

## Justice and Hope Sunday – Worship Resources

“The LORD loves righteousness and justice;  
the earth is full of his unfailing love.”

—Psalm 33:5

Justice and hope. Can these two words really go together? As justice-seekers whose ears are attuned to the voices of marginalized people, where is our hope when the poor are trampled underfoot and it seems that the powerful take the day every time? Where is our hope when even our churches too often turn their faces away?

**We have hope because we are not saving the world, Christ is.**

We have hope because we get to *participate* in this heavenly restoration and reconciliation of all things, and though we groan and labour along with creation, we know the ending of the story already.

There will be freedom for the prisoners.

There will be recovery of sight for the blind.

The oppressed will be set free.

Good news will be proclaimed to the poor.

**And so we work and pray and advocate, entrusting our faithful mustard seeds of love for neighbours to a faithful God.**

As we walk with Christ toward the cross this Lent, we walk with our marginalized neighbours, knowing with them that after the cross comes the empty tomb.

Mark Justice and Hope Sunday on February 18, the first Sunday of Lent, by:

- taking an offering to support the work of the Centre for Public Dialogue
- using these worship resources
- challenging your congregation to take the Lent Advocacy Challenge

Included in this resource package, you'll find:

- How to order free bulletin inserts for this Sunday
- Sermon resources
- Litanies
- Prayers
- Songs
- Sunday School resources
- Offering of letters

You can find more worship resources, including issue-specific worship resources, at [www.crcna.org/publicdialogue/resources](http://www.crcna.org/publicdialogue/resources).

## Free bulletin inserts

[Order free bulletin inserts for your congregation from Faith Alive by the end of December.](#) The back of the insert includes the Lent Advocacy Challenge, a challenge to your congregation to choose a spiritual discipline of advocacy in this Lenten season. ([Preview the Lent Advocacy Challenge here.](#))

## Sermon resources

Not sure how to preach about justice, hope, and advocacy or what to focus on? Here are some resources to get your wheels turning:

*What's the theological foundation for preaching about justice?*

-[Church and Politics](#) (Shiao Chong)

-[Let Justice Roll](#) (Shiao Chong)

-[Imitating God: Doing Justice as a Condition of Authentic Worship](#) (Nicholas Wolterstorff)

*How can I incorporate this biblical justice theme throughout the worship service?*

-[Let Justice Roll: Worship Planning Resources with a Justice Theme](#) (Jay Blankespoor, Elizabeth Vander Haagen)

*Sample sermons on biblical justice:*

-[Four Week Justice Series: Just Amos](#) (Office of Social Justice staff)

-[Justice and Advocacy: Sermon on Psalm 82:1-8](#) (Pastor Jack Van de Hoef)

-[Fearing a Covenant God: Sermon on Psalm 103 and Matthew 5](#) (Mike Hogeterp)

## Litanies

### Opening Litany

Leader:

We come to you broken, Lord Jesus.

We come to you, groaning along with creation.

We are pummeled by the headlines, heartsick over the divisions in our communities and neighbourhoods, buffeted by the injustices we see around us.

Your good creation is sick, Lord, and we cry out.

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new.**

Leader:

We confess that the brokenness of our world is our brokenness too.

We confess that too often we turn away.

We confess that too often we resist the convicting work of your Holy Spirit.

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new.**

Leader:

We see that this country treats some better than it treats others. We see that safe drinking water, quality education, and even a safe walk home are not guaranteed for all citizens of this country.

We mourn the legacy of residential schools. We mourn missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. We mourn broken treaties.

Your good creation is sick, Lord, and we cry out.

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new.**

Leader:

We see the struggles of refugees waiting in a broken system. We see the struggles they face to find affordable housing, English classes, safe communities, welcoming friends in their new country.

We mourn the many who are still in danger, the many who have perished in the desert or in the sea.

Your good creation is sick, Lord, and we cry out.

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new.**

Leader:

We see the *(space to include a particular justice concern of your community)*.

We mourn the *(space to include a particular justice concern of your community)*.

Your good creation is sick, Lord, and we cry out.

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new.**

Leader:

Reveal your sons and daughters, God! May we answer the groans of creation like midwives, ready to welcome a new world where the lame walk, the blind see, and the captives are set free. Your promises are good! Your promises are sure!

**Congregation:**

**Christ is making all things new. Help us to see You at work in your world.**

Leader:

People loved by God, fix your eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith.

**Congregation:**



**Christ is making all things new. Call us participate with you in the renewal of all things!**

Leader:

We know that we will see the goodness of God in the land of the living. Take heart, God's people.

**Congregation:**

**Amen!**

### **Sending and Blessing litany**

(From Lift Up Your Hearts #141)

**Walk, people of God!**

With those who are persecuted and oppressed, **Walk, people of God.**

With those whom the world shuns, **Walk, people of God.**

With those who hunger and thirst, **Walk, people of God.**

With those whose hearts are breaking, **Walk, people of God.**

With those .... [option to add leader's own words/congregation's own concerns here], **Walk, people of God.**

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

## Prayers

Prayer of Confession:

[Prayer from South Africa](#) (from Canadian Foodgrains Bank)

## Songs

Songs of Opening/Gathering in Worship:

- [All Ye Refugees](#) (Sandra McCracken--download lead sheets on [her website](#))
- [He Shall Reign](#) (Tom Wuest--[find chords](#))
- From the Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal:
  - 647 -- Come, Sing to God with All Your Heart

Songs of Confession/Assurance:

- From the Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal:
  - 297 -- Open our Eyes



- 298 -- Salaam/Peace
- 663 -- Pelas dores dest mundo/For the Troubles
- 291 -- How Long, O Lord, How Long

#### Songs of Response:

- [Rise Up](#) (Bifrost Arts Music, sheet music included)
- [The Hope of the Poor \(Psalm 9\)](#) (Wendell Kimbrough--sheet music available for purchase)
- From the Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal:
  - 295 -- [Let Justice Flow Down](#)
  - 299 -- Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us With Your Love
  - 926 -- God of Grace and God of Glory

#### Songs of Sending:

- [All Things Reconciled](#) (Tom Wuest)
- From the Lift Up Your Hearts Hymnal:
  - 131 -- Christ, We Climb with You the Mountain
  - 282 -- Oh God of Every Nation
  - 289 -- For the Healing of the Nations

## Sunday School resources

Currently, the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue's two core focus issues are refugee justice and Indigenous justice. We invite you to consider which of these two issues is particularly visible for your church congregation, and then choose one of the following related ideas for your Sunday School lesson on Justice and Hope Sunday. For example, is your church sponsoring a refugee family, or have you in the past? Or are there Indigenous members of your church, or does your church community have relationships with any Indigenous communities in your town or city?

#### Refugee Justice:

[This lesson plan](#) explores refugees in the Bible, and invites children to write cards of welcome for newly arrived refugees to Canada, and then send those cards to their MP in Ottawa - further address information is included in the plan.

#### Indigenous Justice:

[This lesson plan](#) introduces kids to the injustices that Indigenous children face, using a video of Indigenous children and a card-writing activity to advocate to their MP for equitable funding for Indigenous education. **(This lesson plan syncs with an offering of letters that the adults can also be invited to participate in. See below for more details.)**

## Offering of Letters

An offering of letters is an opportunity for your congregation to respond to God's call to do justice by signing a letter to their Member of Parliament on an important social issue. This year, we are working with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, who have been diligently working for years to advocate for equitable services for First Nations children, particularly child welfare services. We offer God our voices and hands to do his work of justice.

We will provide:

- A sample introduction to the offering of letters that can be read at the end of the worship service
- Advocacy letters that can be provided in the foyer or welcome area for members to sign
- Instructions for mailing the letters to your respective Members of Parliament

Once we've finalized these elements in early January, we will add them to this webpage ([crcna.org/publicdialogue/resources](http://crcna.org/publicdialogue/resources)) for your use.