

**COLLECTS
CONFESSIONS
LITANIES/ANTIPHONAL/RESPONSORIAL READINGS**

The collections presented here are from a wide variety of sources. Because there are so many available, only a small number have been presented. When the author or source is known, it is cited. Check your denominational hymnal as well as the *Bibliography* for additional selections.

As usual, it is possible to write your own collect prayers, confessions, and litanies/antiphonal and responsorial readings. Through your creative work, your worship services can be tailored to your individual circumstances. These can also be a beautiful accompaniment to your personal devotions during the week. See the *Appendices* section for information on how to write a litany.

Collect: a prayer, usually prayed by the presiding minister, although many congregations pray this prayer in unison; it is occasionally a dialogue prayer. It is a prayer that gathers (collects) the people's concerns into one prayer. This prayer is frequently near the beginning of the service. It can set the theme for the entire worship service. In its simplest form, the collect contains three parts: an address, a petition, and a conclusion.

Confession: a corporate—that is, whole congregation—rite, usually confessed by the entire congregation, with absolution—forgiveness—pronounced by the presiding minister. Usually, a corporate confession is general, although it can be focused to acknowledge corporate wrongs or guilt. The confession usually comes at the very beginning of the worship service. This is so that sins can be forgiven and the real work of gathering to praise God can begin.

Litanies/Antiphonal/Responsorial Readings: The Litany is a repeated, insistent, responsive prayer. It is primarily penitential, but it is able to encompass the whole range of human need. The litany form is popular in both liturgical and non-liturgical churches. It usually contains declarative statements spoken by a leader with repetitive responses by the congregation.

Antiphonal and responsorial readings can include litanies. But antiphonal and responsorial readings also include psalms and prayers. An antiphonal reading moves from "choir" to "choir", one side of the sanctuary to the other side, or gender to gender. Responsory readings begin with a verse or declaration spoken by a leader and continue with a response made by the congregation. The responsorial statement is frequently repeated.

The Litany and antiphonal and responsorial readings take flexible positions with the worship service. Any one of them can be used as the Call to Worship, the Confession, the Prayer in a Service of the Word, or the Entrance Hymn in a Eucharist service. The Litany may even be used as the basis of a separate penitential service.

ABBREVIATIONS:

P = Presiding Minister, Assisting Minister or Leader

C = Congregation

C1 = Side one of congregation

C2 = Side two of congregation (you may substitute Women for one side and Men for the second side)

U = Unison

Italic text indicates congregational participation. In cases of C1, C2, italic text alternates for easier reading.

Collects

1. Prayers for the Land; Paul Calvin Peterson

Introductory Prayer

U We gather today to ask God's blessing on the seeds which will be planted, the soil which is cultivated, and the farmers who labor to the service of God. We lift up prayers of thanksgiving for the many blessings bestowed on us, and we seek justice for those who till the soil. Amen

Prayer for Seeds

U Almighty God, Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth, you give seed to the sower and bread to the people. Nourish, protect and bless the seeds which your people have sown in hope. By your providence and bountiful giving, may they bring forth fruit in due season. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Prayer for the Soil

U O Loving God, giver of life, we give thanks that, in the soil, nature awakens in answer to your call of spring. We praise you for the smell of fresh-turned earth, the beauty of a clean-cut furrow, and the sweep of a well-plowed field. We thank you for the life which is in the soil, and ask that you help us to be good stewards of that life. In the name of the one who is the source of new life, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Prayer for Rain

U Bountiful God, it is from you that we receive the fruits of the earth. In your mercy, send us weather which will allow our fields to grow abundantly and provide a harvest to feed your people. May the clouds of the sky shower this land with water, following the example of how you shower us with your grace and love. In the name of Christ, Amen.

Prayer for Animals

U Creator God, you placed us on this earth to be the stewards of all living things. In all of our labors we are to find glory for you. Bless our work with the animals which provide food and clothing. Grant that these animals may help serve our needs as we work to serve you. In the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Prayer for Justice

U God of Divine Justice, we cry out for you to bring justice to your land. We pray that those whose vocation is in the land will receive a fair price for their labors. We pray that the small farm, and all that it represents, may survive and thrive for generations to come. We pray that your comfort and inspiration be felt by those who are struggling. And we pray that your light of hope will never be extinguished upon the land. Through the name of the one who brings eternal justice, Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

2. Morning Prayer; adapted from Walter Rauschenbusch

P O God, we thank you for this earth that is our home, for the wide sky and the blessed sun, for the salt sea and the running water, for the everlasting hills and the never-resting winds, for the trees and the common grass underfoot. We thank you for our senses by which we hear the songs of birds, and see the splendour of the summer fields, and taste of the autumn fruits, and rejoice in the feel of the snow, and smell the breath of the spring. Grant us, O God, a heart wide open to all this beauty and save our souls from being so blind that we pass unseeing when even the common thornbush is aflame with your glory. We ask these things of you, our Creator God, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

3. For Rainfall

P Holy God, maker of all things and protector of your people, look upon us in your love and give us your help. Open the heavens for us and give us the rain we need. Teach us to live for you and to share your gifts with others.

C *O God, hear us in our need, for we come to you through Christ our Lord.*

U *Amen!*

4. Closing Prayer

P Bless us now, O Lord, and make us a blessing to those around us. May our stated commitment to you, to each other and all humankind and to the whole earth from this day onward be visible in our lives. May our steadfast dedication to just and loving earth relationships help to bring justice and healing to creation and thus bring peace to the world.

U *Amen*

5. A Dedicatory Prayer

P Creator of life and Sustainer of seed and soil, you have created this world and given it to us as a heritage and home. You have given us life through Jesus Christ, and you have given us the holy task of sharing the faith and serving you today and in all generations. It is to you we come in this prayer dedication and blessing.

We acknowledge that you are the giver of life, the sender of rain, sunshine and richness of soil; without you, there would be no life. And so we come to dedicate the seed that shall be sown. We pray that the soil may be rich, and the harvest bountiful so that the hungry world may be fed.

It is in your name, O God, that we dedicate this seed. It is in your name, O God, that we dedicate this soil.

We ask that the seed sowers and land cultivators be given strength and wisdom as they work with you to provide food for the world. We ask these things in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who was the sower of good seed. Amen.

C *We are the ones who till the soil and sow the seed. Our work is holy and sacred. It is our responsibility to plant and cultivate with reverence and care. We dedicate ourselves to this work so that food may be provided for our world, and God may be glorified. We ask for strength to uphold our responsibilities, through Jesus Christ, whom God has given to give us life. Amen.*

6. A Prayer at the Opening of Worship; Toni Newman, Wartburg Theological Seminary

P Holy and merciful God, you know our temptations as we struggle to be your people. You know that we desire to do that which will serve us, to do that which will bring us profit. And at the same time, you know that we long to be a people of faith, a people obedient to your word. We long to be faithful stewards of our possessions and of the sacred earth. We long to care for our neighbors. We long for lifestyles that are good and pleasing to you, O God, who spoke and brought all things into being. Speak to us here in this place—now and tomorrow—so that we may hear your word of justice. So that we may know the blessings of serving our communities, and of caring for our neighbors. Help us to hear you here in this place of worship today. Amen.

7. Prayers of Intercession; Fred L. Page, Rossville and Frankfort Presbyterian Churches, Indiana.

U *As we come to your feast, O God, we remember our hunger. We lift up to you all those who hunger, and we look for the day when everyone will sit down together at your table, and all will be filled.*

P O God, be with those who are hungry for bread—for wheat and corn and rice, for something in a bowl, for meat on a plate.

C *We are hungry for bread.*

P O God, be with those who are hungry for justice—for liberation from oppression, for the freedom to give, for the opportunity to choose.

C *We are hungry for justice.*

PO God, be with those who are hungry for peace—for an end to war, for reconciliation among people and nations, for the desire to share life rather than destroy it.

C *We are hungry for peace.*

P O God, be with those who are hungry for love—for a sense of dignity and value, for the gift of compassion, for a feeling of belonging.

C *We are hungry for love.*

U *We are hungry, O God, even though filled, because we see others starving. Their need is ours. Their cries for justice are our cries. Fill us with your great love, O God, that all may receive your abundant gifts and rejoice. In the name of Christ. Amen.*

8. A Prayer of Suffering; Toni Newman

P Let us come to our God who has claimed us by the blood of our Lord
Jesus Christ.

C *Living God, you have suffered the pains of being human. You have
known physical hunger, you have known sadness. We come today
to offer our suffering to you; we lay it at the feet of Jesus, and ask
for comfort.*

P Because of rainless skies,

C *We worry about our crops. We are afraid that they will be blighted,
and that the growing season will be devastated. There will be
nothing to sell at harvest.*

P Because of extreme heat,

C *Our animals endure illness and die. We are not able to care for or
cure them. Our communities suffer in the heat, unable to cool
themselves. Our elderly are not able to withstand these high
temperatures. They die quickly.*

P You, O God, walk with us in our lives. Be with us in our suffering.

C *Send the rain that will soak the land, quench our thirst, and cool the
temperatures.*

P We ask for these things, confident that you will hear our prayers.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

9. A Prayer for Centering for Worship; Toni Newman

P Sisters and brothers, God has promised to come among us when we
gather together. So we come to invoke God's promise to us. Let us
pray for centering so that we are truly present in this place at this
time without distractions.

C *Companion God, you have promised to be with us whenever we
gather. Come to us today. Be in our midst. Let us gather around
the cross of Jesus Christ to be forgiven our sins. Let us gather
around your Word to hear you speak to us. Help us to be centered
here in this place, and not in our cow or hog barns. Help us to be
centered here in this holy place, and not in our corn, bean or beet
fields. Give us your peace so that we may focus on you as you are
here with us. We give thanks that you hear and answer our
prayers. Amen*

10. A Prayer for a Hungry World; Toni Newman

P God has fed God's people throughout history. Our believing ancestors were fed manna in the wilderness. Huge crowds of believers were fed with only a few loaves and fishes. Fisherfolk had their empty nets filled to overflowing. Let us bring our concerns for our hungry world to this feeding God.

P God of the hungry who wandered in the wilderness,

C *You fed us with manna when we were hungry; we had enough every day. Remember our sisters and brothers who will go to bed hungry tonight because they have nothing to eat.*

P God of the hungry multitudes,

C *You fed us with only small loaves and fishes; there was plenty to spare. Remember those who survive because of food pantries and nutrition programs.*

P God of the fisherfolk who had empty nets,

C *You filled the fishing nets so full that they burst. Remember those whose stomachs will bloat from emptiness, whose eyes will glaze with weakness, and who will die before the sunrise.*

P God who feeds,

C *Our world is hungry. These people who suffer are our sisters and brothers. Help us become bread for them so that they may eat and be filled. Let none be lost.*

P You have fed us throughout history. Do not abandon us now. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

U *Amen.*