

To praying congregations of Ohio Conference,

This document contains three prayer services. These were designed specifically to help congregations, small groups, and individuals pray for Ohio Conference as we discern our response to the Concerned Pastors Letter and Resolution in response to Mountain States Mennonite Conference's decision to license a person in a committed same sex relationship.

Although these are designed for this specific situation, please feel free to use them as you see fit. By changing the scripture and songs, or adding more songs, they will take on a delightfully different feel. Again, please use them as you see fit.

The first two pages contain a service for congregational use. The next page is for small group use. And the last page, for personal use.

Many blessings as together, we pray.

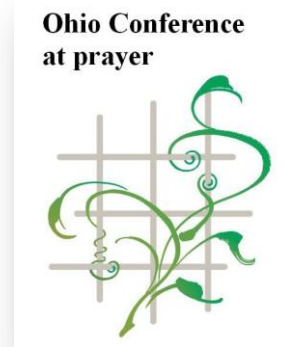
Dana Short,  
Prayer Coordinator, Ohio Conference Ministry Discernment Team

## Words of Welcome (from leader)

### Invocation

Leader: God be in my head  
**People: And in my understanding;**  
Leader: God be in my eyes  
**People: And in my looking;**  
Leader: God be in my mouth  
**People: And in my speaking;**  
Leader: God be in my heart  
**People: And in my thinking;**  
Leader: God be in my soul  
**People: And in my touching;**  
**All: God be at my birth**  
**And at my ending.**

## For Congregational Use



(Adapted from *Hymnal; A Worship Book* 738)

### Prayer of Relinquishment (together)

Today, O Lord, we yield ourselves to you.  
May your will be our delight.  
May your love be the pattern of our living.  
We surrender to you our hopes,  
our dreams, our ambitions for Ohio Conference  
Do with them what you will, when you will, as you will.  
We place into your loving care our conference leadership,  
our pastors, our congregations, our future.  
Care for them with a care that we can never give.  
We release into your hands our need to control,  
our craving for status, our fear of obscurity.  
Eradicate the evil, purify the good,  
and establish your kingdom on earth in Ohio Mennonite Conference.  
For Jesus' sake, amen.

(Adapted from *Prayers from the Heart* By Richard Foster;  
Harper, San Francisco, 1994)

### Song HWB 145 "There is a Wideness in God's Mercy"

### Scripture Matthew 7:1-5 (read by leader)

'Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. For with the judgement you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck in your neighbour's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your neighbour, "Let me take the speck out of your eye", while the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour's eye.

### Prayers of Praise

Leader Praise the One who hears the cry of the poor,  
**People who lifts up the weak and gives them strength.**  
Leader Praise the One who feeds the hungry  
**People and satisfies the longing of those in need.**  
Leader Praise the One who holds with tenderness the orphan and widow  
**People and gives the stranger a land and a home.**

(Hymnal; a Worship Book 683)

### Silent Prayers of Praise

### Scripture Psalm 131 (read by leader)

My heart is not proud, LORD,  
my eyes are not haughty;  
I do not concern myself with great matters  
or things too wonderful for me.  
But I have calmed and quieted myself,

I am like a weaned child with its mother;  
like a weaned child I am content.  
[Ohio Conference], put your hope in the LORD  
both now and forevermore

### **Prayer of Confession (together)**

[We approach God as sinners; just as Paul considered himself the foremost, so are we all.]

**Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.**

(Psalm 51:10-12)

### **Silent Prayers of Confession**

#### **Scripture** Romans 8:26-27 (read by leader)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

### **Prayer of Intercession/Petition (together)**

**Give us discerning minds, oh Lord;  
eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts that are open  
Help us to let go of our need to control the situation  
Help us to remember those who have been hurt or silenced  
and those who have been called to leadership roles  
Help us to pray “Your will be done, not mine”.**

### **Silent Prayers of intercession/Petition**

#### **Scripture** Isaiah 55:1-3, 12 (read by leader)

“Come, all you who are thirsty,  
come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without cost.  
Why spend money on what is not bread,  
and your labor on what does not satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,

and you will delight in the richest of fare.  
Give ear and come to me;  
listen, that you may live.  
You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.

### **Lord’s Prayer (Sins)**

#### **Sending**

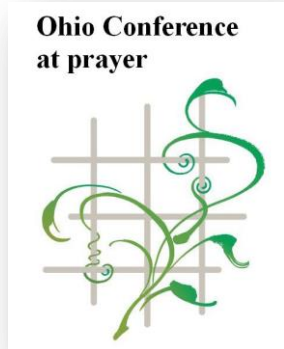
Leader	Go in love,
<b>People</b>	<b>for love alone endures.</b>
Leader	Go in peace,
<b>People</b>	<b>for it is the gift of God.</b>
Leader	Go in safety
<b>People</b>	<b>for we cannot go where God is not.</b>

(Hymnal, A Worship Book, 764)

## Invocation

Leader: God be in my head  
**People: And in my understanding;**  
Leader: God be in my eyes  
**People: And in my looking;**  
Leader: God be in my mouth  
**People: And in my speaking;**  
Leader: God be in my heart  
**People: And in my thinking;**  
Leader: God be in my soul  
**People: And in my touching;**  
**All: God be at my birth**  
**And at my ending.**

## For Small Group Use



(Adapted from *Hymnal; A Worship Book* 738)

## Affirmation (together)

**God of community**  
**whose call is more insistent**  
**than ties of family or blood;**  
**may we so respect and love**  
**those whose lives are linked with ours**  
**that we fail not in loyalty to you,**  
**but make choices according to your will,**  
**through Jesus Christ. Amen**

(*Hymnal; A Worship Book* 738)

## Candle Lighting/Silence

[invite group to light a candle as a symbol of their affirmation of faith]

**Song** (optional) (song may be sung or recorded) HWB 545 “Be Thou My Vision”

**Confession** [Invite group to speak aloud their confessions of ways we are complacent, judgmental, unforgiving, our need to control, our fears, our doubts, etc.]

**Scripture** Romans 8:26-27 (read by leader)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

## Candle Lighting/Silence/Supplications

[invite group to offer prayers of supplication and intercession. Please approach God as the sinners that we are, in a posture of oneness with those for whom we pray.]

[invite group to light a candle/s as a symbol of their trust in God to do what is right, good and just]

**Song** (optional) (song may be sung or recorded) StJ 98 “All Will be Well”

**Circle of Gratitude** [invite group to stand, hold hands (optional), and offer a word of gratitude for what God has done, is doing, and will do in the situation between Ohio Conference and Mountain States Conference.]

**Benediction** (by leader)

Go in the peace and light of Christ Jesus who, in the hours before his death, prayed for our unity through love. May your will be done in us and through us.

## Invocation

God be in my head  
and in my understanding;  
God be in my eyes  
and in my looking;  
God be in my mouth  
and in my speaking;  
God be in my heart  
and in my thinking;  
God be in my soul  
and in my touching;  
God be in my birth  
and in my ending.

## For Personal Use

### Ohio Conference at prayer



Adapted from *Hymnal; A Worship Book* 738

## Scripture 1 Tim 1:14-16a

and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the foremost. But for that very reason I received mercy

## Prayer of Confession

(confess the ways you fail to trust God, are judgmental toward others and blind to your own sins, react to fear and injustice, ... etc.)

## Scripture Matthew 7:7

Ask, and it will be given to me; search, and I will find; knock, and the door will be opened for me.

## Supplication

God, it is difficult to know how to pray;  
and yet, you pray within me prayers too deep for words.  
I offer my heart and all that is in it, to you.  
Do with it as you will,  
Grant me an open heart and a willing spirit,  
that I might approach life in a posture of gratitude and love.

## Open Prayer/Silence

(if you are not used to silence, begin slowly. Try 5 minutes, increasing to 15-20 minutes of silence, with an open heart and listening ears. Allow the Holy Spirit to pray within you.)

## Benediction

May the God of hope fill me with all joy and peace in believing so that I may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen