

IMPORTANT

This is the **international** version of the text
of the Week of Prayer 2021

Kindly contact your local Bishops' Conference or Synod
of your Church to obtain an adaptation of this text for your local context

Resources for
THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
and throughout the year 2021

Abide in my love
and you shall bear much fruit

(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

Jointly prepared and published by
The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity
The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches

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TO THOSE ORGANIZING THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

The search for unity: throughout the year

The traditional period in the northern hemisphere for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is 18-25 January. Those dates were proposed in 1908 by Paul Wattson to cover the days between the feasts of St Peter and St Paul, and therefore have a symbolic significance. In the southern hemisphere where January is a vacation time churches often find other days to celebrate the Week of Prayer, for example around Pentecost (suggested by the Faith and Order movement in 1926), which is also a symbolic date for the unity of the Church.

Mindful of the need for flexibility, we invite you to use this material throughout the whole year to express the degree of communion which the churches have already reached, and to pray together for that full unity which is Christ's will.

Adapting the text

This material is offered with the understanding that, whenever possible, it will be adapted for use in local situations. Account should be taken of local liturgical and devotional practice, and of the whole social and cultural context. Such adaptation should ideally take place ecumenically. In some places ecumenical structures are already set up for adapting the material; in other places, we hope that the need to adapt it will be a stimulus to creating such structures.

Using the Week of Prayer material

- For churches and Christian communities which observe the Week of Prayer together through a single common service, an order for an ecumenical worship service is provided.
- Churches and Christian communities may also incorporate material from the Week of Prayer into their own services. Prayers from the ecumenical worship service, the "eight days", and the selection of additional prayers can be used as appropriate in their own setting.
- Communities which observe the Week of Prayer in their worship for each day during the week may draw material for these services from the "eight days".
- Those wishing to undertake bible studies on the Week of Prayer theme can use as a basis the biblical texts and reflections given in the eight days. Each day the discussions can lead to a closing period of intercessory prayer.
- Those who wish to pray privately may find the material helpful for focusing their prayer intentions. They can be mindful that they are in communion with others praying all around the world for the greater visible unity of Christ's Church.

BIBLICAL TEXT FOR 2021

Jn 15:1-17

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

New Revised Standard Version

INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME FOR THE YEAR 2021

Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit

(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 was prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp.¹ The theme that was chosen, “*Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit*”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the church and the human family.

In the 1930s a number of Reformed women from French-speaking Switzerland who belonged to a group known as the “Ladies of Morges” rediscovered the importance of silence in listening to the Word of God. At the same time they revived the practice of spiritual retreats to nourish their life of faith, inspired by the example of Christ who went apart to a lonely place to pray. They were soon joined by others who took part in regularly organized retreats in Grandchamp, a small hamlet near the shores of Lake Neuchâtel. It became necessary to provide a permanent presence of prayer and welcome for the growing number of guests and retreatants.

Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning.

The first sisters experienced the pain of division between the Christian churches. In this struggle they were encouraged by their friendship with Abbé Paul Couturier, a pioneer of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Therefore, from its earliest beginnings prayer for Christian unity was at the heart of the life of the community. This commitment, together with Grandchamp’s fidelity to the three pillars of prayer, community life and hospitality, form the foundations of these materials.

To abide in God’s love is to be reconciled with oneself

The French words for monk and nun (*moine/moniale*) come from the Greek *μόνος* which means alone and one. Our hearts, bodies and minds, far from being one, are often scattered, being pulled in several directions. The monk or nun desires to be one in his or her self and united with Christ. “Abide in me as I abide in you,” Jesus tells us (Jn 15:4a). An integrated life presupposes a path of self-acceptance, of reconciliation with our personal and inherited histories.

Jesus said to the disciples, “abide in my love” (Jn 15:9). He abides in the love of the Father (Jn 15:10) and desires nothing other than to share this love with us: “I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (Jn 15:15b). Grafted into the vine, which is Jesus himself, the Father becomes our vinedresser who prunes us to make us grow. This describes what happens in prayer. The Father is the centre of our lives, who centres our lives. He prunes us and makes us whole, and whole human beings give glory to the Father.

Abiding in Christ is an inner attitude that takes root in us over time. It demands space to grow. It can be overtaken by the struggle for the necessities of life and it is threatened by the distractions, noise, activity and the challenges of life. In the turmoil of Europe in 1938, Geneviève Micheli, who would later become Mother Geneviève, the first mother of the community, wrote these lines which remain relevant today:

We live in a time that is both troubling and magnificent, a dangerous time where nothing preserves the soul, where rapid and wholly human achievements seem to sweep beings away ... And I think that our civilization will die in this collective madness of noise and speed, where no being can think ... We Christians, who know the full value of a spiritual life, have an immense responsibility and must realize it, unite and help each other

1. See also the presentation on the community at the end of this booklet, as well as www.grandchamp.org

create forces of calmness, refuges of peace, vital centres where the silence of people calls on the creative word of God. It is a question of life and death.

Abiding in Christ until we bear fruit

“My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit” (Jn 15:8). We cannot bear fruit on our own. We cannot bear fruit separated from the vine. It is the sap, the life of Jesus flowing through us, that produces fruit. Remaining in Jesus’s love, remaining a branch of the vine, is what allows his life to flow through us.

When we listen to Jesus his life flows through us. Jesus invites us to let his word abide in us (John 15:7) and then whatever we ask will be done for us. By his word we bear fruit. As persons, as a community, as the entire church, we wish to unite ourselves to Christ in order to keep his commandment of loving one another as He has loved us (Jn 15:12).

Abiding in Christ, the source of all love, the fruit of communion grows

Communion with Christ demands communion with others. Dorotheus of Gaza, a monk in Palestine in the 6th century, expressed this in the following way:

Imagine a circle drawn on the ground, that is, a line drawn in a circle with a compass, and a centre. Imagine that the circle is the world, the centre is God, and the radii are the different paths or ways people live. When the saints, desiring to draw near to God, walk toward the middle of the circle, to the extent that they penetrate its interior, they draw closer to each other; and the closer they draw to each other, the closer they come to God. Understand that the same thing applies conversely, when we turn away from God and withdraw toward the outside. It then becomes obvious that the more we move away from God, the more we move away from each other, and the more we move away from each other, the more we also move away from God.

Moving closer to others, living together in community with others, sometimes people very different from ourselves, can be challenging. The sisters of Grandchamp know this challenge and for them the teaching of Brother Roger of Taizé² is very helpful: “There is no friendship without purifying suffering. There is no love of one’s neighbour without the cross. The cross alone allows us to know the unfathomable depth of love.”³

Divisions among Christians, moving away from one another, are a scandal because it is also moving further away from God. Many Christians, moved to sorrow by this situation, pray fervently to God for the restoration of that unity for which Jesus prayed. Christ’s prayer for unity is an invitation to turn back to him and so come closer to one another, rejoicing in the richness of our diversity.

As we learn from community life, efforts at reconciliation are costly and demand sacrifice. We are sustained by the prayer of Christ, who desires that we might be one, as he is one with the Father so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21).

Abiding in Christ the fruit of solidarity and witness grows

Though we, as Christians, abide in the love of Christ, we also live in a creation that groans as it waits to be set free (cf. Rom 8). In the world we witness the evils of suffering and conflict. Through solidarity with those who suffer we allow the love of Christ to flow through us. The paschal mystery bears fruit in us when we offer love to our brothers and sisters and nurture hope in the world.

Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Abiding in Christ, we receive the strength and wisdom to act against structures of injustice and oppression, to fully recognize ourselves as brothers and sisters in humanity, and to be creators of a new way of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation.

The summary of the rule of life⁴ that the sisters of Grandchamp recite together each morning begins with the words “pray and work that God may reign”. Prayer and everyday life are not two separate realities but are meant to be united. All that we experience is meant to become an encounter with God.

For the eight days of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021, we propose a journey of prayer:

- Day 1: Called by God: “You did not choose me but I chose you” (Jn 15:16a)
- Day 2: Maturing internally: “Abide in me as I abide in you” (Jn 15:4a)
- Day 3: Forming one body: “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12b)

2. The Community of Grandchamp and that of the brothers of Taizé in France are bound together first of all in view of the history of their origins, but also by the fact that the sisters of Grandchamp based their Rule on the book mentioned in footnote 3.

3. Frère Roger de Taizé, *Les écrits fondateurs, Dieu nous veut heureux* (Taizé: Les Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, 2011), 95.

4. During the ecumenical celebration, we propose reciting this text together; see p. 18.

- Day 4: Praying together: “I do not call you servants any longer ... but I have called you friends” (Jn 15:15)
- Day 5: Letting oneself be transformed by the Word: “You have already been pruned by the word...” (Jn 15:3)
- Day 6: Welcoming others: “Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last” (Jn 15:16b)
- Day 7: Growing in unity: “I am the vine, you are the branches” (Jn 15:5a)
- Day 8: Reconciling with all of creation: “So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11) \

THE PREPARATION OF THE MATERIAL FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2021

The international group jointly sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches to prepare materials for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021 met in Grandchamp, Areuse, in the canton of Neuchatel, Switzerland, 15-18 September. The World Council of Churches had invited the Community of Grandchamp to choose a theme and draft a text for the Week of Prayer. The whole Community worked over the course of several months on this draft, which then formed the basis of the drafting work with the international group. Four of the sisters also worked with the international group during the September meeting. The meeting was chaired jointly by the director of the World Council of Churches Faith and Order Commission, Revd Odair Pedroso Mateus, and Revd Anthony Curren from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The Community of Grandchamp is a monastic community that brings together sisters from different churches and countries. The Community was established in the first half of the twentieth century, and from its inception had close ties with both the Community of Taizé and Abbé Paul Couturier, a seminal figure in the history of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Today there are about fifty sisters in the community, committed to seeking the path of reconciliation between Christians, across the human family, and with respect to the whole of creation.

The theme chosen by the local writing group was *Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit* (cf. Jn 15:5-9). This allowed the sisters to share the experience and wisdom of their contemplative life abiding in the love of God, and to speak about the fruit of this prayer: closer communion with one's brothers and sisters in Christ and greater solidarity with the whole of creation.

Participants in the International Team

Ms Anne-Noëlle Clément	Unité Chrétienne
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Revd Dr Mikie Roberts	Programme Executive for Spiritual Life at the WCC
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Secretarial Support was provided by Mr Alexander Freeman of the WCC.

ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION

Introduction

This celebration reflects the ways in which the sisters of Grandchamp pray. In this tradition three of the monastic prayer services – sometimes called ‘vigils’ or ‘nocturns’ in the Benedictine tradition– traditionally said during the night are combined into one evening service. In the same way, our service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is shaped by three sections, called ‘vigils’, which follow a pattern used by the community of Grandchamp.

Each vigil follows the same pattern: readings from scripture; a sung response; a time of silence; and intercessions. Each vigil also has an action reflecting its theme; these are outlined below. Each ends with the singing of *Light of God (Lumière de Dieu)*, composed by a member of the community of Grandchamp.

The first vigil is centred on the unity of the whole person and our abiding in Christ. Participants are invited to five minutes of silence. These moments are repeated throughout the celebration.

The second vigil expresses the desire to rediscover the visible unity of Christians. Anchored in the love of Christ, we turn to our neighbours and exchange with each other a sign of his peace.

The third vigil opens us up to the unity of all peoples, all creation. The action in it is inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza (see introduction). Several people are positioned around a circle, and move towards the centre. The closer we move to God - the centre - the closer we draw to each other.

There is a variety of ways in which this action may be choreographed depending on the space being used, and the traditions of those involved. The following may serve as a guide:

- Each person in the congregation will need to have an unlit candle.
- Organisers may wish to consider whether it is possible for the congregation to be “in the round” with radial aisles to facilitate this action.
- A large, raised lit candle (for example the Easter candle in many traditions) is set as the central point of a circle.
- Six to eight people from different Christian traditions surround the candle in a circle that may be outlined on the ground, or shaped by the congregation’s sitting in the round.
- Each of these people carries a small unlit candle raised high so all can see.
- During the reading accompanying the action (see p. 17), each person in the circle takes steps at the same pace towards the centre.
- When they reach the centre they light their unlit candles and return to the congregation. Everyone’s candle is then lit.
- During the lighting of the congregation’s candles, *Lumière de Dieu (Light of God)* is sung.
- Everyone holds their lighted candle through to the Dismissal. In some places, where it is appropriate and practicable, the congregations may process out of the place of worship into the wider world, with candles lit.

The litany at the beginning can be read or sung – if possible, by two different people. The psalms can also be read or sung, or replaced by a hymn related to the theme of the vigil. The responses during the prayers of intercession can be read, sung or replaced by others. The intercessions can be prolonged by adding time for free prayer. Musical settings of the litany, responses and intercessions used at Grandchamp can be found on pp. 19-22.

Hymns can be accessed and heard on the website of the Community of Grandchamp: www.grandchamp.org.

You can also listen to their common prayer online every day at: www.grandchamp.org/prier-avec-nous

Order of the Celebration

Abide in my love
and you shall bear much fruit

(cf. Jn 15:5-9)

L: *Leader*
C: *Congregation*
R: *Reader*

Invitation to prayer

Entrance Hymn

A hymn invoking the Holy Spirit (to be chosen locally)

Word of Welcome

L May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

C And also with you.

R1 Brothers and sisters in Christ, this year the theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, is: "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit".

R2 It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might come to him and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly, hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit that will bring life to all. Faced with the difference of 'the other', we risk withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in his love, and so bear much fruit.

R1 In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the call of Christ, we turn to his love, to him who is the centre of our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate relationship with God. Abiding in his love strengthens the desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

L In peace let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love.
You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine,
the beauty of each person.
And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.
We withdraw into ourselves.
Our trust in you is forsaken.
Enmity develops between us.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.
Grant us to live from your forgiveness
so that we may be together and praise your name.

Litany of praise

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,

R2 We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise among suffering and tears,

R2 We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;

R2 We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

R1 We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,

R2 We sing your praise in the midst of life and death,
the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

C You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth: glory to you!

First Vigil | Abiding in Christ: The unity of the whole person

Psalm: 103

Reading: Jn 15:1-17

Response: Ubi caritas (p. 19)

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

Intercessions

R God of love, through Christ you said to us: “You did not choose me but I chose you”. You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

C The joy of our heart is in God. (*if sung, p. 20*)

R God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

R God who gathers, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at parish meetings and local ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we might celebrate you with joy.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

R God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we pave the way for bridging rivalries and overcoming tensions.

C The joy of our heart is in God.

Action: A time of silence

R Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. In this short time we are invited to an interior silence, and to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence the action belongs to God. We are simply called to abide in God’s love, to rest in him.

Silence (*approximately 5 minutes*)

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

Second Vigil | The visible unity of Christians

Psalm: 85

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Response: There is One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism (p. 21)

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

Intercessions

R Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: "that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe".

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the church. May the walls that separate us fall.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

R Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

C Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)

Action: Sharing a Sign of Peace

R The Lord calls us to be united among ourselves. He gives us his peace and invites us to share it. Let us exchange a sign of his peace with our neighbours.

Everyone turns to those near them and offers a sign of peace, in keeping with their local context.

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

Third Vigil | The unity of all peoples and all creation

Psalm: 96

Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12

Response: O you who are beyond all things (p. 21)

Optional homily

Short silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

Intercessions

R God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities. Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope! (*if sung, p. 22*)

R Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

R O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

R Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

C God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!

Action: Moving to the centre... and out to the world

inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza

R We are called to be ministers of God's healing and reconciling love. This work can only be fruitful when we abide in God, as branches of the true vine which is Jesus Christ. As we come closer to God we draw closer to one another.

Imagine a circle drawn on the ground. Imagine that this circle is the world.

The designated persons stand up and form a circle around a central candle.

R The centre represents God, and the paths to the centre are different ways people live. When people living in this world, desiring to draw closer to God, walk toward the centre of the circle...

The persons take several steps toward the centre.

R ... to the extent that they move closer to the centre, to God, they move closer to one another. And the closer they come to one another....

The persons move to the centre together.

R ... the closer they come to God.

When the candle-bearers reach the centre they each light their candle. As they stand together at the centre all keep a time of prayer in silence.

Short Silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

The Lord's Prayer

L With the words that Jesus taught us, let us now pray together:

C Our Father...

Hymn: Lumière de Dieu (Light of God) (p. 20)

During the singing the candle-bearers return and share with the congregation the light that they have received.

R Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression. We say together:

C Pray and work that God may reign.

Throughout your day

let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things

so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes:

joy, simplicity, mercy.

These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community.

Blessing

L Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in his love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

C **May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Final hymn *(to be chosen locally)*

3. First vigil: Response for the intercession: "The joy of our hearts"

La joie de notre coeur

M+T: Grandchamp

V+R : La joie de no - tre coeur est en Dieu.

4. At the end of each vigil: "Light of God"

Lumière de Dieu

T+M : Grandchamp

1. Lu miè - re de Dieu, in - on - de la ter - re,
 2. Komm, gött - li - ches Licht, er - leuch - te die Er - de,
 3. Come light, light of God, give light to cre - a - tion,
 4. O god - de - lijk licht kom on - der ons wo - nen,
 5. Ó luz do Senh - or que vens so - bre a ter - ra
 6. Kom, Gud, med ditt ljus, och ge - nom - lys värl - den,
 7. Za - plav ce - lou zem, svě - tlo Bo - ží tvá - ře,
 8. Mwa - nga - za wa Mungu, u - ja - za un - do - go,

1. vi - si - te nos coeurs et de - meure a - vec nous.
 2. er - füll' un - sre Her - zen, nimm Woh - nung in uns.
 3. en - light - en our hearts and re - main with your world.
 4. door - dring de - ze aar - de, daal neer in ons hart.
 5. in - on - da meu ser, per - ma - ne - ce em nós.
 6. och fyll vå - ra hjär - tan, med när - va - ron din.
 7. vej - di do srd - cí a zů - stá - vej u nás.
 8. tembe - le - a mioyo yetu, na u - ka - e na - si.

5. Second vigil: Response after 1 Cor 1:10-13: "There is one Lord"

T : Eph. 4
 M : J. Berthier

There is one Lord one faith, one bap - ti - sm ;
 there is one God who is Fa - ther of all.

*Un seul Seigneur, une seule foi, un seul baptême,
 un seul Dieu qui est Père de tous.*

6. Third vigil after Rev. 7:9-12: “O you who are beyond all things”

♩ = 66

Ô toi l'au-delà de tout

O toi, l'au-de-là de tout, quel es-prit peut te sai-sir? Tous les
 ê-tres te cé-lè-brent, le dé-sir de tous a-spi-re vers toi. O

(You who are beyond all things, what mind can grasp you? All that lives celebrates you; the desire of all reaches out towards you. / Oh tú, el más allá de todo, ¿qué espíritu puede comprenderte? Todos los seres te celebran, el deseo de todos aspira a ti. / Tu che sei oltre ogni cosa, chi potrà mai afferrarti? Ogni creatura ti onora; verso te i desideri di tutti. / O du, der alles überragt, wie kann unser Verstand dich schauen? Jedes Wesen jubelt dir zu; allen gem einsam ist die Sehnsucht nach dir. / Tyś jest ponad wszystko, jakż duch Cię ogarnie? Wszystkie stworzenia wystawiają Ciebie, wszyscy Ciebie pragną. S. Grégoire de Nazianze)

Music: Taizé

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7. Third vigil: Response for the intercession: “God of peace, God of love”

Dieu de paix, Dieu d'amour, en toi notre³es-péran - ce.

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS AND PRAYERS FOR THE EIGHT DAYS

DAY 1

Called by God

“You did not choose me but I chose you”

(Jn 15:16a)

Gen 12:1-4		The call of Abraham
Jn 1:35-51		The call of the first disciples

Meditation

The start of the journey is an encounter between a human being and God, between the created and the Creator, between time and eternity.

Abraham heard the call: “Go to the land I will show you”. Like Abraham we are called to leave that which is familiar and go to the place that God has prepared in the depths of our hearts. Along the way, we become more and more ourselves, the people God has wanted us to be from the beginning. And by following the call that is addressed to us, we become a blessing for our loved ones, our neighbours, and the world.

The love of God seeks us. God became human in Jesus, in whom we encounter the gaze of God. In our lives, as in the Gospel of John, God’s call is heard in different ways. Touched by his love, we set out. In this encounter, we walk a path of transformation - the bright beginning of a relationship of love that is always started anew.

One day you understood that, without your being aware of it, a yes had already been inscribed in your innermost depths. And so you chose to go forward in the footsteps of Christ....

In silence in the presence of Christ, you heard him say, “Come, follow me; I will give you a place to rest your heart.”

The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 52

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
you seek us, you wish to offer us your friendship
and lead us to a life that is ever more complete.
Grant us the confidence to answer your call
so that we may be transformed
and become witnesses of your tenderness for the world.

DAY 2

Maturing internally “Abide in me as I abide in you” *(Jn 15:4a)*

Eph 3:14-21 | May Christ dwell in our hearts
Lk 2:41-52 | Mary treasured all these things

Meditation

The encounter with Jesus gives rise to the desire to stay with him and to abide in him: a time in which fruit matures.

Being fully human, like us Jesus grew and matured. He lived a simple life, rooted in the practices of his Jewish faith. In this hidden life in Nazareth, where apparently nothing extraordinary happened, the presence of the Father nourished him.

Mary contemplated the actions of God in her life and in that of her son. She treasured all these things in her heart. Thus, little by little, she embraced the mystery of Jesus.

We too need a long period of maturation, an entire lifetime, in order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him. Without our knowing how, the Spirit makes Christ dwell in our hearts. And it is through prayer, by listening to the word, in sharing with others, by putting into practice what we have understood, that the inner being is strengthened.

“Letting Christ descend into the depths of our being ... He will penetrate the regions of the mind and the heart, he will reach our flesh unto our innermost being, so that we too will one day experience the depths of mercy.”

The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 134

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
May we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ,
and cherish it as a secret of love.
Nourish our prayer,
enlighten our reading of Scripture,
act through us,
so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us.

DAY 3

Forming one body “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:12b)

Col 3:12-17 | Clothe yourself with compassion
Jn 13:1-15; 34-35 | Love one another

Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service. “Unless I wash you,” he said to Peter, “you have no share with me.”

Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus’ example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church.

Jesus wishes that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a community, parish or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely.

In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters. With them, you are called to live the parable of community.

The Sources of Taizé (2000) pp. 48-49

Prayer

God our Father,
you reveal to us your love through Christ
and through our brothers and sisters.
Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other
with our differences and live in forgiveness.
Grant us to live united in one body,
so that the gift that is each person comes to light.
May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ.

DAY 4

Praying together “I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends”

(Jn 15:15)

Rom 8:26-27 | The Spirit helps us in our weakness
Lk 11:1-4 | Lord, teach us to pray

Meditation

God thirsts for relationship with us. He searches for us as he searched for Adam, calling to him in the garden: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9)

In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer, intimately united to his Father, while creating friendships with his disciples and all those he met. He introduced them to that which was most precious to him: the relationship of love with his Father, who is our Father. Jesus and the disciples sang psalms together, rooted in the richness of their Jewish tradition. At other times, Jesus retired to pray alone.

Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. It can express wonder, complaint, intercession, thanksgiving or simple silence. Sometimes the desire to pray is there, but one has the feeling of not being able to do so. Turning to Jesus and saying to him, “teach me”, can pave the way. Our desire itself is already prayer.

Getting together in a group offers us support. Through hymns, words and silence, communion is created. If we pray with Christians of other traditions, we may be surprised to feel united by a bond of friendship that comes from the One who is beyond all division. The forms may vary, but it is the same Spirit that brings us together.

In the regularity of our common prayer, the love of Jesus springs up within us, we know not how. Common prayer does not exempt us from personal prayer. One sustains the other. Let us take a time each day to renew our personal intimacy with Jesus Christ.

The Rule of Taizé in French and English
Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Great Britain pp. 19 & 21

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
your entire life was prayer,
perfect harmony with the Father.
Through your Spirit, teach us to pray according to your will of love.
May the faithful of the whole world unite in intercession and praise,
and may your kingdom of love come.

DAY 5

Letting oneself be transformed by the Word

“You have already been pruned by the word...”

(Jn 15:3)

Deut 30:11-20 | The word of God is very close to you
Mt 5:1-12 | Blessed are you

Meditation

The Word of God is very close to us. It is a blessing and a promise of happiness. If we open our hearts, God speaks to us and patiently transforms that which is dying in us. He removes that which prevents the growth of real life, just as the vine grower prunes the vine.

Regularly meditating on a biblical text, alone or in a group, changes our outlook. Many Christians pray the Beatitudes every day. The Beatitudes reveal to us a happiness that is hidden in that which is unfulfilled, a happiness that lies beyond suffering: blessed are those who, touched by the Spirit, no longer hold back their tears but let them flow and thus receive consolation. As they discover the wellspring hidden within their inner landscape, the hunger for justice, and the thirst to engage with others for a world of peace, grows in them.

We are constantly called to renew our commitment to life, through our thoughts and actions. There are times when we already taste, here and now, the blessing that will be fulfilled at the end of time.

Pray and work that God may reign.

Throughout your day

Let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things

so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes,

joy, simplicity, mercy.

These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community

Prayer

Blessed are you, God our Father,
for the gift of your word in Holy Scripture.
Blessed are you for its transforming power.
Help us choose life and guide us by your Spirit,
so that we can experience the happiness which you want so much to share with us.

DAY 6

Welcoming others

“Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last”

(Jn 15:16b)

Gen 18:1-5 | Abraham hosts the angels at the Oak of Mamre
Mk 6:30-44 | Jesus' compassion for the crowds

Meditation

When we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, his love in us grows and bears fruit. Welcoming the other is a concrete way of sharing the love that is within us.

Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed those he met. He listened to them and let himself be touched by them without being afraid of their suffering.

In the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus is moved with compassion after seeing the hungry crowd. He knows that the entire human person must be nourished, and that he alone can truly satisfy the hunger for bread and the thirst for life. But he does not wish to do this without his disciples, without that little something they can give him: five loaves and two fish.

Even today he draws us to be co-workers in his unconditional care. Sometimes something as small as a kind look, an open ear, or our presence is enough to make a person feel welcome. When we offer our poor abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way.

We then experience what Abraham did, for it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance.

It is Christ himself whom we receive in a guest.

The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103

Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace?

The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 60

Prayer

Jesus Christ,
we desire to welcome fully the brothers and sisters who are with us.
You know how often we feel helpless in the face of their suffering,
yet you are always there ahead of us
and you have already received them in your compassion.
Speak to them through our words, support them through our actions,
and let your blessing rest on us all.

DAY 7

Growing in unity “I am the vine, you are the branches” (Jn 15:5a)

1 Cor 1:10-13; 3:21-23 | Is Christ divided?
Jn 17:20-23 | As you and I are one

Meditation

On the eve of his death, Jesus prayed for the unity of those the Father gave him: “that they may all be one ... so that the world may believe”. Joined to him, as a branch is to the vine, we share the same sap that circulates among us and vitalizes us.

Each tradition seeks to lead us to the heart of our faith: communion with God, through Christ, in the Spirit. The more we live this communion, the more we are connected to other Christians and to all of humanity. Paul warns us against an attitude that had already threatened the unity of the first Christians: absolutizing one’s own tradition to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ. Differences then become divisive instead of mutually enriching. Paul had a very broad vision: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3:22-23).

Christ’s will commits us to a path of unity and reconciliation. It also commits us to unite our prayer to his: “that they may all be one. . .so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians who so readily profess love for their neighbour, and yet remain divided. Make the unity of the body of Christ your passionate concern.

The Rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 13

Prayer

Holy Spirit,
vivifying fire and gentle breath, come and abide in us.
Renew in us the passion for unity
so that we may live in awareness of the bond that unites us in you.
May all who have put on Christ at their Baptism
unite and bear witness together to the hope that sustains them.

DAY 8

Reconciling with all of creation

“So that my joy may be in you,
and that your joy may be complete”

(Jn 15:11)

Col 1:15-20 | In him all things hold together
Mk 4:30-32 | As small as a mustard seed

Meditation

The hymn to Christ in the epistle to the Colossians invites us to sing the praise of God’s salvation, which encompasses the entire universe. Through the crucified and risen Christ, a path of reconciliation has been opened up; creation too is destined for a future of life and peace.

With the eyes of faith, we see that the kingdom of God is a reality that is very close but still very small, hardly visible – like a mustard seed. However, it is growing. Even in the distress of our world the Spirit of the Risen One is at work. He encourages us to become involved – with all people of good will – in tirelessly seeking justice and peace, and ensuring the earth is once again a home for all creatures.

We participate in the work of the Spirit so that creation in all its fullness may continue to praise God. When nature suffers, when human beings are crushed, the Spirit of the risen Christ – far from allowing us to lose heart – invites us to become part of his work of healing.

The newness of life that Christ brings, however hidden, is a light of hope for many. It is a wellspring of reconciliation for the whole of creation and contains a joy that comes from beyond ourselves: “so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11).

Do you wish to celebrate the newness of life that Christ gives through the Holy Spirit, and let it live in you, among us, in the church, in the world and in all of creation?

Second promise made during profession at the Community of Grandchamp

Prayer

Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us.

We thank you for your presence in us and in creation.

May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love.

In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world
where justice and peace flourish,
for the glory of your name.

THE COMMUNITY OF GRANDCHAMP AND THE ECUMENICAL EXPERIENCE OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE*

In the 1930s, a group of women of the Reformed Church of French-speaking Switzerland known as the “Ladies of Morges” rediscovered the importance of silence in listening to the word of God, taking as their model Christ, who often retired alone to pray. They hosted spiritual retreats, which they opened up to others, and gradually found a regular home for these retreats in Grandchamp, a small hamlet near Lake Neuchâtel. Subsequently, the need arose for a permanent presence for prayer and hospitality. Thus, a woman who would later become Sister Marguerite settled in Grandchamp. She was quickly joined by two other women. Geneviève Micheli, the initiator of these retreats, led this modest beginning in prayer and encouraged the first three sisters on their journey. At their request, she became the first mother of the community in 1944.

Lacking experience and having neither a service book nor a monastic rule, and since at that time there were no monastic communities in the Reformation churches, the first sisters turned to monasteries of other confessions for guidance. They opened themselves up to the treasures of these other traditions. They had to learn everything: how to live a life based on the word of God and daily contemplation, how to live in community and how to receive others in hospitality.

The first sisters suffered over the division of Christians – particularly Mother Geneviève, who therefore understood the full importance of ecumenical and theological work. However, this work had to be founded on that which was essential for her, prayer in the light of John 17:21: “that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” She sought to give her life for unity in Christ and through Christ, until the day when God would be all in all. The ecumenical calling of the community was therefore not a choice but a gift, a grace received from the beginning and born of poverty.

This grace was confirmed and stimulated by several decisive encounters. One such encounter for the fledgling community was that with Father Paul Couturier. A Catholic priest in Lyon, he was one of the pioneers of ecumenism and of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity as we know it today. Deep bonds developed between him and the first sisters, and he accompanied them faithfully on their spiritual journey, as evidenced by their correspondence. In 1940, he wrote to Mother Geneviève:

... No spiritual retreat should take place without having Christians leave it with acute suffering over separations and the determination to work for unity through fervent prayer and progressive purification ... For me, the problem of unity is primarily and fundamentally a problem of the orientation of one's inner life. Thus, you understand how much importance I attach to your request and to the work of spiritual retreats. Let us pray fervently, in other words, let us freely let Christ into us.

Another very important encounter was that with Roger Schutz, the future Brother Roger of Taizé, who visited Grandchamp in 1940. His own search was encouraged by that of the sisters with whom he would keep in contact. Bonds of communion developed over the years and these deepened in 1953 when the Community of Grandchamp adopted both the Rule of Taizé and the Taizé Office immediately upon its publication. Brother Roger wrote:

The constant search for unity harmonizes the human being; it provides thought with deeds and being with action. This equilibrium is acquired to the extent that we strive – in successive steps – to be consistent with what is best in ourselves and what is at our innermost core: Christ within us.⁵

Very soon, in conjunction with the brothers of Taizé and the Little Sisters of Jesus, the sisters of Grandchamp were also called to live out the simple presence of prayer and friendship in small communities often in underprivileged areas, particularly in Algeria, Israel, Lebanon and in working-class areas in various countries of Europe. The deep ties established with local neighbours and churches allowed them to discover a diversity of liturgical rites in the universal church and opened them up to encounters with other religions.

Grandchamp's ecumenical vocation commits it to the work of reconciliation between Christians, within the human family, and with respect to all creation. As a community the sisters of Grandchamp discovered very quickly that this

* This text is reproduced under the sole authority and responsibility of the Community of Grandchamp which wrote the source texts for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021.

5. Frère Roger, de Taizé, *Les écrits fondateurs, Dieu nous veut heureux* (Taizé: Les Ateliers et Presses de Taizé, 2011) p. 121.

vocation requires them to embody reconciliation, first and foremost within themselves and among themselves. Immediately after the Second World War, German and Dutch sisters (influenced by recent events), followed by sisters from Indonesia, Austria, Congo, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Latvia belonging to different denominations, joined the first sisters from Switzerland and France. The community currently numbers about fifty sisters from different generations.

Like all the baptized, the sisters are called to become that which they already are at a deeper level: beings in communion. How can we be such beings if we do not learn first to accept ourselves with our differences? Differences are both a gift of God and a formidable challenge. With a diversity of confessions, languages, cultures and generations the community faces the challenge of living unity in diversity in its own small way. This diversity also entails different ways of praying, thinking, doing, being in a relationship, as well as a diversity of characters. How then can one work for reconciliation except by living forgiveness day after day? Above all, this requires work on one's inner self and then work in our relationships, trusting in God's mercy. It all starts inside one's heart, where the root of all division is to be found, the deepest wounds waiting to be visited in order to receive God's healing peace. The unity between us is thus the fruit of the slow and patient transformation of our lives which the Spirit accomplishes with our consent.

Liturgical prayer is the backbone of Grandchamp's day and gathers the community four times every day. The various times of liturgical worship help the sisters internalize the life of Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The icon of the Trinity in the centre of Grandchamp's chapel welcomes the sisters in silence. It invites them to enter into the communion of love between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, to let this love grow within and flow among them and toward those who come as visitors. Then there is often an exchange of gifts. The sister's like to say that they always receive more than they give!

This welcoming has enabled surprising encounters with people who have sensitized the community to the non-violence of the gospel: Jean and Hildegard Goss, Joseph Pyronnet and Simone Pacot, who initiated the "Bethesda" sessions, a profound evangelization. At the same time, the sisters' awareness of ecology has increased in a very palpable way through the development of an organic garden, their use of environmentally friendly produce, and careful consideration of the way they feed themselves, travel, the management of goods, and what it means to live in solidarity. This is why the sisters take care to forge links and exchanges with other communities, groups, movements and committed people, particularly with the networks of religious and/or monastic communities at the local, regional, international and ecumenical levels, with ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, movements for reconciliation, justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Despite a renewal for which the sisters are grateful, like many other communities in Europe they are also confronted with the weakening of their lifeblood – ageing, which forces them to be creative. Just as the first sisters had to depend on help from others, so the sisters today depend on outside help in order to welcome others. The volunteer work that they offer is a sharing of their life of prayer and work. It is first and foremost open to young people, but it is also without age limits and open to people from all continents who are looking to give meaning to their lives, to Christians of different denominations, sisters and brothers from other communities, sometimes Jews, Muslims and adherents of other religions, and to people without any specific religious attachments. In this way the community wishes to become a house of prayer for everyone, a place of welcome, dialogue and encounter.

The poverty of other religious communities has opened up a new ministry, one which forces the sisters to listen with other religious and to discern how to respond to the calls that are being addressed to them. It is a new grace to be able to be a place of prayer and a sign of reconciliation together. Thus, for six years, one of the Grandchamp sisters has lived in France in an ecumenical sisterhood comprised of sisters from four different communities. For several years now sisters have made simple journeys, for the duration of a three-month visa, to experience life in Israel. One of the sisters joined a sisterhood of the Little Sisters of Jesus in order to share their everyday lives. A little later two other sisters experienced life in a community of Carmelites of St. Joseph. Today, some sisters are present in Taizé on an informal basis. These new experiences bring new gifts into the community.

The work of the World Council of Churches occupies an important place in Grandchamp's prayer. Every Monday evening, the sisters pray with the intercessions of the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle proposed by the WCC. The sisters have had the privilege of participating in several WCC assemblies – in Vancouver, Harare and Porto Alegre. For several years, the sisters were present at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, a small community of prayer, hospitality and friendship during the months of the graduate school.

Religious life occupies a privileged place – although very hidden – on the path of the reconciliation of the churches. It sings of the risen Christ, the gift of a communion that is always being offered, which the Holy Spirit causes to blossom in a multitude of faces and gifts. It can serve as leaven in the dough, a ferment of unity, because it takes us to the depths of the mystery of faith, on a path of continual conversion, of transformation. And in some circumstances religious life can help individuals to transcend themselves. Sometimes, and unbeknownst to us, this can have repercussions in some other part of the Body of Christ. André Louf expressed this in the following words:

In a divided church, the monastery instinctively constitutes the “no-man’s land” of the Spirit. The monastery should be an ecumenical land par excellence. It can prefigure communions that exist elsewhere only in hope. Wherever it may be, a monastery does not fundamentally belong to Orthodoxy or Catholicism, to the extent that they are still temporarily opposed. It is already a sign of the undivided church toward which the Spirit is powerfully driving us today.⁶

For more information visit: www.grandchamp.org

6. Dom André LOUF, lecture on 16 December 1979 in Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris for the inauguration of the Saint Benedict Year.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Themes 1968-2021

Since 1968, the texts have been prepared by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. From 1975, the booklet has been produced each year on the basis of a project prepared by a local ecumenical group from a different country.

- 1968 To the praise of his glory (Ephesians 1:14)
- 1969 Called to freedom (Galatians 5:13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1970 We are fellow workers for God (1 Corinthians 3:9)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Monastery of Niederaltaich, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1971 ...and the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:13)
(Preparatory meeting in Bari, Italy)
- 1972 I give you a new commandment (John 13:34)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1973 Lord, teach us to pray (Luke 11:1)
(Preparatory meeting held at the Abbey of Montserrat, Spain)
- 1974 That every tongue confess: Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:1-13)
(Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1975 God's purpose: all things in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-10)
(Material from an Australian group – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1976 We shall be like him (1 John 3:2) or, Called to become what we are
(Material from Caribbean Conference of Churches. Preparatory meeting held in Rome, Italy)
- 1977 Enduring together in hope (Romans 5:1-5)
(Material from Lebanon, in the midst of a civil war. Preparatory meeting held in Geneva)
- 1978 No longer strangers (Ephesians 2:13-22)
(Material from an ecumenical team in Manchester, England)
- 1979 Serve one another to the glory of God (1 Peter 4:7-11)
(Material from Argentina – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1980 Your kingdom come (Matthew 6:10)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Berlin, German Democratic Republic – Preparatory meeting held in Milan)
- 1981 One Spirit - many gifts - one body (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)
(Material from Graymoor Fathers, USA – Preparatory meeting held in Geneva, Switzerland)
- 1982 May all find their home in you, O Lord (Psalm 84)
(Material from Kenya – Preparatory meeting held in Milan, Italy)
- 1983 Jesus Christ - the life of the world (1 John 1:1-4)
(Material from an ecumenical group in Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Céligny (Bossey), Switzerland)
- 1984 Called to be one through the cross of our Lord (1 Corinthians 2:2 and Colossians 1:20)
(Preparatory meeting held in Venice, Italy)
- 1985 From death to life with Christ (Ephesians 2:4-7)
(Material from Jamaica – Preparatory meeting held in Grandchamp, Switzerland)
- 1986 You shall be my witnesses (Acts 1:6-8)
(Material from Yugoslavia (Slovenia) – Preparatory meeting held in Yugoslavia)

- 1987 United in Christ - a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-6:4a)
(Material from England – Preparatory meeting held in Taizé, France)
- 1988 The love of God casts out fear (1 John 4:18)
(Material from Italy – Preparatory meeting held in Pinerolo, Italy)
- 1989 Building community: one body in Christ (Romans 12:5-6a)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Whaley Bridge, England)
- 1990 That they all may be one...That the world may believe (John 17)
(Material from Spain – Preparatory meeting held in Madrid, Spain)
- 1991 Praise the Lord, all you nations! (Psalm 117 and Romans 15:5-13)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Rotenburg an der Fulda, Federal Republic of Germany)
- 1992 I am with you always... Go, therefore (Matthew 28:16-20)
(Material from Belgium – Preparatory meeting held in Bruges, Belgium)
- 1993 Bearing the fruit of the Spirit for Christian unity (Galatians 5:22-23)
(Material from Zaire – Preparatory meeting held near Zurich, Switzerland)
- 1994 The household of God: called to be one in heart and mind (Acts 4:23-37)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Dublin, Republic of Ireland)
- 1995 Koinonia: communion in God and with one another (John 15:1-17)
(Material from Faith and Order – Preparatory meeting held in Bristol, England)
- 1996 Behold, I stand at the door and knock (Revelation 3:14-22)
(Material from Portugal – Preparatory meeting held in Lisbon, Portugal)
- 1997 We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:20)
(Material from Nordic Ecumenical Council – Preparatory meeting held in Stockholm, Sweden)
- 1998 The Spirit helps us in our weakness (Romans 8:14-27)
(Material from France – Preparatory meeting held in Paris, France)
- 1999 He will dwell with them as their God, they will be his peoples (Revelation 21:1-7)
(Material from Malaysia – Preparatory meeting held in Monastery of Bose, Italy)
- 2000 Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-14)
(Material from the Middle East Council of Churches – Preparatory meeting held La Verna, Italy)
- 2001 I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-6)
(Material from Romania – Preparatory meeting held at Vulcan, Romania)
- 2002 For with you is the fountain of life (Psalm 36:5-9)
(Material CEEC and CEC – Preparatory meeting near Augsburg, Germany)
- 2003 We have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:4-18)
(Material churches in Argentina – Preparatory meeting at Los Rubios, Spain)
- 2004 My peace I give to you (John 14:23-31; John 14:27)
(Material from Aleppo, Syria – Preparatory meeting in Palermo, Sicily)
- 2005 Christ, the one foundation of the church (1 Corinthians 3:1-23)
(Material from Slovakia – Preparatory meeting in Piestany, Slovakia)
- 2006 Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them (Matthew 18:18-20)
(Material from Ireland – Preparatory meeting held in Prosperous, Co. Kildare, Ireland)
- 2007 He even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak (Mark 7:31-37)
(Material from South Africa – Preparatory meeting held in Faverges, France)
- 2008 Pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:(12a) 13b-18)
(Material from USA – Preparatory meeting held in Graymoor, Garrison, USA)
- 2009 That they may become one in your hand (Ezekiel 37:15-28)
(Material from Korea – Preparatory meeting held in Marseille, France)
- 2010 You are witnesses of these things (Luke 24:48)
(Material from Scotland – Preparatory meeting held in Glasgow, Scotland)
- 2011 One in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayer (cf. Acts 2:42)
(Material from Jerusalem – Preparatory meeting held in Saydnaya, Syria)

- 2012 We will all be changed by the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:51-58)
(Material from Poland – Preparatory meeting held in Warsaw, Poland)
- 2013 What does God require of us? (cf. Micah 6:6-8)
(Material from India – Preparatory meeting held in Bangalore, India)
- 2014 Has Christ been divided? (1 Corinthians 1:1-17)
(Material from Canada – Preparatory meeting held in Montréal, Canada)
- 2015 Jesus said to her: Give me to drink (John 4:7)
(Material from Brazil – Preparatory meeting held in São Paulo, Brazil)
- 2016 Called to proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord (cf. 1 Peter 2:9)
(Material from Latvia – Preparatory meeting held in Rīga, Latvia)
- 2017 Reconciliation - The love of Christ compels us (2 Cor 5:14-20)
(Material from Germany – Preparatory meeting held in Wittenberg, Germany)
- 2018 Your right hand, O Lord, glorious in power (Ex 15:6)
(Material from the Caribbean – Preparatory meeting held in Nassau, Bahamas)
- 2019 Justice and only justice you shall pursue (Deut 16:18-20)
(Material from Indonesia – Preparatory meeting held in Jakarta, Indonesia)
- 2020 They showed us unusual kindness (Acts 28:2)
(Material from Malta – Preparatory meeting held in Rabat, Malta)
- 2021 Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit (cf. John 15:5-9)
(Material from Community of Grandchamp – Preparatory meeting held at Areuse, Switzerland)

KEY DATES IN THE HISTORY OF THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

- c. 1740 In Scotland a Pentecostal movement arose, with North American links, whose revivalist message included prayers for and with all churches.
- 1820 The Rev. James Haldane Stewart publishes “Hints for the General Union of Christians for the Outpouring of the Spirit”.
- 1840 The Rev. Ignatius Spencer, a convert to Roman Catholicism, suggests a “Union of Prayer for Unity”.
- 1867 The First Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops emphasizes prayer for unity in the Preamble to its Resolutions.
- 1894 Pope Leo XIII encourages the practice of a Prayer Octave for Unity in the context of Pentecost.
- 1908 First observance of the “Church Unity Octave” initiated by the Rev. Paul Wattson.
- 1926 The Faith and Order movement begins publishing “Suggestions for an Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity”.
- 1935 Abbé Paul Couturier of France advocates the “Universal Week of Prayer for Christian Unity” on the inclusive basis of prayer for “the unity Christ wills by the means he wills”.
- 1958 Unité Chrétienne (Lyon, France) and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches begin co-operative preparation of materials for the Week of Prayer.
- 1964 In Jerusalem, Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I prayed together Jesus’ prayer “that they all may be one” (John 17).
- 1964 The Decree on Ecumenism of Vatican II emphasizes that prayer is the soul of the ecumenical movement and encourages observance of the Week of Prayer.
- 1966 The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity [now known as the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity] begin official joint preparation of the Week of Prayer material.
- 1968 First official use of Week of Prayer material prepared jointly by Faith and Order and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.
- 1975 First use of Week of Prayer material based on a draft text prepared by a local ecumenical group. An Australian group was the first to take up this plan in preparing the 1975 initial draft.
- 1988 Week of Prayer materials were used in the inaugural worship for The Christian Federation of Malaysia, which links the major Christian groupings in that country.
- 1994 International group preparing text for 1996 included representatives from YMCA and YWCA.
- 2004 Agreement reached that resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity be jointly published and produced in the same format by Faith and Order (WCC) and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (Catholic Church).
- 2008 Commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (Its predecessor, the Church Unity Octave, was first observed in 1908).
- 2017 Marking the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the materials for the Week of Prayer in 2017 were prepared by Christians in Germany.