

Collect and Prayers of the People for the 400 Year Commemoration

Collect for the Commemoration of the African Diaspora

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, you who have brought us thus far on the way with Christ, the one in whom is our true and perfect freedom. Give us grace to honor the lives of your precious children, enslaved in body yet free in mind. May we forever stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before and make no peace with oppression, that children of slaves and former slave owners may one day live in harmony; through Jesus Christ our liberator, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Prayers of the People: Opening Exhortation

Presider Dear Friends in Christ: as we commemorate the 400th Anniversary of the arrival of 20 enslaved Africans in the English colony of Virginia in 1619, the church invites us to give thanks for the resilience and cultural contribution of people of the African diaspora. While slavery has had a universal impact, there has always been the presence of the drum, a symbol of global communications and healing. On this day let the drumming of our hearts beat with renewed purpose as we become co-breakers of the inheritance of slavery and co-workers in the perpetual struggle for equality, justice, and peace. In Christ we find our inspiration and aspiration for bringing the harmonious reign of God. Therefore, let us offer our prayers to our Loving, Liberating and Life-giving God.

After each bidding, prayers for specific needs, in the bracketed areas, may be added. The spoken petition, "By your might; Lead us into the light", may be replaced with a musical selection using either "Oh Freedom" or "Like the murmur of the dove's song." One verse of either song may be sung after each bidding.

Lector Repairing God, help us to lift every voice and sing, 'til earth and heaven ring, ring with the harmonies of Liberty for all your children, that our divisions may cease and we may be one. [We pray for the church...] By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Lector Reconciling God, we have come over a way that with tears has been watered, we have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, give us grace to see in each other the face of Christ. [We pray for the nation and the world]. By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Lector Resilient God, keep us forever in your path, we pray, lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met you in gift as friend and stranger, in the crucible of fortitude and struggle, that we never forget the ancestors who have brought us thus far by faith. [We pray for those who have died, especially ____]. By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Lector Restoring God, yet with a steady beat, our weary feet have come to the places for which our parents sighed, inspire us with the energy to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, keeping our eyes fixed on you. [We pray for those who are sick]. By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Lector Rejoicing God, who by your might has led us into the light, give us courage for the living of these days, that we may reflect Christ our one true light, and rejoice with those who have entered your perfect freedom. [We pray for those who are in need] By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Lector Remembering God, lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget you, stir in us a passion to hold the stories of those who have come before, that we may tell it to our children and our children's children. By your might;

People ***Lead us into the light.***

Presider God of Hope, stony the road we trod, bitter the chastening rod, born in the day that hope unborn had died, revive in us your people that sense of hope that never fails so that we can make new this old world in the name of Jesus our brother. ***Amen.***