

When reading the introduction to the week of prayer I came across these words: The summary of the rule of life that the sisters of Grandchamp recite together each morning begins with the words “pray and work that God may reign”. Prayer and everyday life are not two separate realities but are meant to be united. All that we experience is meant to become an encounter with God. Do we want that in our lives this year, do we pray and work that God may reign in our lives, whatever we are doing, wherever we may go?

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

Service for use at home or in small gatherings

Each person needs a card heart pencil/pen and a tea light.

Music is played as people gather and a candle is lit in the middle of a large circle which everyone sits around.

Opening Prayer

Lord, you invite us to abide in you who are the vinedresser who cares for us with love.

You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine,
the beauty of each person.

And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.

We withdraw into ourselves. Our trust in you and one another is lost.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.

That as one family we may praise your name.

Amen.

Litany of praise

All **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,

Reader 2 We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

All **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise among suffering and tears,

Reader 2 We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

All **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;

Reader 2 We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

All **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,

Reader 2 We sing your praise in the midst of life and death, the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

All You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

First Vigil – Abiding in Christ: the unity of the whole person

Reading: Jn 15:1-17

A short time of silence

Intercessions

Reader God of love, through Christ you said to us: "You did not choose me but I chose you." You invite us to receive your friendship. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and to grow and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

All **The joy of our heart is in God.** *(all touch their heart and smile)*

Reader God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to accept one another. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, inspire us to celebrate each other just as we are.

All **The joy of our heart is in God.** *(all touch their heart and smile)*

Reader God you who gather, you knit us together as one vine in Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at church and in our community that together we may celebrate you with joy.

All **The joy of our heart is in God.** *(all touch their heart and smile)*

Reader God of the one vineyard, you call us to live in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes schools and workplaces.

All **The joy of our heart is in God.** *(all touch their heart and smile)*

Action: A time of silence where we reflect on God's love, after which music is played as everyone writes/draws their name on their card and takes it up and places it by the candle.

Second Vigil – The visible unity of Christians

Psalm: 85

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

A short time of silence

Intercessions

Reader Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the Church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe".

All **Thank you. Amen.**

Reader Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls that separate us fall.

All **Thank you. Amen.**

Reader Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back to you when we lose our way.

All **Thank you. Amen.**

Reader Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may be open to your grace.

All **Thank you. Amen.**

Reader Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their faithfulness to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

All **Thank you. Amen.**

Action: Let us exchange a sign of Christ's peace as our prayer and commitment to unity.

Then each takes up their tea light and lights in from the main candle and places it by their heart.

Third Vigil – The unity of all peoples with all creation

Psalm: 96

Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12

A short time of silence

Intercessions

Reader God of life, you have created everyone in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, and traditions. Grant us the courage to stand against injustice and prejudice

All **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace

All **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, gifts and resources, with all those in need.

All **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new ways of living that are in harmony with all creation.

All **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Action: Moving to the centre and out to the world (inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza). Everyone stands and takes a step towards the candles and extends hands towards each other.

Reader At the centre of the world is God, in whom all our desires and longings find their meeting place.

As we move closer to God, so we draw closer to one another. And the closer we come to one another . . .

All The closer we come to God.

Short time of silence followed by the Lord's Prayer after which people return to their seats and pray using words the Grandchamp nuns pray each day...

Reader Will you Pray and work that God may reign?

All With God's help, we will.

Reader Throughout your day will you let the Word of God breathe life into your work and play and rest?

All With God's help, we will.

Reader Will you maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ.

All With God's help, we will.

Amen.

Suitable music could be played at this point.

Blessing

Reader Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in God's love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

All May the God of all creation, fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

This simplified version of the Ecumenical Celebration was prepared by Lynne Chitty, on behalf of ROOTS for Churches Ltd.

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