**A Just Forgiveness and the Way of Peace**

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Adapted from prayers written by Rev. Susan A. Blain.

Original prayers can be found [HERE](https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/pentecost_15_september_13/)

**Call to Worship**

One: We have come to pray for peace.

**All: We seek the way of Just Peace.**

One: We have come to pray for grace.

**All: We seek the way of forgiveness.**

One: We have come to pray for wholeness.

**All: We seek the way of restorative justice. Amen.**

**Opening Prayer**

Compassionate-One, Lover-of-Goodness, Patience-with-Sinners,

Draw near to us.

Surround us with confidence in your good news:

that you love us as parents love their children;

that your mercy is boundless and generous,

that you beckon us always and will wait forever

as we find our way back to you.

Open our hearts to receive your compassion;

And then show us how to forgive,

So that we may be vessels of resurrection hope in our troubled world.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Prayer of Confession**

One: Friends, in the scriptures, “Seven” is often seen as a perfect number, a mystical number, a number that points to infinity.

So when Jesus tells his disciples to forgive “seventy times seven”,

(or “seventy-seven times” depending on translation),

he is inviting people into a never ending, expansive dance of grace. Confession, repentance, turning one’s life around to a transformed future; Forgiveness, resilience, opening one’s life to a new moment in relationship: all this may seem impossible, and yet Jesus calls us to profound, ever-evolving change.

Let’s take a few moments to ponder our lives, personal, and in wider community.

* Where do we need forgiveness? Where do we need to forgive?
* Where do our lives intersect in the wider community

with structures, practices, attitudes that deeply hurt our neighbors?

* Where must we seek reconciliation?
* How have we been wounded with structures, practices, attitudes of the wider community that need transformation? How can we find healing?
* Where are the places that we have power and privilege? How can we provide release and repair? How can we seek the way of Just Peace?

**All: Source of All Grace, we confess that we sometimes hold power over others, keeping unnecessary scores and debts in our minds. Help us to release our lists to you, the true Source of power and peace. Amen.**

**Assurance of Grace**

Holy One,

You call us into this ever expanding dance of grace;

Turning “seventy times seven” is not too much when we follow your lead into a future of hope and Just Peace.

Glory be to the One who, working in us,

can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Amen.

**Offertory Prayer**

**All: God of Abundance, we are grateful that you have offered us an infinite amount of love and grace. You have invited us into a dance of Just Peace in which we both give and receive. Bless this moment in that cycle as we share what we have for the dance to continue. Multiply these gifts seventy times seven. Amen.**

**Pastoral Prayer**

One: Holy God, for us, forgiveness is complicated. We dish out and absorb so much pain that it is hard for us to know when we are the cause; when we should forgive and when we should ask forgiveness. It’s a mess, and we would rather not think about it. Most days it is easier to just keep pressing forward. But there are those moments like this one when we strive to be real, with you and with each other; when we share the deepest worries of our minds and the biggest hopes of our hearts. We want to stop cycles of pain and injustice. We want to magnify and continue cycles of Just Peace. Source of all peace, we trust that you know us and that you hear these prayers. We trust Jesus’ words that you have already offered us all the love and grace that we need. Move us from this place back into the challenge, ready to engage, to work and to walk the way of Just Peace. Amen.