

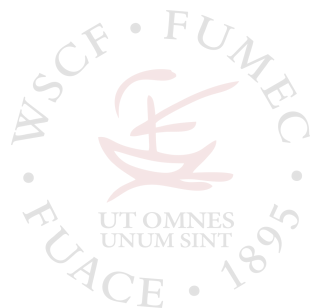
UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR STUDENTS 2024

WORLD STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION



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1. INTRODUCTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Pray for justice, act for justice

Today, as we gather to observe the Universal Day of Prayer for Students, we are reminded of the profound power of prayer in our quest for justice. Pray for Justice, Fight for Justice is not just a rallying cry; it is a testament to the strength we draw from our faith, which fuels our actions and sustains our spirit in the relentless pursuit of a fairer world. Prayer is our foundation, the deep well from which we draw our perseverance and unity, empowering us to confront the forces of injustice that plague our world.

In the face of wars, genocides, hunger, forced migrations, and widening gaps between rich and poor, prayer connects us to the divine, guiding our steps towards justice. Through prayer, we find the courage to challenge the systems and attitudes that perpetuate inequality and environmental destruction. Prayer illuminates the path toward change, inspiring us to act with compassion but firmly against unjust systems.

The power of prayer lies in its ability to transform hearts and minds, to foster a sense of solidarity among us, and to remind us that we are not alone in our struggles. It is a source of comfort and strength, a reminder that faith makes all things possible, including creating a more just and equitable world.

As we come together to mark this particular day, let us harness the power of prayer to fuel our fight for justice. Let it be the force that binds us, students and seniors alike, in a shared commitment to challenge injustice and work for our global community's betterment. Our prayers, combined with our actions, have the potential to bring about meaningful change, to heal divides, and to usher in a new era of peace and justice.

Therefore, I invite students and senior friends from across the globe to join in this celebration of the Universal Day of Prayer for Students. Together, let us pray for justice, fight for justice, and believe in the transformative power of our combined efforts. Let today reflect our hope, a day when we stand united in our commitment to making the world better for all.

As part of our prayers today, let us hold in our hearts the people of Gaza, Myanmar, South Sudan and the Philippines. May our prayers envelop these regions with hope, strength, and the promise of peace. Let us pray for an end to colonialism and dominance, for healing in lands torn by violence, and for justice to guide the way toward reparation and abundant life.

Celebrate UDPS with us, embracing the power of prayer and action. Be part of the movement towards a future where justice prevails and peace and love reign.

Ut Omnes Unum Sint
Marcelo Leites

2. UDPS HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Every year individuals, churches and communities around the world unite to lift up students in prayer on Student Sunday, also known as the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS). Student Sunday is coordinated by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and has been celebrated since 1898, making it one of the oldest ecumenical days of prayer. It serves as one of the tangible signs of our common life and the connection between students and alumni of the WSCF all around the world. The UDPS was first celebrated on Sunday 13th February 1898 at the second meeting of what was then known as the General Committee of the World Student Christian Federation. The participants of the Federation's then ten-member movements believed intercessory prayer should be a vital ingredient in the life of a worldwide body of Christian students.

As a result, the early leaders of the Federation called on Christian students around the world to join together in February each year for observance of the Universal Day of Prayer for Students. During the world wars when it was impossible to hold the WSCF meetings, the major bond of unity between those separated from one another by the ravages of war was the annual observance of the Day of Prayer for Students. For more than a century students and friends of the WSCF have observed this Day of Prayer as a way to express their common commitment as witnesses of our faith in God and in each other, to the world both inside and outside our academic communities.

The WSCF publishes ecumenical worship services on a theme that relates to the Federation's theme of study for the year or responds to current events and issues of concern to the world's students.

3. PROPOSAL FOR THE 2024 UDPS CELEBRATION

The following suggestions can help developing the celebration. Please, feel free to consider them and/or adapt them according to your contexts and groups.

- Appoint a small committee of interested persons to organize the service and to assign parts to leaders and readers. Try to involve a diverse group of people to prepare for the liturgy.
- Try to organize a good choir to lead the singing. The choir may vary/change the sung parts and select different hymns or songs if desired. Parts to be sung may be spoken if preferred.
- You can also replace the suggested songs in this liturgy to adapt to your local language and customs. Brainstorm creative and symbolic acts in the service that would serve to highlight the theme.
- Give adequate time for the preacher (student, Senior Friend, or clergy) to prepare a short sermon (recommended 7-12 minutes). She, he, they may select other Bible readings for the service as the spirit leads.
- If you wish to add a service of Eucharist together with this prayer service, please do so according to your tradition.
 - Organize the collection. This year, devote your collection to help support the work of the Federation.
 - Inform churches in different parts of the country and invite them to organize this service in their local congregations or fellowship.

"The work of WSCF is largely centered on justice, all of its programs are anchored in it: Identity, Diversity, Dialogue and Gender Justice; Climate and Economic Justice; Peace Building; Democracy, Human Rights and Fundamentalisms; and Youth Ecumenical Leadership. As expressed in the vision "WSCF is called to be a prophetic witness in the Church and the transformation of the world where God's love for creation, justice and peace is shared by all across boundaries of race, class, ethnicity, culture, gender and sexuality. This vision is nurtured by a radical hope of God's reign in history and liberating faith in Jesus Christ." The reign of God as witnessed by Jesus Christ is one that seeks justice for all.

WSCF is compelled to seek justice, especially in the present context where injustice seems to be the norm. A society in which the rich keep on getting richer and the poor poorer. We are living in a time when the world's resources are largely controlled by one percent of the world's population. In this system, not only have majorities been left out, but also creation has also been exploited and treated just for profit. This has resulted in the ongoing climate crisis that affects mostly the poor in the world and keeps perpetuating social and economic inequalities.

This year's Universal Day of Prayers calls students to pray for justice and be active actors in building a more just world for all".

Morgan Mambwe, Regional Secretary WSCF Africa and Global Program Director for Youth Ecumenical Leadership

4. CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,

All: Lord here my voice!

Leader: Let your eyes be attentive to the voice of my supplication!

5. SONG

Nasio Fontaine - Justice

This is reggae power
Prop-pop-pidle-llp-pap-praop-pol
We got to have, we got to have
A that the people need, justice
And everybody need some justice
And we got to have
Justice
A every people need some justice
Lord! Lord! Justice
Down in the ghetto we need some justice
And we got to have
Justice
See how the people cry for justice
Yeah!

Apartheid its got to go
We got to give justice
A chance to flow now
Racism well that can't last
Racial discrimination
Is a thing in the past, so!
We got to have justice
Hear we cry
Justice
Come on and give the people justice
Lord say we got to have
Justice
By any means there must be justice,
Lord!
And we need, justice
Check how the people
Cry for justice, ohha! Yeah! Justice
I know the people need some justice
Ohhy! Yeah!

Let justice flow, we gonna fight
To make it so, let justice be
Every one can be free
Come on let justice run
All could stand on common ground
wanna let you know
There won't be no peace
Without justice and equality, yeah!

Let justice run down as a river
Ohh ohhyi yeah!
And righteousness as a mighty stream
Justice for one
And justice for all
Too much division
Too much a class
And too many walls, yeah!

We got to have
We got to have some justice
So I'm a saying
Let justice run down as a river
Lord please
And righteousness as a mighty stream
Justice for one
And justice for all
Too much division
Too much-a-class
And too many walls, yeah!

Justice
Every nation need some justice
And we got to and we got to have
Justice
And every people need some justice
Lord! Justice
Down in the ghetto need some justice
Ohh! Ohh! Uhh yeah!
Justice
See how the people cry for justice
Lord! Lord'
We got to have
We got to have Justice
So, uhh! Woh! Uhh Justice
Come on and give the people justice

Yeah! Oohy! Justice
Down in a Palestine need justice
Oh! Hoi! Uhh yeah! Justice
Yoh! Hoi! Uhh yeah! Justice
Down in a Soweto need justice
Lord! Lord! Justice
All over Earth people need justice
And dem a cry, justice
Come on and give the people



6. PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

God of Liberation, we come together, seeking Your guidance and wisdom. In a world where oppression and injustice are widespread, illuminate our path through the scriptures, showing us how to live out Your call for justice and liberation. Inspire us with the courage to see and act beyond our own lives, recognizing the universal struggle for dignity and freedom.

Please help us understand that our commitment to justice transcends borders, embodying the principles of liberation theology in our daily actions.

Empower us to transform our compassion into concrete acts of solidarity, aligning ourselves with global movements that strive for equity and the upliftment of the marginalized. Let our engagement with Your Word today fuel our dedication to creating a just society, where the needs of the poor and oppressed are met with love and action. Guide us to challenge the structures of power and privilege, inspired by the radical love and equality that Your kingdom represents.

We pray for the strength to follow the path of righteousness, guided by the example of Jesus Christ, whose life and teachings urge us to stand with the oppressed and work for liberation. May our actions reflect His legacy as we commit to building a world that mirrors Your vision of justice, peace, and inclusive love. Amen.

7. BIBLE READING I (ISAIAH 1:1-17)

1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

A Rebellious Nation

2 Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth!

For the Lord has spoken: "I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.

3 The ox knows its master, the donkey its owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand."

4 Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the Lord; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel

and turned their backs on him.

5 Why should you be beaten anymore?

Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted.

6 From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores,

not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with olive oil.

7 Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners

right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers.

8 Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege.

9 Unless the Lord Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the instruction of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

11 "The multitude of your sacrifices—what are they to me?" says the Lord. "I have more than enough of burnt offerings,

of rams and the fat of fattened animals;

I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.

12 When you come to appear before me,

who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts?

13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!

Your incense is detestable to me.

New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—

I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.

14 Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals

I hate with all my being.

They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them.

15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,

I hide my eyes from you;

even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening.

Your hands are full of blood!

16 Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong.

17 Learn to do right; seek justice.

Defend the oppressed.[a]

Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

8. PROPOSED HOMILY OUTLINE

The passage opens with the prophet bringing a lament from God to the people of Judah. The lament is about **1.** People's rebellion against him v.1-3. / **2.** The nation's inequity and corruption v.4. / **3.** How the people are bruised and not bound up v.5-6. / **4.** How the country is left desolate and burnt with fire in the presence of the people and displacement of people v.7. / **5.** How the daughters of Zion are neglected v.8

V.10-15 shifts to how these social injustices affected their sacrifices and prayers. God detested them because of the injustices the people committed.

V. 16-17 gives what the people of Judah ought to have done to be at peace.

1. Remove the evil
2. Lean to do good and seek justice
3. Rescue the oppressed and defend the weak

Points of reflection

The passage invites us to join God in lamenting over:

- Inequity in the distribution of global resources: While God in infinite grace through creation has endowed Mother Earth with precious natural resources, not all the people benefit from them. The extractive industry in countries like Congo DR, Zambia and many other African countries benefit the capitalists leaving the people of the land in abject poverty and polluted environments. This gives a sad picture of countries with rich deposits of natural resources but with poor quality of life of the general citizenry.
- High level of corruption in some countries: One can only be left in tears at the alarming levels of corruption. Corruption is detrimental to the quality of life as it leads to the rich getting rich through malpractices and the poor getting poorer. A report by worldpopulationreview.com shows that Somalia was the most corrupt country followed by South Sudan. The two countries also fall among the poorest countries. Corruption is an act of injustice that robs people of a good quality of life.
- The people bruised in war: The war between Ukraine and Russia has left nearly the whole world bruised. It has contributed to unstable market prices for oil and a shortage of grain on the world market. Thousands of people have been displaced and left homeless. This has affected especially women and children who are vulnerable. According to the UNHCR report of July 24, 2023 "Nearly 2.32 million South Sudanese have fled to neighboring countries, and 2.22 million remain internally displaced in South Sudan due to violent conflict throughout the country. It is the largest refugee crisis in Africa and the third-largest refugee crisis in the world." We are called to mourn with God for these our friends.
- The bruised ecological systems by human activities: Capital centrism has for a long time treated the earth as a resource that should be exploited. Human activities have led to continued loss of biodiversity, especially with the extractive industry and agriculture. High pollution due to industrialisation has bruised the ecological systems resulting in floods, droughts, and global warming. Human beings have acted unjustly to other creatures and God laments over it. As God's children and bearers of his kingdom message, we are compelled to mourn with Him. It is painful that millions of plant and animal life are continually threatened with extinction. .
- The neglected people in society especially women and children: The chains of Patriarchy continue to bind women and children and expose them to oppression. Churches continue holding positions of influence and decision-making. Justice demands that all people are given equal opportunities regardless of their gender.
- Worship without paying attention to social justice: Worship especially in Africa has become a center of injustice. Misleading theologies such as the theology of "sowing a seed" to receive a blessing are making people lose their resources to benefit a few individuals. Churches concentrate on worship and neglect the social justice ministry. A blind eye has been paid to the marginalised in communities. Deaf eye has been paid to the cry of the needy people. A fold is extended to the people asking for what rightly belongs to them. We are invited to mourn with God for these injustices.

We are further invited to take practical action to: **1.** Remove evil in our communities. / **2.** Learning to do good and seeking justice. / **3.** Rescuing the oppressed and defending the weak.

9. PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Student 1: Prayer for LAC

For the students in Latin America and the Caribbean
We pray for peace and justice
For the downtrodden in the streets and favelas,
We pray for peace and Justice
To the ever-shrinking Amazon rainforest
Help us to make peace and justice
For the environmental defenders and their families
whose lives are at risk for denouncing the capitalist
practices of extraction, exploitation, and appropriation of
the land
For the violence, rapes and femicides of girls and women
as a result of the patriarchal system
Help us to pray for peace and justice

Student 3: Prayer for Asia Pacific

For students in Asia Pacific
We pray for peace and justice
To the students and workers who are being persecuted
in Myanmar and the Philippines
Help us to take justice and peace
To the people of Indonesia and all who are affected by
the rising Ocean levels
We pray for peace
To the people in the slams of India and other countries
Help us to make peace and justice
To the aquatic life in the mangrove zones that have
been destroyed
Help us to make peace and justice

Student 5: Prayer for Europe

For the students in Europe
We pray for peace and justice
For the people affected by the rise in temperatures
We pray for peace and justice
To the migrants and refugees seeking better life
Help us to take peace and justice
To marginalized and oppressed
Help us to make peace and justice

Student 2: Prayer for the Middle East

For the students in the Middle East
We pray for peace and justice
To the Children, Women and all who are
affected by on-going genocide in Gaza
Help us to make peace and justice
For the refugees and all who have lost their
loved ones and their homes
We pray for peace and justice
To the innocent children suffering for what
they do not know
Help us to make peace and justice

Student 4: Prayer for Africa

For the students in Africa
We pray for peace and justice
To the people of Sudan, South Sudan and those in war
tone countries
Help us to make peace and justice
For the people working in mines who are paid very little
We pray for peace and justice
To the poor and less privileged
Help us to make peace and justice
The people who are discriminated on account of their
race and or color
Help us to stand just solidarity with them

Student 6: Prayer for North America

For the students in North America
We pray for peace and justice
To the socially marginalized people
Help us to make peace and justice
For the families of the students who were shot in Atlanta
we pray for justice
To the students who are traumatised and those leaving in
fear
Help us to reach to them with healing

Leader:

Lord of justice, in your kindness, hear our prayers.

Grant us the courage and strength to be agents of peace and justice in the world.

Help us to train and empower people to change the injustice of this world.

Help us to bind the bruised in society

Give us hearts that love and care for the broken creation

Hearts that are compelled with compassion towards the oppressed

In Jesus Christ

AMEN

10. HYMN

O Day of Peace

NEW CREATION

539

Unison

The musical score is written for a unison voice part. It consists of six systems of music, each with a vocal line and a corresponding lyric line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are as follows:

1 O day of peace that dim - ly shines through all our
2 Then shall the wolf dwell with the lamb, nor shall the
hopes and prayers and dreams, guide us to jus - tice, truth, and
fierce de - vour the small; as beasts and cat - tle calm - ly
love, de - liv - ered from our self - ish schemes. May swords of
graze, a lit - tle child shall lead them all. Then en - e -
hate fall from our hands, our hearts from en - vy find re - lease, till by God's
mies shall learn to love, all crea - tures find their true ac - cord; the hope of
grace our war - ring world shall see Christ's prom - ised reign of peace.
peace shall be ful - filled, for all the earth shall know the Lord.

WORDS: Carl P. Daw, Jr. (1944 -)
MUSIC: C. Hubert H. Parry (1848-1918)
Work © 1952 Hope Publishing Company

JERUSALEM
L.M.D.

11. BENEDICTION

Children of the highest God, go into the world and seek justice for all. Radically denounce all forms of injustice.
May the God of Justice watch over you and preserve you.
AMEN

12. CREDITS

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Designed by: María Camila Ulloa, WSCF Interregional Office Assistant

Worship at the 37th WSCF General Assembly, Berlin, 2022.



Worship at the re-launch of the Uganda SCM, 2023.

