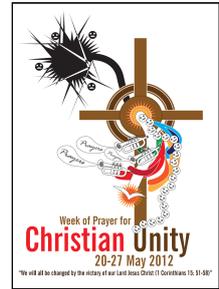


Ecumenical Service

for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012

We will all be changed – by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ

This service is from Poland: it draws on the experience of Polish Christians who have lived through times of joy and adversity. Its theme passage, 1 Corinthians 15:51-58, speaks of God raising Christ from the dead, and the transforming power of faith in the risen Lord Jesus. Poland has a distinctive custom of sharing the *optatek* – a special wafer – in homes, churches and work-places at Christmas time. Each person breaks off a piece of another's *optatek* and eats it, so expressing the unity, love and forgiveness between people to whom the Saviour came.



A. Gathering

Hymn/song(s) are sung during a time of prelude or on the entry of those leading the service.

L: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: **And also with you.**

A short introduction is given in these or similar words:

L: Listen, I tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed.

All: **Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

L: God in Christ is the Victor over death, sin and all evil

The opening prayer is read by the service leader.

All: **Amen.**

Prayers of repentance

L: Reconciling God, in spite of the unity you give us in Christ,
we persist in our disunity. Have mercy on us!

All: **Have mercy on us!** (*or 'Kyrie Eleison', sung or said*)

L: We harden our hearts when we hear the Gospel. Have mercy on us!

All: **Have mercy on us!**

L: We fail to serve You in our brothers and sisters. Have mercy on us!

All: **Have mercy on us!**

L: The disobedience of Adam and Eve brought suffering and death,
and creation was wounded and torn apart. Have mercy on us!

All: **Have mercy on us!**

A moment of silence is kept.

L: May God Almighty have mercy on us,
forgive our sins, and lead us to eternal life.

All: **Amen.**

B. The Word of God

Scripture

First reading: Habakkuk 3.17-19

New Testament reading: 1 Corinthians 15.51-58

Gospel reading: John 12.23-26

Hymn/song(s) may be used before or between the readings and sermon / homily.

Sermon / homily

A time of silence, instrumental music and / or hymn/song(s).

Confession of Faith

An affirmation of the Christian faith is recited.

Hymn/Song

during which the opłatek wafers are brought to the front and placed on a central table.

C. Prayers for Unity and Transformation

L: United in Christ who gives us the victory, let us pray to the Lord:

For the Church, the Body of Christ, that we might truly live
the unity we receive through the Holy Spirit: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For the leaders of our churches, that they may be faithful
to the unity to which all Christians are called: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For the nations of the world, that they may live in peace
with one another, and promote justice for all: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For all people, that we may be good stewards of the earth:
God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For the people of our society, that we may be transformed
to live as caring neighbours to each other: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For the sick and suffering, that they may be transformed
by your healing presence: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For all families and households, that their struggles and joys
may find their fulfilment in your love: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: For the dying, that they may be comforted by your presence,
and raised to new life in Christ: God our strength,

All: **Change us by your grace.**

L: Risen Lord, Jesus Christ,
stand in our midst and grant us unity and peace.

All: **Amen, Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

L: When the disciples asked Jesus, "How shall we pray?", he responded,
"Pray in this way". Let us join together in the prayer which he gave us:

All: **Our Father who art in heaven,
 hallowed be thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
 in earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation,
And deliver us from evil.**

**For this is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
 for ever and ever. Amen.**

D. The Greeting of Peace and sharing the *opłatek*

L: Poland has a distinctive custom of sharing a special wafer, the *opłatek*, in
people's homes, churches and work-places at Christmas time. Each person
breaks off a piece of another person's *opłatek* and eats it. This sharing
expresses the unity, love, and forgiveness which God gives in Christ.

We invite you to do the same as a sign of our peace and unity in Christ.

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **And also with you.**

L: Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

*Each person present is given an *opłatek* wafer.*

*This is shared by each person breaking off a piece of another person's *opłatek* and eating it.*

E. Sending out

Hymn/song *during which a collection may be taken up*

Prayer of commitment

L: We remember what Paul the Apostle wrote to the Corinthian church:

*Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the
Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.*

Praise to the Lord, who leads us into unity!

Heavenly Father, we dedicate ourselves this week to pray for the deepening of our unity in Christ. The Lord Jesus has overcome death, and called us into new life in the Spirit. And so we pray:

L: Changed by God's steadfast love,

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: Changed by Christ, the servant of the Lord,

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: Changed by the Lord's victory over evil,

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: Changed by the peace of the Risen Lord -

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: United in the Spirit and the reign of Christ,

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: Changed through patient waiting for the Lord,

All: **Send us, and together we will go!**

L: The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

L: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

All: **Amen.**

And/or

L: May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be upon you.

All: **Amen.**

L: Go forth in the peace of Christ!

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Closing hymn/song(s) and/or instrumental music.