
NFWM General Order of Worship

– Advocacy and the Suffering Prophet –



National Farm Worker Ministry Resources

Note: Please adapt this lectionary resource for your denominational and local church context. Though it is specifically for churches or Christian groups that have some background with farm worker advocacy, it could also be used for educating groups newer to farm worker advocacy and justice issues.

These resources and the structure provided should be re-worked for your congregational context. Please add hymn locations should you choose to utilize the ones that are available in your hymnals. Know that generally several song options are available for you to pick from.

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Prelude/Opening Music:

How Great Thou Art (Stuart K. Hine)

Once A Woman Seeking Water (Carolyn Winfrey Gillette)

Folk Song:

I Pity the Poor Immigrant (Woody Guthrie / Bob Dylan)

Pastures of Plenty (Woody Guthrie)

Reading of Jeremiah 15:10-21:

[A copy of the text is available at the end of this resource.]

Taize Hymn (*O Lord, Hear My Prayer*):

[Sung three times acapella.]

O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer. When I call, answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer. Come and listen to me.

Seeds for a Homily/Sermon:

[Should you like to use a sermon, please visit our website. We have the beginning of exegetical work available on Jeremiah's lament (15:10-21) here: <http://nfwm.org/sample-sermons/>. If you use it, please adapt it to your congregational context!]

Taize Hymn, (*Take, O Take Me as I Am*):

[Sung three times acapella.]

Take, O, Take me as I am, summon out what I shall be, set your seal upon my heart, and live in me.

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Prayer:

[Have a volunteer, minister, or church leader pray the following collect.]

“O Lord,

Like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, we consume your words. We find joy in your living Word, in the form of your Son. This Word reminds us to “welcome one another” like Christ (Romans 15:7) and to seek freedom of all people (Galatians 3:26-28). We beg you to remember farm workers, isolated in the fields. Build political, religious, interpersonal, and union structures that bring protection as you made “a fortified wall of bronze” for Judah (Jer. 15:20). Anoint the hearers today to become your spokespeople. Enabled by your Holy Spirit, let us become the

people speaking truth in a world where the wicked silence and oppress farm workers. Do not allow their ruthlessness and violence to continue. Amen.”

Communion/Eucharist/Lord’s Supper According to Your Tradition:

[Tie this practice into the homily/sermon from above. Working with the theme of suffering, remind participants that Jesus suffered greatly; the night before his death, he shared a meal with his disciples. This same meal resonates with farm workers, as they are the ones who suffer to prepare the grains and grapes that eventually become the supper. Just as God creates justice for its people, our participation in this sacrament allows us to promote divine justice during the worship service. If you are able to place local grapes and wheat/grains on the table (the products of farm worker labor) it will enhance the images of the elements (the cup and the bread). Please follow your church’s and/or denominational practices for this practice.]

Hymn:

How Great Thou Art (Stuart K. Hine)

Once A Woman Seeking Water (Carolyn Winfrey Gillette)

Prayer for Renewal:

[Prayer comes from the NFWM “Prayer” website (<http://nfwm.org/2009/05/prayers/>); if you would prefer another prayer, please go to our website or integrate one from your tradition.]

“O God of Peace and Love, Renew our minds and our wills that we may sow love instead of hatred, Peace instead of violence, Equality instead of dominance.

O God of Mercy and Justice. Forgive us when we turn into pieces, forgive us when we say we love you, but do not feed your people. Forgive us when, for the sake of so-called security and development, we make life for others a series of torture, misery and death.

O God of Song, Dance and Tears of life, Enable us to work with love. Enlighten us to walk with faith. Empower us to peace with justice. Praise and thanks to our God. Hope and Peace to all!

Amen.”

Benediction

Bless the people in the church with encouragement to get involved with farm worker rights and issues that affect their food and their neighbors. Encourage parishioners to read more of our materials, join us at an upcoming event (subject to timing) and to pray for farm workers.

Additional Ideas

Perform a Church-Wide Activity

- Put pressure on Prima to be accountable for its workers (more information on our website: <http://nfwm.org/2014/10/take-action-hold-safeway-accountable-selling-prima/>).
- Hold an educational seminar about farm worker rights and historical issues (see website for “Bless the Hands” curriculum)
- Plan a church-wide feast and donation event (e.g. a “Harvest of Justice” program) with congregants to educate them further (see <http://nfwm.org/2009/06/planning-a-harvest-of-justice/>).
- Take an offering on behalf of the NFWM to connect financial giving and justice.
- Hand out shopping guides (<http://nfwm.org/take-action/union-label-shopping-guide/>; for wallet size versions, please contact nfwm@nfwm.org).

Use Alternate Songs About Farm Workers

Pick and sing various songs in numerous languages to connect with the music of farm worker movements; please see <http://nfwm.org/education-center/faithbasedresources/farm-worker-songs/>.

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Jeremiah 15:10-21 NRSV

¹⁰ My mother, I wish I had never been born!
 The whole land opposes me.
 They fight against me.
 I haven't made loans to anyone.
 And I haven't borrowed anything.
 But everyone curses me anyway.

¹¹ The LORD said,
 "Jeremiah, I will keep you safe for a good purpose.
 I will make your enemies ask you to pray for them.
 They will make their appeal to you
 when they are in great trouble.

¹² "People of Judah, the armies of Babylon
 will come from the north.
 They are as strong as iron and bronze.
 Can anyone break their power?

¹³ I will give away your wealth and your treasures.
 Your enemies will carry off everything.
 And they will not pay anything for it.
 That will happen because you have sinned so much.
 You have done it throughout your country.

¹⁴ I will make you slaves to your enemies.
 You will serve them in a land
 you have not known about before.
 My anger will start a fire
 that will burn you up."

¹⁵ LORD, you understand how much I'm suffering.
 Show concern for me. Take care of me.
 Pay back those who are trying to harm me.
 You are patient. Don't take my life away from me.
 Think about how much shame I suffer because of you.

¹⁶ When I received your words, I ate them.
 They filled me with joy.
 My heart took delight in them.
 LORD God who rules over all,
 I belong to you.

¹⁷ I never sat around with those who go to wild parties.
 I never had a good time with them.
 I sat alone because you had put your powerful hand on me.
 Your anger against sin was burning inside me.

¹⁸ Why does my pain never end?
 Why is my wound so deep?
 Why can't I ever get well?

To me you are like a stream that runs dry.
You are like a spring that doesn't have any water.
¹⁹ So the LORD says to Jeremiah,
“If you turn away from your sins, I will heal you.
And then you will be able to serve me.
Speak words that are worthy, not worthless.
Then you will be speaking for me.
Let these people turn to you.
But you must not turn to them.
²⁰ I will make you like a wall to them.
I will make you like a strong bronze wall.
The people will fight against you.
But they will not overcome you.
I am with you.
I will save you,”
announces the LORD.
²¹ “I will save you from the hands of evil people.
I will set you free from those who treat you badly.”