



World Day of Prayer March 2024

I beg you ... bear with one another in love - Ephesians 4:2

Shortened Version of the Worship Service

Prepared by the Christian Women of Palestine

Amended by The Salvation Army IHQ for Worship using TSA 2015 Songbook

BEFORE THE SERVICE

Personally ask 4-5 people from your corps to work with you to prepare for the day. Each one can have a specific responsibility for preparation and on 1 March. Decide if they will be your worship service readers/participants and music leader or if you can find others for this responsibility.

Choose the leaders for the worship service: Music Leader, Leader 1, Leader 2, Narrator, 3 characters; Eleanor, Lina, Sara

Personally ask a group of 3-4 people to help you with the reception of tea & coffee with snacks or a meal.

Send out invitations to women and men from the corps, outreach programs, prayer and bible study groups, community worship / church partners and social centers to join together to celebrate on 1 March.

ROOM PREPARATION

Place a table at the front covered in a white tablecloth. Arrange on the table baskets with lemons, oranges, olives, olive oil, cactus plants and flowers such as jasmine or poppies. These items can also be placed around the room. Leave room on the table for a large, open Bible and candle to be placed. As the people arrive have greeters distribute an olive branch/leaf (fresh, dried, or cut-out), or downloadable bookmark, to them.

Play the instrumental version of I Urge You and show the PowerPoint slides to introduce Palestine as a prelude.

Leader 1 has the bible, Leader 2 has the candle, both at the side of the group waiting for all of those attending to be seated. Music leader plays soft background music. The 3 Women portraying Eleanor, Lina and Sara are seated near the front before the worship service begins. They can be dressed in regular street clothes.

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Leader 1 enters carrying the Bible and places it on the table, opened at **Ephesians 4:1-7**.

Leader 2 enters carrying a candle, places it on the table and lights it. Both Leaders take their places ready to begin the service.

OPENING HYMN: Come On and Celebrate TSA songbook #357

Come on and celebrate!
His gift of love we will celebrate.
The Son of God, who loved us and gave us life.
We'll shout your praise, O King:
You give us joy nothing else can bring;
We'll give to you our offering,
In celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.
Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.

ALTERNATIVE HYMNS:

Thine is the Kingdom TSA songbook #277,
We're the Army TSA songbook #942,
I'll stand for Christ alone TSA songbook #960,
To God be the Glory TSA songbook #279,
Sing to God New Songs of Worship TSA songbook #344

WELCOME AND GREETING

Leader 1: Welcome to the World Day of Prayer 2024 worship service.
Salaam. Peace be with you.

ALL: **And also, with you**

Leader 1: We gather in the Name of the Trinity: Father, Son & Holy Spirit.

ALL: **Amen.**

Leader 1: Loving God, walk with us as we journey through the land where you lived and taught.
Open our eyes to see the present suffering of the inhabitants of this land. Grant us
the strength and courage to act and pray with all who suffer around the world.

ALL: **Amen.**

Leader 1: Let us praise God who brings us together to worship in love and unity. In the midst of
injustices, war and suffering God calls us to bear together in love. When we stay
together through difficulties, we live in the peace that God promises us.

As we share the peace of Christ, we exchange the olive tokens that were distributed
at the beginning of the service. The peace of Christ be with you.

ALL: The peace of Christ be with you. Exchange the olive tokens or branches.

Leader 1: Unifying God, reigning far above our earthly differences in views and theology,
help us remember these essential qualities of faith: humility, gentleness,
patience, and love.

ALL: **We confess our weakness and failure to accept others without judging them.**

Leader 1: We endeavor to be humble and patient as we face challenges in our families, society, community, and church.

ALL: **With gentleness and love we can overcome difficulties. We remain strong in our faith, knowing that we belong to God. Amen.**

A STORY OF RESILIENCE

Leader 1: In today's service we will hear **three stories from Palestinian Christian women** who witness to the power of bearing together in love. Their stories illuminate the experiences of Palestinian Christian women from **three different generations**. *The symbol of an olive tree represents the three generations through its trunk, branches, and leaves.*

Leader 2: **Let me introduce you to Eleonor.** She is one of the **older generations** who, like the trunk of the olive tree, has witnessed many years of wars and violence.

She is a Palestinian Christian, a member of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Holy Land. She comes from an old, deeply rooted Jerusalem family. In the early 19th century, her great-grandfather established St. George's Orthodox Church which enabled Christians living outside the city walls to have a place to worship.

That church remained in existence until 'the Catastrophe', or Nakba, of 1948, when 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee, disperse, and become refugees.

Eleonor: As my brothers and I were growing up, my parents remembered their neighbours graciously as they waited for the big day of return. Sadly, my parents passed away without realizing this dream. My parents always spoke with gratitude about their Jewish neighbours and they taught me how to bear with others in love.

As I have gone through life as a Palestinian Christian living in Jerusalem, I have chosen to be fully engaged with all members of the community at local and global levels. I learned from my parents' example how important it is to co-exist with others, even when life is harsh and difficult.

My commitment to my community started when I was 11 and my Arabic teacher encouraged me to run errands for her humanitarian work. She was gentle and loving, which helped me understand the value of making life better for others.

Later, I implemented humanitarian and development programs, as well as social and community projects. These programs and projects served all people, regardless of religion, ethnicity, gender, status or need.

I was also privileged to help hundreds of women in Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to sustain their families as breadwinners. Many of these projects have grown and spread to other areas, positively impacting many lives.

Since my childhood, I have known that life is fragile, and peace is not guaranteed. However, I firmly believe that we can be strong together if we bear with one another in love.

Leader 1: **SCRIPTURE READING – Ephesians 4:1-7**

“Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift.”

Silent Reflection: Let us reflect now on the ways that God is moving us to bear together with others in love.

A STORY OF TRUTH TELLING

Leader 2: ***Let me introduce you to Lina.***

On May 11, 2022, Lina lost her Aunt Shireen, a famous journalist who was killed in Jenin. Aunt Shireen was like the branch of an olive tree, resisting the strong winds that threatened to erase the truth of Palestinian experience. When she died, Palestine lost a legend and a famous Al Jazeera journalist. As Lina’s aunt, her godmother at baptism and her best friend, Shireen was Lina’s role model. She was also a role model to many young Palestinian women. Lina cherishes all the moments spent with her, talking about art, politics and life.

Lina: For 25 years my Aunt Shireen dedicated her life to telling the stories of Palestinian experience, and to being a voice of truth. She entered every house in Palestine and the Arab world through the TV screen. The presence of 500 people on the day of her funeral was proof that she had also entered their hearts.

Many people did not know that my aunt was a Palestinian Christian. Shireen’s faith led her to bear with all in love, despite differences in faith traditions. She stood with all who were being harmed. She campaigned for both Muslims and Christians to have access to the holy sites in Jerusalem. Her truth telling was even a way of bearing with the occupiers in love.

Although Shireen, like a branch of the olive tree, was cut down too soon, her legacy lives on. Her memory now nourishes the earth, from which we will gain strength to continue telling the truth and working towards reconciliation.

Leader 2: Hearing this story of a woman who dared to speak the truth in love, let us commit ourselves to journey with each other as she did as we sing our next hymn.

OFFERTORY HYMN – I LOVE TO SING TSA songbook #845

Love to sing of the Saviour, Who gave his life for me;
He fills my spirit with gladness, For service sets me free.

How I love to sing, How I love to sing
How I love to sing of Jesus, How I love to sing

I love to sing of His beauty, His greatness, and his love,
A theme that thrills all creation in earth and heaven above.

I love to sing of his virtue, His all-transforming might;
To sing of his great salvation be all my heart's delight.

Psalm 86:11 – “Teach me your ways, O LORD, that I may live according to your truth! Grant me purity of heart, so that I may honour you.”

A STORY OF FLOURISHING

Leader 2: *Let me introduce you to Sara.*

Sara says she sometimes feels like the leaf on an olive tree, connected through the branches to the roots, nourished from within.

She was born and raised in Jerusalem as a Lutheran Christian, where life has always been challenging. She is glad that things are changing in society as indicated by her church ordaining its first female pastor. Her own family history is connected with that of Palestine. ***She wants to share a story with you that shows what it means to be a Palestinian Christian.***

Sara: My grandparents used to live in Jaffa. They grew up there before 1948, living alongside other Christians, Muslims and Jews. When the state of Israel was created in 1948, Palestinians who had lived on the land for thousands of years, were displaced. The Israeli forces came to my grandparents' home and forced them out. This caused my grandparents to become refugees in Jordan.

Many years later, my grandparents came for a visit to Jerusalem, and my parents took us on a trip to Jaffa.

They were excited to show us the home they used to live in. Everything had changed except for the trees they planted, which helped us to identify the place but, sadly, those living in the house were hostile to us.

Later, when I visited my grandparents in Jordan, my grandma showed me the keys that her mother had kept when leaving their house. She, like many others, kept their keys with the hope of return, a hope that is passed on through many generations.

I know that the tree from where I came is strong and resilient. I can bear with others in love because they did. Their love is what makes me flourish like the leaf on an olive tree.

Psalm 115:12-18 - *“The LORD remembers us and will bless us. He will bless the people of Israel and bless the priests, the descendants of Aaron. He will bless those who fear the LORD, both great and lowly. May the LORD richly bless both you and your children. May you be blessed by the LORD, who made heaven and earth. The heavens belong to the LORD, but he has given the earth to all humanity. The dead cannot sing praises to the LORD, for they have gone into the silence of the grave. But we can praise the LORD both now and forever! Praise the LORD!*”

Leader 2: Today we have been blessed by the stories of three Palestinian Christian women. These stories have shown us the power of bearing together in love.

INTERCESSORY PRAYERS

Leader 1: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we now pray for women everywhere, for the world and for those in need. Let us pray:

God of Righteousness, bless us and make us witnesses of peace and justice. Open our eyes so that we can see things as you do. Protect us from all forms of violence, hurt and revenge. We pray especially for women who are denied education and other basic rights; for women who are abused and suffer violence. We pray that our churches, as well as our governments, will create safe places for women. Help us to raise our voices and use our gifts and talents to help others. Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

ALL: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader 1: Refugee God, because your son, Jesus, as a child had to flee a massacre in Bethlehem, you know the plight of refugees and the displaced. Remain with them and help them in these dark and difficult times. Guide and protect them and take them to places of safety. Open the hearts of those receiving refugees and guide the actions of political leaders so that all needs will be met. Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

ALL: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader 1: God our Rock, you have taught us to build our lives on you. We pray for those who are homeless and especially for families whose homes have been destroyed through war or natural disasters. We pray for all who work tirelessly to resolve these situations. Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

ALL: **Hear our prayer.**

Leader 1: God of Peace, we pray for a peaceful end to the ongoing situation in Palestine. We also pray for the city of Jerusalem, sacred to the three religions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Let there be equality, freedom of religion, freedom of movement and freedom of expression. Teach us as Christians to follow the way of Jesus, sharing love with those we meet.

Lead us into a life worthy of our calling.

ALL: **Hear our prayer**

Leader 1: We conclude our intercessions as we join in the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, who is in heaven, Holy is your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us for our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

WORDS OF COMMITMENT

ALL: *May we commit to working for peace as we stand with all women, particularly those experiencing oppression, violence, or discrimination. May we be faithful advocates in all levels of society and church life. May we bear with one another in love. Let us go now and be agents of peace and justice.*

BLESSING

Leader 2: The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;
The Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.
In the name of Jesus. Amen.

Leader 2: We conclude our service as we sing our closing hymn.

CLOSING HYMN OPTIONS:

I Want to Tell You What the Lord Has Done TSA songbook #852

We Are Marching in The Light of God TSA songbook #903

King of Kings, Majesty TSA songbook #376

Show Your Power TSA songbook #365

Leader 2: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

ALL: **In the name of Christ, Amen.**

NOTES FOR THE SHORTENED SERVICE

The shortened service is designed for smaller groups, where it is not possible to hold a full service (eg. Residential care homes, prisons etc.) It will not be appropriate in every situation. Sometimes, a short introduction to the World Day of Prayer, a brief PowerPoint presentation, singing or listening to the hymns, followed by the reading and a prayer reflecting the theme will be enough.

If you or anyone who attends the service wishes to make a donation towards the work of the WDP, this can be done:-

By cheque, made payable to WDP and sent to WDP, Commercial Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2RR.

By online donation via our website: www.wwdp.org.uk minimum £5

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Our office staff can help you with further requests and enquiries: Tel 01892 541411 Email: office@wwdp.org.uk

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