

Break The Silence Sunday Calendar of Prayer

2023 Edition



Prayers for you &
your community to use for
personal devotion,
small group reflection
& community worship

<http://www.breakthesilencesunday.org>

Welcome to a new venture from Break The Silence Sunday...

We have gathered a writing group of diverse voices. The writers are survivors & allies; clergy & laity; United Church of Christ & members of other faith traditions; across the spectrum of gender, sexuality, race, and culture. Author biographies are given, as available, with each prayer.

The group is, of course, not as diverse as it could be, and we are always looking for others who might write for us, speaking to their particular context and understanding of being supported as a survivor & supporting survivors in life, and particular in faith communities. If you're interested in writing, please be in touch with Pastor Moira Finley at the email address below.



Some of these prayers will easily fit within the liturgy of a faith community's time for worship. Other prayers are much more suited to times of small group reflection such as Bible studies and adult education programs. Still other prayers will be best suited to personal devotion time, connecting individuals with the struggles and strengths of survivors.

Please know that some of these prayers contain explicit language. Use care and caution when using them in any setting where a survivor might be present (and that's every setting you can imagine).

Do your prep work to make sure that individuals, or any group you would use the prayers with, are aware of the content, have sufficient trigger and content warnings, have a way to excuse themselves if the material becomes too much for them to bear, and have a way to receive pastoral care and support.

Make sure you know your local area resources such as the rape crisis center, and have their contact information ready before you use the prayers.

You can always provide the contact information for:

Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN) at 800-656-4673 and www.rainn.org for live chat support

Trevor Project at 866-488-7386, by text at 678-678, and online at <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>

The prayers are presented in no particular order.



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Questions? Want to write with us?

Contact Rev Moira Finley at breakthesilencesunday@gmail.com

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Rev Maren Tirabassi

Maren C. Tirabassi, UCC pastor for forty-two years, is author of twenty-three books, recently *Child Laughs – Prayers of Justice and Hope*, *Christmas Eve at the Epsom Circle McDonald's and Other Poems* and *Death at Fair Havens* (a cozy mystery, sequel coming in July) Maren loves hiking, swimming, quilting, beagles and attending mystery and science fiction/fantasy conventions.



These are small prayers for a Break the Silence Year in which at least once a season, the stories, lives, and losses of survivors of sexual violence are lifted up.

Break the Silence Prayer for Advent

Introductory Words: In a worldscape when legends and stories of many cultures told of a child born of the divine into the family of a human mother, our Nativity story is uniquely defined by "consent," the very real possibility of Mary's "yes" or "no."

God, as we light a candle for survivors of sexual violence,
we pray for hope of healing of both body and mind,
peace in renewing survivors' spirits,
love that listens without comment,
and joy that comes when survivor and ally,

can break open together our "silent days,"
and rest well in our "silent nights." Amen

Break the Silence Prayer for Epiphany

Introductory Words: The themes of Epiphany – long journeys with few oases, dangerous words by the "authorities" in Jerusalem, receiving of gifts, and new ways to journey home – mirror much in the lives of survivors of sexual violence.

God, we pray for stars
to lead survivors of sexual violence
on the long road of ongoing recovery,
and the painful twists of anniversary memories
or unexpected triggers.

We pray for a silencing, indeed,
of self-appointed authorities
who badger the wounded,
about walking alone, personal history,
or wearing some style of clothing ...
implying their responsibility.

We pray for pastors, churches, friends,
to receive with gratefulness
the gifts of those who want to break
their own silence open,
even the myrrh of loss,

and only then to begin the work of change,
so that everyone returns home
by another and a safer way. Amen.

Break the Silence Prayer for Lent

Introductory Words: In this season of prayer, reflection, and simplicity, we pray the community of our church provide intentional silence to listen to survivors of sexual violence, so that they feel welcome to break silence about their experiences in their time and on their terms.

Gracious God, survivors of sexual violence
have walked lonesome valleys.
and felt more 'all by themselves' than Jesus.
Guide all of us to be open and quiet
a long time with one another in wilderness.

Survivors have watched churches celebrate palms,
and avoid thinking, much less naming,
the betrayals happening all around.
Guide us to be that true thing –
a Garden of Gethsemane that does not sleep.

Survivors have felt thorns of criticism, the
and buried their memories alone
Bring resurrection to lives
where it so often counts the most. Amen

Break the Silence Prayer for Eastertide

Introductory Words: Jesus was recognized when "welcome" moved on to "break and bless the bread." Never forgetting suffering past but also happily welcoming gifts received is how a congregation truly becomes a "Breaking the Silence Church."

God, help our community become Emmaus,
where truth spoken on a long walk
through stories of grief
and an unquestioning welcome
of every stranger
brings our church to sit down
at a table of survivors and allies.

Since the time of Jesus Christ,
survivors have always offered the blessing. Amen.

Break the Silence Prayer for Pentecost Day

Introductory Words: After forty days with Jesus and ten days in confused prayer, those who gathered on Pentecost had no idea how the Spirit would be present. Then and now, the heart of it is that all voices are raised and all people are reached.

God, we have waited for a new Spirit,
and still, we are surprised,
when words come from younger and older,
genders more frequently heard,
and those whose voices are stolen.

When survivors of misuse and abuse,
of violation and violence, speak out,
everyone can understand
what resurrection truly can be.

May we all be baptized in tears,
and the fire of truth. Amen.

Break the Silence Prayer for Pentecost Season (so-called Ordinary time)

Introductory Words: So much happens in the between-times. They are good times for healing survivors and learning from them what advocacy is wanted from allies. There's a holy need for churches to offer ordinary time and familiar undemanding friendship, while still speaking truth to those in power.

God of the ordinary, bless our community
with the grace of ordinary love –
mustard seed, yeast, lost child parables,
the need for stillness after storm,
and miracles small as a bag lunch
for those who experience sexual violence.

God of the ordinary, bless each of us
to know how to listen
to those who break their silence,
and protect those who are not ready.
Help us to quietly learn
childhood stories
of friends we've known for years,
and the freshest pain and shame.

Help us say, "rape," and unsay "victim."
Help us say, "welcome" and unsay, "why didn't you ...?"
Help us say, "would you like a donut ...
or Communion or a friend?"
and also mention what we need. Amen.

Blake Arnall

Chaplain Blake Arnall, MDiv, BCC
ACPE Certified Educator
Assistant Director, Spiritual Care
UCLA Health Santa Monica
Member Religious Society of Friends



This world can be a dangerous and broken place. So many are hurt and lives changes forever.

Let us all join together to create communities of healing. God, who feels are heartache, connect us through compassion and spirit.

Open our hearts... help us to listen... help us to feel each other's struggle

Holy One help us to join hands and hearts, and build safe places for stories to be shared and deeply heard.

Give us strength to face these issues with compassion and to make needed changes.

Help us to be caring healers, wise allies, and courageous survivors.

With your Divine power, may healing flow through our connections and love.

In your many holy names we pray.

Amen

Richard Bruxvoort-Colligan

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan is a composer of church music, a student of the Psalms, and co-leader of Olive Branch Community (ELCA) in Rochester, MN. He has earned his D.Min at Eden Theological Seminary, and lives with his family in Strawberry Point, Iowa.



A Healing Embrace Prayer

(Some who have experienced trauma find physical touch intrusive, repulsive, and/or re-traumatizing. Others crave it and welcome it with joy. This is a prayer to explore healing from an imagined embrace of Jesus Christ).

When indicated below, the people may embrace their own shoulders or belly with their arms, touch their face with a gentle hand, or tenderly bring their hands together in a loving clasp.

One: O Living One,

Many: Maker of us and all,

One: We are your people, and you are our source.

Many: You are the source from whom all blessings flow.

The people of God inhale a generous breath.

One: We suffer because of our own mistakes.

Many: Yes.

One: We suffer because of other people's accidents and determined choices.

Many: Yes.

One: We suffer because of random time and chance.

Many: Yes.

One: Let us pray for a healing embrace from Jesus Christ for all who suffer today.

The people of God receive a generous breath.

One: When we are confused by old patterns in our own lives, ease our minds.

Many: Allow old habits to loosen, so we can understand them.

One: May the Christ who experienced both joy and pain embrace us, and embrace all who are suffering.

The people of God enact a self-embrace in body or spirit.

One: In the moments we feel deficient, fill us with your goodness.

Many: Open our own brokenness, so we can deepen our compassion.

One: May the Christ who was both thanked and betrayed embrace us, and embrace all who are suffering.

The people of God enact a self-embrace in body or spirit.

One: In remembering past violence, plant in us seeds of courage.

Many: Grow in us the possibility of new life.

One: May the Christ who smiled at goodness and wept over loss embrace us, and embrace all who are suffering.

The people of God enact a self-embrace in body or spirit.

One: O Living One,

Many: Maker of us and all,

One: We are your people, and you are our source.

Many: You are the source from whom all blessings flow.

All: Amen

Emma Landowski

Rev. Emma Landowski: Eco-feminist, Survivor, Spiritual Midwife, Dog parent, lover of food and fresh air.



Holy one,

They say you can only heal from what you are willing to feel, but sometimes I am tired of feeling. Some days I'd rather be numb than feel or remember the pain I have gone through. But then you remind me of the things I should feel; I am allowed to feel, encouraged to feel: anger, grief, sadness AND empowered. God of love and healing, give me the strength to not be complacent with the evils of this world. Strengthen me to continue breaking the silence. Remind me that I am your beloved and you have called me by name. May it be so.

Amen.

Morgan McAllister

Morgan is a 33 year old trans man and a Texan. He is a lifelong member of the Frozen Chosen, his favorite musical is Godspell, and he runs a consent-focused, sex and body positive peer group for LGBTQIA Houstonians. His favorite book of the Bible is Luke, with Esther as a close runner up.



Dear Jesus,

I didn't want to write this prayer, but I decided to do it anyway. Sometimes I stay up at night questioning whether my rape even happened the way I remember it, but you are always there with me to hold me tight through the pain. As the Bible tells us, our bodies are temples - and we know that you, the carpenter and builder of all the world, have promised to rebuild your temple not just here on earth but in our perfect, eternal bodies in the hereafter. You, the redeemer, have promised to 'wipe away our tears' at the end of days, even as you wept with us in your own time here on earth. There is nothing we have been through, Lord, that you cannot relate to. Even when it comes to sexual assault, you have endured with us: At the hands of your murderers your naked flesh was bared, your body manhandled without consent, and ultimately tortured and broken. Nothing can make sexual assault less horrific or traumatizing, but knowing that you stand with us as the ultimate survivor is a comforting reminder that we never walk alone. Thank you, Jesus, for your sacrifice, your solidarity, and your love.

Amen.

Gregory Whelton

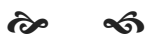
Rev. Gregory Whelton, retired United Church of Christ minister, ordained in 1978. Called by God to make his home in Sheboygan, Wisconsin.



Loving Creator in your Spirit be with all those who have been used, assaulted, abused, ignored and overlooked by us and by the Church and the World. Forgive us for walking by and acting as though their pain was not real. Give us a full measure of your love and the courage to truly listen to them and their stories and to open our hearts to them and to welcome them into our community even if they have been sitting among us for years, forgotten, In the same love that empowered your Son to say not my will by thine, empower us to be the Your living presence in our world today. In the Name of Jesus the Christ we pray. Amen.

Jody Clegg

Rev Jody Clegg is a graduate of Eden Theological Seminary and lives in St. Louis, MO. He is ordained in the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and has served as interim or sabbatical pastor at various St. Louis area UCC and Disciples of Christ congregations



Loving God, you have made us for companionship with you, and you take delight in us.

You desire that we have abundant life.

Yet, you also grieve when our sins block the way of abundant life to others.

We do not always hear the cries and pains of the abused and assaulted.

We do not always confess the cries and pains we cause, and work to heal the injury and brokenness we've caused.

You grieve when we are the ones abused and assaulted.

You hear our cries and pains and will not leave us abandoned.

You call us friend and heal our wounds.

You sit by us as our companion in despair and accompany us as our guide into the light of day.

Through Christ, Light of the World, lead us onto the path of life again when others seek to destroy or degrade the abundant life we have in you.

Through Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, lift us above any desire to cause harm or to ignore harm done to others. Raise us to lives that bear witness to your abundant life and that accompany others as they travel Your path from death to life again.

This we pray through Christ our Good Shepherd, who saves us from death, with you, and the Holy Spirit, who turns our groans into prayers.
Amen.

Christopher Grundy

Rev. Dr. Christopher Grundy is Professor of Worship and Preaching, Academic Dean, and Dean of the Chapel at Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, MO. He is ordained in the United Church of Christ.



Christopher is a singer and songwriter and he submitted the following song, “I Have Called You By Name”. You can listen to the song on our website, breakthesilencesunday.org on the “Calendar of Prayer” tab. Sheet music is on its way.

“I Have Called You By Name”

You are mine, I have called you by name,
child, over and over again.

My steadfast love won't go away.

Don't be afraid.

You are mine, I have made you to be free,
maybe not free from all pain,
but my love for you won't go away.

Do not be afraid!

I have called you by name.

As you're swimming the river to freedom,
and the current is dragging you down,
feels like you'll drown, but you can't go back now,
just keep breathing, and reaching for shoreline,
knowing I'll be there bearing you up,
child, do not fear, I will be here.

You are mine, I have called you by name,
child, over and over again.

My steadfast love won't go away.

Don't be afraid.

You are mine, I have made you to be free,
maybe not free from all pain,
but my love for you won't go away.

Do not be afraid!

I have called you by name.

As you walk through the fires of memories,
burning coals at the soles of your feet,
I'll be with you, you won't be consumed.
Keep your head up, and keep moving forward,
though the smoke makes you choke,
you'll go on, you'll know I'm near,
voice in your ear.

You are mine, I have called you by name,
child, over and over again.

My steadfast love won't go away.

Don't be afraid.

You are mine, I have made you to be free,
maybe not free from all pain,
but my love for you won't go away.

Do not be afraid!

I have called you by name.

I have called you by name.