

## Prayers for a just and compassionate federal budget

July 2011

**Leader:** We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. As Congress and the administration consider different approaches to reducing the deficit, we are here to make visible the potential impact of the budget negotiations on our country's most vulnerable populations and on Earth herself. We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. To eliminate vital domestic and international programs that respond to the needs of poor people and our planet is wrong.

### **Reading from Jeremiah 6:**

Thus says Yahweh:  
Stand at the crossroads and look.  
Ask about the ancient paths.  
Ask what the good way is and walk that way.  
Then you will find peace within yourselves.  
But the people say, "We will not walk it."  
I also appointed sentinels for you:  
"Listen for the sound of the trumpet."

But you said, "We will not listen."  
Therefore, hear this, you nations,  
And understand, you witnesses  
What will happen to such obstinate people!  
Hear this, earth:  
I am about to bring disaster upon my people –  
The fruit of their own schemes.  
For they did not heed my words;  
They rejected my instruction.

**All: Our God hears the cry of those who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

### **Reading from Isaiah 61:**

The Spirit of Yahweh is upon me  
For Yahweh has anointed me:  
God has sent me to bring good news to  
those who are poor;  
To heal broken hearts;  
To proclaim release to those held captive;  
And liberation to those in prison

To announce a year of favor from Yahweh  
And the day of God's vindication;  
To comfort all who mourn,  
To provide for those who grieve in Zion –  
To give them a wreath of flowers instead of ashes,  
The oil of gladness instead of tears,  
A cloak of praise instead of despair.

**All: Our God hears the cry of those who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real

needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Left side:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Right side:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live. Amen Amen**

(Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

## **Prayers for a just and compassionate federal budget July 2011**

**Leader:** In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful: We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget.

**Leader:** As Congress and the Administration consider different approaches to reducing the deficit, we are here to make visible the potential impact of the budget negotiations on our country's most vulnerable populations and on Earth itself. We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. To eliminate vital domestic and international programs that respond to the needs of poor people and our planet is wrong.

**Leader:** The Holy Qur'an reads: "Let there become of you a community that shall call for righteousness, enjoin justice and forbid evil (3:104)." And so we have gathered to strive to be that community and to seek righteousness and justice within our nation's budget.

**All: God, we pray for a just and compassionate budget.**

**Leader:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, and from poverty.**

**Leader:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare.**

**Leader:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger.**

**Leader:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem.**

**Leader:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world.**

**Leader:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation.**

**Leader:** The Holy Qur'an reads: "Whatever of your wealth you spend shall [first] be for your parents, and for the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer; and whatever good you do, verily, God has full knowledge thereof. (2:215)"

**All: God, we pray for a just and compassionate budget.**

**Leader:** The Holy Qur'an reads: "O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to God, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being God-conscious. And remain conscious of God: verily, God is aware of all that you do." (5:8)

**All: God, it is You we worship, and it is You we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path, and guide our nation toward a budget that is just and compassionate, according to your sacred command. Amen.**

(Created by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns; adapted by the Islamic Society of North America.)

**Prayers for a just and compassionate federal budget**  
**Prepared by Network: A Catholic Social Justice Lobby; July 13, 2011**

**Leader:** We are gathered on Capitol Hill as people of faith to pray for a just resolution to the current fiscal and debt impasse. Everyday partisan posturing becomes more extreme and it seems to us that some politicians are more interested in winning than in solving the problems of our nation in a way that promotes the common good. Each of our faiths teaches that the way forward is in community and that the measure of our greatness is how we care for those who are struggling. It is this ideal that was written into the preamble to our Constitution and it is to that standard that we aspire. We know that it is not easy to live up to that vision. So we gather in prayer for the President and all the negotiators, all members of Congress, and ourselves that our hearts might be open and our wills strengthened to act for the common good.

**READING:**

**The Entrance of Sin, by Scott Cairns**

*The man said, "The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." Gen. 3:12*

Yes, there was a tree, and upon it, among the wax leaves, an order of fruit which hung plentifully, glazed with dew of a given morning. And there had been some talk off and on—nothing specific—about forgoing the inclination to eat of it. But sin had very little to do with this or with any outright prohibition.

For sin had made its entrance long before the serpent spoke, long before the woman and the man had set their teeth to the pale, stringy flesh, which was, it turns out, also quite without flavor. Rather, sin had come in the midst of an evening stroll, when the woman had reached to take the man's hand and he withheld it.

In this way, the beginning of our trouble came to the garden almost without notice. And in later days, as the man and the woman wandered idly about their paradise, as they continued to enjoy the sensual pleasures of food and drink and spirited coupling, even as they sat marveling at the approach of evening and the more lush approach of sleep, they found within themselves a developing habit of resistance.

One supposes that even then, this new taste for turning away might have been overcome, but that is assuming the two had found the result unpleasant. The beginning of loss was this: every time some manner of beauty was offered and declined, the subsequent isolation each conceived was irresistible.

**PAUSE FOR REFLECTION**

**LEADER:**

It is this very turning away that is at the heart of this budget struggle. We as a nation forget that the root of our wellbeing is in community. We would rather pull away into our special interests or political ideology. But our faiths lead us to see that we and all of creation are one. My faith describes this unity as being one body. And as one body we are responsible to each other for care of that body. And so in that effort of coming together to pray for the whole body, let us open our hearts and beg God's Spirit to move among us in order to come to a new awareness of a constructive way forward as we pray with a special awareness of the needs of women in our society.

**READER:** Let us pray for women of our country who work in low wage jobs caring for children, the sick, those who are in need and would bear the brunt of budget cuts to the safety net.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**READER:** Let us pray for women ages 18 to 64 who make up 75% of the adult beneficiaries of Medicaid for their healthcare and who would bear the brunt of budget cuts to Medicaid.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**READER:** Let us pray for single mothers who are disproportionately likely to be poor and rely on safety net programs and are more likely to be employed by these very programs and who would bear the brunt of cuts to SNAP, TANF, SSI, Pell grants and other programs.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**READER:** Let us pray for elderly women who tend to be poorer, live longer and have more health care needs than men and therefore rely on Medicare and Medicaid for their health insurance and who would bear the brunt of cuts to these programs.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**READER:** Let us pray for the President, Congressional leadership and all of the members of the House and Senate that they will turn away from individualism and isolation and open their minds and hearts to the needs of all of our people, not just their campaign contributors or wealth supporters.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**READER:** Finally, let us pray for ourselves. Open our ears that we might hear your word O Spirit. Open our eyes that we might see what needs to be done to address this time of impasse. Strengthen our will that we might act with integrity and compassion.

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

**LEADER:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All:** Give us your vision.

**LEADER:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All:** Give us your courage.

**LEADER:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All:** May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live. Amen Amen

**RESPONSE:** (Sung) Our God hears the cry of the poor, blessed be our God!

## WISC Prayer Vigil for a Just and Compassionate Budget

Thursday July 14, 2011

**Leader:** God in the Spirit calls us by grace to be renewed in the image of our Creator, that we may be one in divine love for the world.

**Leader:** Today is the day God cares for the integrity of creation, wills the healing and wholeness of all life, weeps at the plunder of earth's goodness.

**All: *And so shall we***

**Leader:** Today is the day God embraces all hues of humanity, delights in diversity and difference, favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends.

**All: *And so shall we***

**Leader:** Today is the day God cries with the masses of starving people, despises growing disparity between rich and poor, demands justice for workers in the marketplace.

**All: *And so shall we***

**Leader:** Today is the day God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world's warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly.

**All: *And so shall we***

**Leader:** Today is the day God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace, celebrates where justice and mercy embrace, exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb.

**All: *And so shall we***

**All: *Today is the day God brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, gives sight to the blind and sets the oppressed free. And so shall we.***

**Prayer:** Loving and compassionate God, today we are indeed called to bring good news to the poor – to stand with those whose cries too often go unheard in the halls of power. Together we pray that justice and compassion might enter into the hearts and minds of our elected leaders.

God you have entrusted to our care an amazing and abundant creation. Help us to challenge those who peddle notions of false scarcity, pitting neighbor against neighbor, and who worship at the altar of individualism that is contrary to your call for community.

Instead give us courage to embrace your economy of abundance and strive for a just community where all have the opportunity to live fully into their potential and share in the plenty that you have provided.

### **Prayers of the people:**

**Leader:** Our nation's budget is a testament to our shared priorities – showing clearly who and what we value as a people. We recognize and affirm the vital role of governments in ordering society and enabling us to do together that which none of us could do alone. The burdens and benefits of our common life together must be shared among us and our laws must serve to overcome inequalities not institutionalize them.

Too often the conversations around budget decisions focus on programs and numbers. And yet we know that connected to the programs are people and behind the numbers are the names of our brothers and sisters – beloved children of God.

Today we pause to lift up before God those who would be hurtmost by proposals to further tear at our social safety net while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice.

For all those who hunger, we pray:

God we give thanks for the work and ministry of our brothers and sisters who give food to those who hunger. We also give thanks for hands and hearts of those whom you have moved to enact programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other vital anti-hunger programs which help keep over 40 million people in the United States from going hungry.

For all those who seek employment, we pray:

God we lift to your care the millions of our brothers and sisters who are unemployed and under-employed. You know the names of each of the 14.1 million of our brothers and sisters who are looking for work. Today we especially ask that you give comfort and strength to the 6.3 million who have been unemployed for 27 weeks or more and pray our elected leaders will take action to alleviate their suffering.

For all those who are suffering illness, we pray:

God we ask that your healing presence be with those whose health is ailing. We give thanks for doctors, nurses, family members, and all who comfort the sick. We pray that our elected leaders will have courage to protect critical health programs such as Medicaid from budget cuts and strengthen global efforts to eradicate pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

For all children, we pray:

God we grieve the fact that every 32 seconds a child is born into poverty in the United States. Help us remain vigilant in our efforts to secure a safe and healthy future for all your children.

For all those struggling with poverty, we pray:

God we have so mismanaged your great abundance that we now live in a world where over 1.4 billion of our global neighbors live in extreme poverty. Help our elected leaders construct pathways to shared prosperity where all your children can live lives of dignity and hope.

**All: Gracious and merciful God hear our prayers. We know that you are already at work in the places of deep suffering in this world. Strengthen our courage – and the courage of our elected leaders – to meet you there and join in creating the just world you envision. May the budget decisions being made reflect the particular concern you show for those on the margins of society – placing them at the center of our shared vision for a just and compassionate budget. Amen.**



## Order of Worship

July 15, 2011

### Prayer Service for the WISC Community and Others, Prepared by the PC(USA)

*Prayers for a just budget that will create jobs and provide just compensation for all*

- Gathering Music (over)
- Prayer Litany

Reader 1: Why, O Lord, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor – let them be caught in the schemes they have devised. (Psalm 10:1-2)

**Community:** *The moral test of today's globalizing economy is whether it serves the human enterprise and the larger creation.*

Reader 2: We affirm that. . . God, who made heaven and earth, ... who keeps faith forever; ... executes justice for the oppressed; [and] ... gives food to the hungry. (Psalm 146:5-7)

**Community:** *As people encounter joblessness in our country, we pray that help, hope and healing are on the way. We ask that you move Congress and the President to see beyond politics to create jobs and a healthy economy that does not forget people living in poverty.*

Reader 3: . . . what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

**Community:** *Our love for the Creator of all life is the beginning of love of self and love for others. We are called to live in humble submission and service to our Creator. We pray that decision-makers find humility, so that justice and kindness may be hallmarks of their service.*

Reader 4: Those who oppress the poor insult their Maker, but those who are kind to the needy honor God. The wicked are overthrown by their evil-doing, but the righteous find a refuge in their integrity. (Proverbs 14:31-32)

**Community:** *We stand in solidarity with those who are unemployed, underemployed, without training, without education, and in need of support in this time. We pray that love for people will override political posturing. God of the ages, we ask for help in this time of trouble.*

**Music – Prayers of the People** (over)

Closing Prayer

Let the peace of God be with you! Let us pursue justice together in the name of the one who gives life, health, strength and prosperity.

**Community:** *Amen, Amen and Amen!*

## Seek Ye First

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God  
And God's righteousness  
And all these things shall be added unto  
you  
Allelu, Alleluia

Ask and it shall be given unto you  
Seek and ye shall find  
Knock and the door shall be opened unto  
you  
Allelu, Alleluia

## Prayers of the People

*This prayer is based on the idea of  
solidarity with those who are suffering.  
While we may not be hungry, homeless,  
without healthcare, etc., we are praying  
with those who are because if one  
member of the Body of Christ suffers, all  
suffer. If one has no healthcare, all are  
without healthcare. (I Cor 12:26)*

We are hungry, oh, we are hungry  
We are hungry, oh, we are hungry  
We are man, woman, we are children and  
oh, we are hungry

We are homeless...

### Chorus:

Let the rains go, let the healing river flow  
Let justice roll like water  
Let the day begin when new life enters in  
And let your Kingdom come

We have no healthcare...

We are praying...

## Today We All Are Called to be Disciples of the Lord

1. Today we are all called to be  
Disciples of the Lord,  
To help to set the captives free,  
Make plowshare out of sword,  
To feed the hungry, quench their thirst,  
Make love and peace our fast,  
To serve the poor and homeless first,  
Our ease and comfort last.

2. God made the world and at its birth  
Ordained our human race  
To live as stewards of the earth,  
Responding to God's grace.  
But we are vain and sadly proud,  
We sow not peace but strife,  
Our discord spreads a deadly cloud  
That threatens all of life.

3. Pray justice may come rolling down  
As in a mighty stream,  
With righteousness in field and town  
To cleanse us and redeem.  
For God is longing to restore  
An earth where conflicts cease,  
A world that was created for  
A harmony of peace.

4. May we in service to our God  
Act out the living word,  
And walk the road the saints have trod  
Till all have seen and heard.  
As stewards of the earth may we  
Give thanks in one accord  
To God who calls us all to be  
Disciples of the Lord.

# *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

**Led By Ecumenical Advocacy Days and Church World Service  
Monday, July 18th at 12:30 pm**

**Leader:** We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the U.S. and abroad from budget cuts. We are in solidarity with more than 25 heads of communion and national religious organizations who wrote Congressional leaders and President Obama last week saying, "We share our grave concern and dismay that the ongoing conversations and negotiations regarding our nation's budget may yield an outcome that places individuals and families struggling with poverty at risk of even further hardship while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice." We believe that the federal budget is a moral document, and we pray for a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

## **A Reading from the Prophets: Isaiah 58:1-12**

"Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinances of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. You ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairers of the breach, and restorers of streets to live in."

**Leader:** Through Isaiah, God challenges a nation that on the one hand professes a delight in seeking God and knowing God's ways, yet serves self interests, oppresses workers, neglects poor and hungry people and quarrels to no good end. Isaiah calls the nation to a righteous practice that loosens the bonds of injustice, lets the oppressed go free, and breaks every yoke.

**ALL: Oh God, may our nation hear your word.**

## **A Reading from the New Testament: Luke 4:14-21**

"Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.'"

**ALL: Oh God, may we hear your word and be filled with the power of your Spirit.**

**A Litany for a Faithful National Budget**  
(Prepared by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

**All: Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

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**Leader:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

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**Leader:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

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**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Left side:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Right side:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live.**

**ALL: Amen.**

WISC Prayer Vigil  
Columban Center for Advocacy & Outreach  
Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Let us close our eyes and center ourselves, becoming aware of the creation around you. Feel the hot sun on your skin, the sun that is the source of life; feel the earth, & all of her elements, beneath your feet; feel the wind that blows through your hair and sustains your breath, the air that flows in & out of your lungs; and become aware of all of God's creatures that are a part of God's circle of life.

Loving and compassionate God, today we are called to bring good news to your creation - the creation that is often used and abused with no voice or consideration of its sacredness and fragility. United we pray that the hearts and minds of our elected leaders be converted to the integrity of the Earth & all that inhabits it, which you have left in our care. We pray that they are guided by justice and compassion, instead of greed and pride, so that we may be good stewards of your sacred creation.

The Time Is Now

**All:**

Deep within us, God,  
there is a place that knows.  
You have put it there.

**Leader:**

Living on the surface,  
we have forgotten to go there,  
where we know You  
where we know Earth  
where we know life and  
one another.

**All:**

It is time now  
to remember who we are  
and why we are here

**Leader:**

It is time now  
to see with our eyes, disintegration  
of the web of life  
to hear with our ears, messages  
from plants, prairies, trees, forests, wetlands  
all ecosystems  
animals, fish, birds, insects  
air, waters, land

suffering people  
And know with all our hearts and minds  
What We Must Do.

**All:**

**It is time now to wake up  
to the peril we have created  
in our not knowing,  
in our separation.**

**Left Side:**

Generous, ever-creative, loving God,  
Bless us with grace and strength to come back to wholeness  
Empower us to see and hear with clarity and without fear  
That we may receive knowledge and inspiration

**Right Side:**

To transform our way of living into harmonious interconnection with all life  
to live with enough, not excess  
to conserve precious resources for future life, not squander  
to restore the cycle of life, not destroy

**All:**

**That the One Body might have life  
And life to the full  
In the spiritual freedom of life without separation  
from that which gives us life.**

To find balance, contentment, peace

Amen.

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## Prayer for our Leaders

### *Prayers of Petition*

Carissa:

Lord, I offer a pray for our leaders. That they are guided by your will in taking care of the most in need and the most vulnerable, in particular your beautiful & sacred creation. We pray to the lord...

All: Lord here our prayer!

Taaremon:

God we thank you for the beautiful trees that give us fresh air, the lakes that give us water and quench our thirst, and the sound of birds that give us peaceful harmony. We thank you for the beauty that we see around us which reminds us of your presence among us.

Help us to become more and more aware of the problems around us and in our world at large. Give us the foresight and open-mindedness to make decisions that will benefit our environment so that the next generation will continue to live happily. Give us the knowledge to make the best choices, to appreciate nature, to encourage others to work together and to live simply.

God you know our weaknesses, please help us change our habits.

We pray to the lord...

Dylan:

We pray for those affected by the oil spill along the Yellowstone River, and that those in power will work to ensure that similar instances will not occur."

We pray to the lord...

Amy:

Creator of All Goodness, we ask you for ears to hear the cry of the wounded Earth with humble hearts and minds humble open to receiving the wisdom of Creation as we seek to repair our relationship with the natural world. Let us pray.

Julie:

For all of us gathered here today, that we are strengthened in our commitment to advocate for environmental justice, even in the face of extreme budget cuts. We pray to the Lord...

## Prayers for a Just and Compassionate Budget: July 20, 2011

### “Working Together to End Hunger”

*Worship Prepared by the National Council of Churches USA for the WISC Community*

#### **I'm Gonna Eat at the Welcome Table**

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table one of these days,  
Hallelujah!

I'm gonna eat at the welcome table,  
I'm gonna eat at the welcome table one of these days.

(All Sisters, All Brothers, All Children)

#### **Litany**

One: For the pregnant mother who works the night shift to feed her family, and the about 400,000 other pregnant mothers whose WIC food assistance might end.

**Many: She's gonna eat at the welcome table.**

One: For the boy who cannot concentrate on his homework because his family had to skip dinner, and for all the children whose families could lose about \$150 worth of food stamps per month.

**Many: He's gonna eat at the welcome table.**

One: For the one in four Latino and African American families that struggle to put food on the table, and for one in seven U.S. families overall.

**Many: Everybody's gonna eat at the welcome table.**

One: For our families, friends, and faith communities who go hungry or serve hungry people. At this time I invite you to pray silently for them or speak their names out loud.

**Many: We're all gonna eat at the welcome table. Amen.**

**Scripture** Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.  
(Proverbs 31:8-9)



## **Prayer of Confession**

(Adapted from UMH 893)

One: God, we confess our day to day failure to be truly just and compassionate.

**Many: God, we confess to you.**

One: God, we confess we often fail to love with all we have and are, often because we are afraid of taking a risk.

**Many: God, we confess to you.**

One: God, we confess our selfishness and lack of sympathy.

**Many: We have stifled generosity and left little for others.**

One: Spirit, speak to us. Help us listen to your word of forgiveness, and go forth with new hearts. Amen.

## **Words of Motivation** (Fighting Poverty with Faith)

### **Word of Assurance and Sending:**

**Many: May God hear our words and forgive, yet deny us an easy peace. May God grant us instead, passion, a revolutionary passion that spills over into the world in acts of compassion and love, justice and integrity. Let us go in the spirit and way of God, who is the source of our strength and passion. Amen.**

## **I'm Gonna Live So God Can Use Me**

### *African-American Spiritual*

I'm gonna live so God can use me  
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

I'm gonna live so God can use me  
anywhere, Lord, anytime!

(Work, Pray, Sing)

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*You can access the Fighting Poverty with Faith action toolkit at:  
<http://fightingpovertywithfaith.com/f2/actiontoolkits/>*

## **Prayer vigil for a just and compassionate federal budget, which protects older Americans**

*Led by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thursday, July 21, 2011*

**Leader 1:** As people of faith, we are called by God to care for older adults and vulnerable individuals. Even as we work to fulfill our responsibility as faithful stewards, we understand there is an important role for local, state and federal governments as well to end poverty and hunger, which none of us can accomplish alone. Regular income from Social Security prevents 13 million senior citizens from falling into poverty. Today, 7.5 percent of U.S. senior citizens are at risk of hunger and many rely on help from SNAP and local food pantries.

**Leader 2:** We gather to pray for the budget negotiation process to be just and morally faithful. As Congress considers options to reduce future deficits, they should reject proposals that would establish arbitrary spending caps. Furthermore, any deficit reduction must be thoughtfully constructed to protect services for low-income and vulnerable populations and allow Congress the flexibility to reach these targets in a way that preserves our shared commitment to justice for all God's children, including older Americans.

**Litany for Aging** (adaptation) By Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.

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**Leader:** Honor you father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. (Ex. 20:12)

*People:* We pray that the long years will be good years.

**Leader:** The glory of youth is their strength, but the beauty of the aged is their gray hair. (Prov. 20:29)

*People:* Give us strength and experience.

**Leader:** Remember the days of old, consider the years long past; ask your father, and he will inform you; your elders, and they will tell you (Deut. 32:7)

*People:* Remind us to ask, and teach us to listen.

**Leader:** Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life. (Prov. 16:31)

*People:* Day by day, we strive to be more holy.

**Leader:** Listen to your father who begot you, and do not despise your mother when she is old. (Prov. 23:22)

*People:* We are grateful for parents who teach and nurture in love.

**Leader:** So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, until I proclaim your might to all the generations to come. (Psalm 71:18)

*People:* We love to tell the story of God and his love.

**Leader:** In old age they too produce fruit; they are always green and full of sap. (Psalm 92:14)

*People:* We are grateful for the spirit and wisdom of our elders.

**Leader:** You who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. (1 Peter 5:5)

*People:* Yes, we too will soon know and understand ... give us wisdom so that we may serve others as we have been served. Amen

## **Prayers of Petition**

Each portion of the prayers ends with these words:

Leader: Hear us, O God.

**People: Your mercy is great.**

**Prayer:** Lord of all, bless the public servants in the government of this nation, that they may do their work in a spirit of wisdom, charity, and justice. Help them use their authority to serve faithfully and to promote our common life. *Hear us, O God.*

**Response: Your mercy is great.**

**Prayer:** God of justice, we remember before you those who suffer with illness and are in need of health insurance. Watch over the nearly 60 million Americans for whom Medicaid provides coverage and be with seniors and people with disabilities for whom Medicaid is the main source of long-term care. Almighty and most merciful God, guide the people of this land so to use our wealth and resources that all people may receive the help they need for healing and deliver them from fear and pain. *Hear us, O God.*

**Response: Your mercy is great.**

**Prayer:** God of abundance, we pray for senior citizens who are struggling in these difficult economic times. Give them hope and wisdom to face the challenges of life.

*Hear us, O God.*

**Response: Your mercy is great.**

**Prayer:** Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of heaven and earth. You are the source of holy wisdom, and the fountain of all truth. We give thanks to you for the elders among us. Pour out your Spirit, that our elders may continue to dream dreams and testify to the Light of their salvation, O Lord our God. *Hear us, O God.*

**Response: Your mercy is great.**

**Prayer:** God, our refuge and strength, our present help in time of trouble, inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. Be with us all, and give us peace at all times and in every way, our encourager and Lord. **Amen.**

## **Song of Praise and Hope**

This little light of ours - We're gonna let it shine (x3) Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

All Around the Nation - We're gonna let it shine (x3) Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

Won't let no one put it out - no - We're gonna let it shine (x3) Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine

# The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil

*Led By Justice and Witness Ministries, United Church of Christ*

*Friday, July 22th at 12:30 pm*

**Leader:** We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. For two weeks we have lifted our prayers - inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on us all to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals no matter where they live in the world. We are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to safeguard programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates.

We believe that the federal budget is a reflection of our values and our vision of the common good, and we pray for a global economy and a national budget that breaks the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world. Today, as Congress and the President struggle to find a debt ceiling solution I ask you to join me in prayer:

## **Opening Prayer**

O God, open this gathering of your people to the presence of your Holy Spirit. Give us a vision and the passion to call for and live into a world that more closely reflects your kingdom, your promise of abundance and fullness of life. Open our eyes and the eyes of our lawmakers to the needs of the poor. Open our hearts and the hearts of our lawmakers to the suffering of your peoples all over the world. Open our ears and the ears of our lawmakers to words of peace. Open our lips to demand justice. Open the hearts of our lawmakers to act with justice and compassion. Amen.

## **May Your Kingdom Come**

For the hungry....

We cry out for Your mercy.

For the hurting...

We cry out for Your mercy.

Come Spirit come (4x)

May your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven (3x)

Come Lord come (2x)

*For the warring...*

*For the dying...*

## **Scripture reading: Matthew 25:31-40**

<sup>31</sup>“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory.<sup>32</sup>All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats,<sup>33</sup>and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.<sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you that are blessed by my

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

### **Prayers of the People**

We pray for those who suffer hunger and devastating famines; that that we may respond to them with generosity,

**Come Spirit come.**

We pray for those the world over who migrate in search of freedom and opportunity; that we may respond to them with welcoming spirits,

**Come Spirit come.**

We pray for victims of war and all kinds of violence; that we may respond to them with compassionate care,

**Come Spirit come.**

We pray for those with HIV/Aids in need of merciful care; that we may share our medicines and our healthcare resources,

**Come Spirit come.**

We pray for those crafting budget resolutions; may they be led by your Holy Spirit in their work,

**Come Spirit come. May your kingdom come, as it is in heaven.Amen**

### **Closing Prayer**

# *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

**Led By Religious Leaders of the Washington Interreligious Staff Community**

**Monday, July 25th at 12:30 pm**

**Leader:** God be with you...

**All:** **And also with you.**

**Leader:** We are gathered on Capitol Hill as people of faith to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the U.S. and abroad from budget cuts. We are in solidarity with more than 25 heads of communion and national religious organizations who wrote Congressional leaders and President Obama saying, "We share our grave concern and dismay that the ongoing conversations and negotiations regarding our nation's budget may yield an outcome that places individuals and families struggling with poverty at risk of even further hardship while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice." We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. We affirm governments role in serving the common good, and we pray for a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

## **Hymn**

1) Open our eyes, that we may see  
Glimpses of truth we are to be;  
Place in our hands the wonderful key  
That shall unclasp and set us free.

2) Open our ears, that we may hear  
Voices of truth Thou sendest clear;  
And while the wave notes fall on our ear;  
Everything false will disappear.

3) Open our mouth, and let us bear,  
Gladly the warm truth everywhere;  
Open our hearts and let us prepare  
Love with Thy children thus to share.

*Silently now we wait for Thee,  
Ready our God, Thy will to see,  
Open our eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

*Silently now we wait for Thee,  
Ready our God, Thy will to see,  
Open our eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

*Silently now we wait for Thee,  
Ready our God, Thy will to see,  
Open our eyes, illumine me,  
Spirit divine!*

## **A Reading from the Prophets: Isaiah 58:1-12**

"Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinances of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. You ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairers of the breach, and restorers of streets to live in."

**Leader:** Through Isaiah, God challenges a nation that on the one hand professes a delight in seeking God and knowing God's ways, yet serves self interests, oppresses workers, neglects poor and hungry people and quarrels to no good end. Isaiah calls our nation to a righteous practice that loosens the bonds of injustice, lets the oppressed go free, and breaks every yoke.

**ALL:** **Oh God, may we and our nation, the President and Congressional leaders, hear your word.**

**A Litany for a Faithful National Budget**  
(Prepared by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

**Leader I:** Let us pray...  
**All:** **Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader IV:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live.**

**ALL: Amen.**

**Benediction**

Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honor all people; work for justice; love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of God's Spirit. **Amen.**

# *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

Led By U.S. Senior Religious Leaders

Tuesday, July 26th at 12:30 pm

## **Welcome and Call to Worship**

**The Rev. Grady Parsons**

Stated Clerk of the General Assembly  
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Leader: God be with you....

All: **And also with you.**

**Leader:** We are gathered on Capitol Hill as people of faith to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the United States and abroad from budget cuts. We are here as senior religious leaders who are in solidarity with more than twenty-five U.S. heads of communion and national religious organizations who wrote Congressional leaders and President Obama saying, "We share our grave concern and dismay that the ongoing conversations and negotiations regarding our nation's budget may yield an outcome that places individuals and families struggling with poverty at risk of even further hardship while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice." We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. We affirm government's role in serving the common good. We have come to Washington to meet with Congressional leaders and to join with you in daily prayer for a global economy and a federal budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

## **Opening Prayer**

**Archbishop Vicken Aykazian**

Armenian Orthodox Church  
Past President  
National Council of the Churches of Christ USA

## **Reading from the Hebrew Bible**

**Rabbi David Saperstein**

Executive Director  
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

## **Reading from the New Testament**

**Sister Simone Campbell, SSS**

Executive Director  
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

## **Reading from The Koran**

**Dr. Sayyid Syeed**

National Director  
Islamic Society of North America

## **Reflections on the WISC Faithful Budget Campaign** *(Alphabetical listing by organization.)*

**Bishop Johny Itty**

Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Church World Service

**Sister Simone Campbell, SSS**

Executive Director  
NETWORK: A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby

**Dr. Sayyid Syeed**

Executive Director  
Islamic Society of North America

**Rabbi David Saperstein**

Executive Director  
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

**The Rev. Michael Livingston**

Past President  
National Council of the Churches of Christ USA



***A Litany for a Faithful National Budget***  
(Prepared by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

<b>Leaders:</b>	<b>The Rev. David Beckmann</b> President Bread for the World	<b>Major Betty Israel</b> National Social Secretary The Salvation Army
	<b>The Rev. Lari Grubs</b> Regional Minister of Capital Area Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	<b>Diane Randall</b> Executive Secretary Friends Committee on National Legislation

**Leader I:** Let us pray...  
**All:** **Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for unemployed families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader IV:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live. AMEN.**

**Benediction**

**Shan Cretin**  
General Secretary  
American Friends Service Committee

## *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

**Led By Rabbi Jack Moline, Director of Public Policy, The Rabbinical Assembly  
on Behalf of the Jewish Community  
Wednesday, July 27th at 12:30 pm**

**Leader:** We are gathered as people of faith on Capitol Hill to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the U.S. and abroad from budget cuts.

In Deuteronomy it is declared, "There shall be no needy among you—since God will bless you in the land that God is giving you" (15:4). Our nation's resources are too abundant; our wealth is too great; we are too blessed to house a single needy person within our borders. Some things should not be on the table in these debt limit negotiations. The disadvantaged have already sacrificed much during a Great Recession and a stagnant recovery, and others have forgone nothing at all. Therefore, we call on Congress and the President to exempt all programs that serve the disadvantaged from spending cuts.

### ***Reflections on the Call of Jeremiah***

#### **A Responsive Reading**

**Leader:** We pray for compassion

**ALL:** We pray that our national leaders do not further imbalance the scales of economic justice in a contest of political brinksmanship.

**Leader:** We pray for healing.

**ALL:** We pray that our national leaders set aside political rancor and join hands to undo the damage wrought by months of recession and years of stagnant recovery.

**Leader:** We pray for justice.

**ALL:** We pray that our nation maintains its commitment to economic security for all so that we may continue to be a light unto the nations and a model of social justice to the world.

**A Litany for a Faithful National Budget**  
(Prepared by Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

**All: Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for the unemployed and their families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Left side:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Right side:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live.**

**ALL: Amen.**

## *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

Led By Faithful America  
Thursday, July 28th at 12:30 pm

Leader: The peace of God be with you

**All: And also with you**

### **A Reading from 1 Samuel 2: 1-10**

Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in my victory. There is no Holy One like the Lord, no one besides you; there is no Rock like our God. Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble gird on strength. Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry are fat with spoil. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. The Lord kills and brings to life, he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low, he also exalts. He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap, to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's and on them he has set the world. He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness; for not by might does one prevail. The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered; the Most High will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed."

### **Reflection on the periscope**

Washington is a place where bravado is not only expected, but rewarded. Often times, the steady rhythm of measured temperance and thoughtful conversation fades when faced with the cacophonous drum beat of partisan purity and absolute imperatives. As we continually strive to speak for those without a voice, it is tempting to enter a shouting match for the common good, aligning ourselves with the powerful and extending our reach to the influential. But instead, in this moment, we gather here. We take time out of our impossible schedules to recognize, affirm, and celebrate Hannah's song, that God brings life out of ashes, and righteousness out of iniquity, that God's power simultaneously humbles the proud and raises up the lowly. We gather here not out of protest or defiance toward any one lawmaker or political party, but to remember that God provides for all of God's people. In the middle of this hot summer day, we gather here to re-center ourselves as we enter into God's work, not exalting those in power, but elevating those who have none. While across the street, distinguished women and men haggle over who most deserves the care and protection of our nation, we gather here, knowing with certainty who God has chosen as God's anointed. And so, let us join our hearts and minds together, turning to God in prayer and supplication.

### **Intercessory Prayer**

Leader: For the entire world, God's good creation and the people made in God's own image, all of which bear the burden of our nation's pride and inaction

**All: We pray that God would open our minds to our global community, so we can**

**remind ourselves and others that the actions we take and fail to take transcend the borders of our cities, states, and even country.**

Leader: For the multitude of people living with scarcity in this country of abundance, for the few people living with abundance among those who have little, and for the growing number of people just getting by

**All: We pray that God would open our hearts to our connectedness, so we can remind ourselves and others that as long as there are those with want for basic needs, we all want for wholeness.**

Leader: For the lawmakers who make vital decisions concerning the availability and dispersion of our resources

**All: We pray that God would open our souls to steadfastness, so we can remind ourselves and others that voices of faith must be engaged when determining the priorities of our nation's financial resources.**

Leader: For our neighbors in the Washington DC area whom we pass every day, struggling to survive the staggering heat, struggling to provide food for their families, struggling to afford health care, struggling.

**All: We pray that God would open our eyes to their sanctity, so we can remind ourselves and others that while the budget is expressed in billions of dollars per year, its effects are felt in hundreds of dollars per month.**

Leader: For those who are sick without means to seek healing, for those who face violence in their own homes without means to escape, for those who are born into poverty and oppression without means to transcend the cycle

**All: We pray that God would open our hands to serve, so we can remind ourselves and others that, despite our brokenness, we can enter into God's will, providing hope for tangible solutions to devastating inequalities.**

Leader: For the losses we have all faced in the midst of this crisis: the infringement on our ecological system, the inability to legally and safely welcome strangers, the abandonment of equality and personhood for each American citizen

**All: We pray that God would open our voices to mourn, so we can remind ourselves and others of the very real consequences we have already faced in this crisis.**

Leader: For those cares and concerns closest to our own hearts, that we name now, silently or aloud

Leader:

God who raises the lowly and strengthens the weary,  
You provided sustenance where there was only starvation, healing where there was only affliction, and life where there was only death.

Give us grace, that we might humble ourselves in your sight

so that your name might be exalted above our words and your love might prevail beyond our deeds,

as we earnestly seek your wisdom and compassion.

We pray in the name of the one whose grace sheds eternal light on our lives.

**All: Amen.**

**Hear the reflections of the psalmist (Psalm 16)**

Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge.  
I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord;  
I have no good apart from you.'  
As for the holy ones in the land, they are the noble,  
in whom is all my delight.  
Those who choose another god multiply their sorrows;  
their drink-offerings of blood I will not pour out  
or take their names upon my lips.  
The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup;  
you hold my lot.  
The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;  
I have a goodly heritage.  
I bless the Lord who gives me counsel;  
in the night also my heart instructs me.  
I keep the Lord always before me;  
because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.  
Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices;  
my body also rests secure.  
For you do not give me up to Sheol,  
or let your faithful one see the Pit.  
You show me the path of life.  
In your presence there is fullness of joy;  
in your right hand are pleasures for evermore.

**Benediction**

Remember, as we part ways, that we join in God's work when we lift the voices of the oppressed to the halls of the esteemed. Let us go forth, our prayers nourished by our emergence into the world.



I am taking a mission group in January to work with children in southern Africa. Because of expectations that the U.S. dollar will fall and the South African rand will rise, . . . the air fare rose \$143 in June. The lack of a credible budget has cost our group almost \$3,000, just as it will cost our nation dearly if interest rates shoot up due to default on the national debt.

. . . While churches can do much to aid the hungry, only governments can extend agricultural technology, provide aid for farm-to-market roads, build stockpiles for grain, and create credit programs for farmer produce that end hunger. (Scott Brunger, Ph.D., Maryville, TN)

**Refrain:**        *Bring your best to their worst*  
                      *Bring your peace to their pain*  
                      *God of love, heal your people.*

We are in a political quagmire. Due to the inability of the Congress to work together, the good of people across the globe is being compromised by the self interest of our political leaders. I am convinced that this is not the fault of Republicans, Democrats or Tea Party members alone. Too many Congresspersons of all parties are trapped in a space where commitment to the common good is diminished for the sake of personal gain and the seduction of power. In the process, the American People and others all over the world are left to suffer. Our denomination cannot stand idly by and watch while the mandate of the gospel to love our neighbors is violated in the halls of Congress. (J. Herbert Nelson, Arrested July 28, 2011- Washington, D.C.)

**Refrain:**        *Bring your best to their worst*  
                      *Bring your peace to their pain*  
                      *God of love, heal your people.*

Yesterday I was in the House Gallery as men and women of faith bore witness to the lives of people in need - they were kneeling, singing and praying and likely would soon be arrested for their actions. At the same time, Congresswoman Pingree rose and named the poor, the vulnerable, those that do not have a voice in the budget discussions, and called out for her colleagues to listen to what was happening. I found tears coming to my eyes as she spoke and could feel the Spirit's presence swirling through the Capitol. May each of us be such a witness, from our faith, to those who are in need. (Anna Woofenden, Seminary Student)

**Refrain:**        *Bring your best to their worst*  
                      *Bring your peace to their pain*  
                      *God of love, heal your people*

***We invite others who are so moved, to share your own reflection of witness and we will continue our response in song.***

***Closing Prayer***



# *The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil*

**Monday, August 1, 2011 at 12:30 pm**

**The United Methodist Building Front Lawn  
Washington, DC**

## **Welcome and Call to Worship**

**Leader:** God be with you....

**All:** **And also with you.**

**Leader:** We are gathered on Capitol Hill as people of faith to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the United States and abroad from budget cuts. We are here as senior religious leaders who are in solidarity with more than twenty-five U.S. heads of communion and national religious organizations who wrote Congressional leaders and President Obama saying, "We share our grave concern and dismay that the ongoing conversations and negotiations regarding our nation's budget may yield an outcome that places individuals and families struggling with poverty at risk of even further hardship while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice." We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. We affirm government's role in serving the common good. We have come to Washington to meet with Congressional leaders and to join with you in daily prayer for a global economy and a federal budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

## **Opening Prayer**

## **Reflections on the WISC Faithful Budget Campaign**

### **A Reading from the Prophets**

Isaiah 58:1-12

"Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinances of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. 'Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?' Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. You ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairers of the breach, and restorers of streets to live in."

### **Reflections on Isaiah**

***A Litany for a Faithful National Budget***  
(Prepared by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

**Leader I:** Let us pray...  
**All:** **Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for unemployed families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader IV:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live. AMEN.**

**Benediction:** May the Lord bless you and keep you. **Amen.**  
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you, **Amen.**  
May the Lord lift up her countenance upon you, and give you peace, **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve God.

The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil  
Led by the Historic and Living Peace Churches  
August 2, 2011

**Welcome and Call to Worship - A Prayer from the International Day of Prayer for Peace**

**Leader:** We are gathered on Capitol Hill as people of faith to pray for a just and compassionate federal budget. Inspired by a common spiritual conviction that God has called on all Americans to protect the vulnerable and promote the dignity of all individuals living in society, we are an interfaith coalition aiming to protect those struggling to overcome poverty in the U.S. and abroad, and to exclude programs that protect people in poverty from the U.S. budget deficit debates. Today's vigil is part of an 18-month faith-based public policy campaign to urge Congress and the Administration to exempt programs that assist at-risk families and children in the United States and abroad from budget cuts. We are here as senior religious leaders who are in solidarity with more than twenty-five U.S. heads of communion and national religious organizations who wrote Congressional leaders and President Obama saying, "We share our grave concern and dismay that the ongoing conversations and negotiations regarding our nation's budget may yield an outcome that places individuals and families struggling with poverty at risk of even further hardship while shielding the wealthiest in our nation from any additional sacrifice." We believe that the federal budget is a moral document. We affirm government's role in serving the common good. We have come to Washington to meet with Congressional leaders and to join with you in daily prayer for a global economy and a federal budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

**Leader:** God,

We humbly pray to choose peace within, so...  
that peace will come to our homes, schools,  
communities, cities, and so nations.

And so we will raise hands only to greet each other.

God and Creator,

We have prayed this many times,

But, our fear still holds us so tight, so closed -.

**All: ....Reach into us beyond all fear and open us to love ourselves and each other.**

**Leader:** God of Enough..

When we are afraid to lose what we have -

**All: ....Let us offer it up to the One who gave it freely, and share.**

**Leader:** God of Peace,

There are peaceful patterns and paths open to us -

**All: .... Let us use them to see that all are fed, housed and find wholesome work, education, and health care.**

**Leader:** God of All,

You love each one of us beyond our understanding.

You know our stories -

**All: ....Give us courage to bring balance and rhythm to our lives and so bring peace to our planet home.**

**Leader:** In the name of the God of Peace, may it be so!

And let the People speak with one voice -

**All: ....Amen!**

**Moments of Prayerful Silence - Speak as the Spirit Moves**

***A Litany for a Faithful National Budget*** (Prepared by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns)

**Leader I:** Let us pray...

**All: Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Twenty percent of all children in the United States live in poverty. We cannot leave our children a legacy of rising debt, nor can we leave them a legacy of rising poverty.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects all our children from hunger and homelessness, from inadequate education and healthcare, from poverty. Our God hears the cry of the children who are poor. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader I:** Many older adults in the United States live near or below the poverty line. Social Security and Medicare are their lifelines. We cannot neglect the very real needs of our senior citizens.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects our elders from poverty, financial insecurity and inadequate healthcare. Our God hears the cry of our seniors who are poor or vulnerable. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** Women in the United States are disproportionately served by the social safety net. Women rely on many of the programs facing drastic cuts – from Medicare and Medicaid to SNAP and TANF, from SSI and Pell grants to domestic violence prevention to nutrition and child care. We cannot ignore the real needs of women in our society or fail to address the systemic injustice that perpetuates their vulnerability.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that protects women from poverty, financial insecurity, inadequate healthcare and physical danger. Our God hears the cry of the women. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader II:** With an official unemployment rate over nine percent, millions of U.S. Americans are struggling to meet their most basic needs. Yet an unjust federal budget could reduce or eliminate assistance for unemployed families.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that responds to the needs of those who are unemployed, protecting them and their dependents as much as possible from the overwhelming anxiety of financial insecurity and lost self-esteem. Our God hears the cry of those who are unemployed. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** We live in a world that is intensely interconnected. Loving our neighbors requires that we promote the global common good. Yet, programs that respond to HIV and AIDS, extreme poverty, food insecurity, overwhelming debt, violence against women, natural disasters and other urgent needs are likely to be severely cut.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respond to the needs of our brothers and sisters around the world. Our God hears the cry of those who live on the margins of our world. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader III:** God's good creation continues to suffer from our use and abuse of its precious gifts. The enforcement of laws that protect the integrity of creation could be severely compromised by unjust budgetary decisions.

**All: We pray for a just and compassionate budget that respects and protects the integrity of creation. Our God hears the cry of Earth. Blessed be our God.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of vision to see a way forward that is just and compassionate.

**All: Give us your vision.**

**Leader IV:** For the gift of conviction to work with vigor and faithfulness for a just solution to the crises we face

**All: Give us your courage.**

**Leader IV:** Spirit of God, renew the hearts of all of us who are gathered here. Inspire Congress and the administration to act justly and to protect our most vulnerable brothers and sisters, here and around the world. Reinvigorate our nation's vision of the common good.

**All: May God, our Creator and parent, breathe into us new life and new meaning. May the Wisdom of God breathe into us new hope and a new awareness. May the Spirit of God breathe into us a new spirit and a new understanding of the world in which we live. AMEN.**

**Song of Peace and Sending – Come Share the Spirit**

## The WISC Faithful Budget Campaign Prayer Vigil

led by the Methodist Federation for Social Action

August 3, 2011

### Welcome

### We Gather with Persistence In Prayer

#### Habakuk 1:2-4

<sup>2</sup> O GOD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?

Or cry to you ‘Violence!’ and you will not save?

<sup>3</sup> Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble?

Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.

<sup>4</sup> So the law becomes slack and justice never prevails.

The wicked surround the righteous — therefore judgement comes forth perverted.

#### Prayer:

*Sometimes It Just Seems to Be Too Much*

by Ted Loder (*Guerrillas Of Grace: Prayers For The Battle*)

Sometimes, God, it just seems to be too much: too much violence, too much fear; too much of demands and problems; too much of broken dreams and broken lives; too much of war and slums and dying; too much of greed and squishy fatness and the sounds of people devouring each other and the earth; too much of stale routines and quarrels, unpaid bills and dead ends; too much of words lobbed in to explode and leaving shredded hearts and lacerated souls; too much of turned-away backs and cowardly silence, fiery rage and the bitter taste of ashes in my mouth.

Sometimes the very air seems scorched by threats and rejection and decay until there is nothing but to inhale pain and exhale confusion. Too much of darkness, God, too much of cruelty and selfishness and indifference ... Too much, God, too much, too bloody, bruising, brain-washing much.

Or is it too little, too little of compassion, too little of courage, of daring, of persistence, of sacrifice; too little of music and laughter and celebration.

### We Gather Seeking Patience

#### Amos 5:10-15, 18-24

<sup>10</sup> They hate the one who reproveth in the gate, and they abhor the one who speaks the truth.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, because you trample on the poor and take from them levies of grain, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not live in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine.

<sup>12</sup> For I know how many are your transgressions, and how great are your sins— you who afflict the righteous, who take a bribe, and push aside the needy in the gate.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore the prudent will keep silent in such a time; for it is an evil time.

<sup>14</sup> Seek good and not evil, that you may live; and so the God of hosts, will be with you, just as you have said. <sup>15</sup> Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the God of hosts, will be gracious to you.

Therefore, thus says God...

<sup>21</sup> I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup> Even though you offer me your burnt-offerings and grain-offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon.

<sup>23</sup> Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

<sup>24</sup> But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

### **Prayer by Ted Loder**

*I'm impatient, God, and it drives me crazy, to say nothing of those around me.*

*But you don't seem to have deadlines, God. Who would set them, after all? You have eternity. I don't!*

*So, forgive me, I want quick miracles, quick miracles of healing, of reconciling, of changing for good.*

*of justice rolling down now, and of peace coming to the world, to my heart, of water turning into wine, grief turning into joy - within at most a season's breath.*

*Quick miracles, God, not slow ones, which are your specialty, it seems so slow people die in the meantime, and children starve, are shot, storms and droughts destroy, hate and indifference flourish, cruelty rules the day, my life slips away.*

*Life is short! I have deadlines!*

*I am not a patient person. I have only so much time to strive, to accomplish what I gave to do, to right some wrongs, to make amends, to create some beauty, help the poor, welcome the outcast gays, clear the ghettos, repair the city, only so much time -- I'm not God, you know.*

*Maybe that's the dis-ease for which impatience is the symptom, I'm not God and I forget it act compulsively as though I know what needs doing and when, as though I am you. a faithless confusion, I realize.*

*But, come on, God, I don't have eternity. Or do I?*

*I suppose that's really what this prayer comes up to: Do I have eternity?*

*To be convinced a little that I do, that you do have it with me, for me, would be miracle enough, I do believe, for then I would likely be a more patient person, and that, says Paul, is the first degree of love, and the world and I both could use a great many more degrees of that.*

*So, God, this is what I ask, that you would pull off in me this one miracle quick enough to finish in my short remaining years. Perhaps you've begun, I hope, by giving me pause to rest in this prayer, which is to rest in you.*

*Thank you. Amen.*

## We Discover Perseverance for the Journey

### Luke 18:1-8

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup>He said, 'In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup>In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, "Grant me justice against my opponent." <sup>4</sup>For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, "Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup>yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming." ' <sup>6</sup>And Jesus said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup>And will not God grant justice to those who cry out day and night? Will God delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup>I tell you, God will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Messiah comes, will they find faith on earth?'

### A Litany to our Nation's Leaders

taken from

"The Federal Budget as a Moral Document: A Letter from Religious Leaders"  
January 25, 2005

One: "Our faith traditions teach us that every person is created in God's image and that we are all part of God's family.

**ALL: WE ARE CALLED BY GOD TO CARE FOR EACH OTHER, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND AS A NATION.**

One: Because of these core beliefs, we feel called to speak out on the federal budget. Despite its complexity, the budget is essentially a moral document--the specific expression of the values of the nation.

**ALL: AS PEOPLE OF FAITH AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS, WE MUST EXAMINE THE BUDGET CLOSELY TO DETERMINE WHETHER ITS PROVISIONS ARE FAIR AND JUST. WE MUST ASK SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO DISCOVER WHETHER THE BUDGET... PROMOTES THE COMMON GOOD.**

One: Does the budget provide those in need with the assistance necessary to build self-reliant, purposeful lives?

**ALL: DOES THE BUDGET PROVIDE ADEQUATELY FOR ALL OF GOD'S CHILDREN, INCLUDING THE POOR AND SICK, THE OLD AND VERY YOUNG?**

One: Does the budget strengthen the foundations of our country in order to make us safer and more secure?

**ALL: DOES THE BUDGET PROTECT GOD'S CREATION, THE ENVIRONMENT?**

One: Does the budget spread its burdens and rewards fairly, or are some groups given special unearned privilege, while others are excluded from America's bounty and opportunity?

**ALL: DOES THE BUDGET PROMOTE JUSTICE AND EQUALITY BY PROVIDING FOR BASIC HUMAN NEEDS IN HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, HOUSING AND OTHER AREAS?"**

One: As we move on to "step two" and discussions about revenues and spending cuts, "we will assess ...provisions concerning health care, education, housing, the environment, foreign policy, national security and other issues. If the budget falls short in these areas,

**ALL: WE WILL WORK TO TRANSFORM IT INTO A DOCUMENT THAT REFLECTS AMERICA'S BEST MORAL VALUES AND WHO WE ARE AS CHILDREN OF GOD."**

**Going Forth to Serve** (in unison)

**Together, as your beloved community, O God, may we learn the lessons of life and time; so that as we practice the disciplines of persistence and prayer, we might discover within us the patience and perseverance that leads to courage, hope, change and joy for all! Amen.**