hear the cries of those enslaved to alcohol and drugs.

They cry out in pain, in rage, in shame, in despair.

Set them free we pray.

God of strength,

Hear the cries of those whose loved ones suffer addiction.

They cry out in desperation, in anger and bewilderment and fear;

Grant them courage we pray.

God of restoration

Hear the cries of your people that hope may come again

to communities torn apart and destroyed by substance abuse.

Grant them faith, so as to move even mountains. **Amen**

## SEEDS OF PEACE

The playing field is not level, God, and some people always play uphill.

*Grant us your justice, soon.*

The jobs are few and mostly dirty, God, and some people always get the dirtiest.

*Grant us justice, soon.*

The pay is bad and the hours long, God, and some people always get the worst shift.

*Grant us justice, soon.*

Pensions, holidays, early retirement - what are they for some, God?

some people always seem to miss out.

*Grant us justice, soon. Amen*

Loving God, help us to be true:

to see the truth of our brokenness,  
hear the truth of our pain,  
and speak the truth of our violence,  
regardless of the cost.



Loving God, help us to be merciful,  
To open our hearts to everyone we meet,  
To reach out our hands with compassion,  
And offer love without condition.

Loving God, help us to be just:  
To transform our violent world –  
Overturning the systems and structures of oppression  
And bringing justice to all creation.

Loving God, help us to be community:  
To live together in trust –  
All people and all creation,  
Reconciled and renewed in your grace,  
A world of peace.  
Now and forever. Amen.  
(Elenie Poulos)

*God of peace and reconciliation,  
Break through the fears and insecurities  
which mar our relationships.  
Bring to our homes  
renewed understanding and love,  
and to our troubled world  
fresh visions of peace.  
Curb our warring madness,  
transform our greed and selfishness  
and give us hearts for you alone.  
For your love's sake. Amen.*

Watch now, dear Lord,  
With those who wake or watch  
or weep tonight,  
and give your angels charge  
over those who sleep.  
Tend your sick ones, O Lord  
Christ,  
Rest your weary ones,  
Bless your dying ones, soothe  
your suffering ones,  
Pity your afflicted ones, shield  
your joyous ones,  
And all for love's sake. Amen  
(Augustine of Hippo)

**Suggested Song:** Dave Andrews *One Day*  
(from *Whispers of Peace*)