Memorial Day Prayer Service

Environment: American flag, flowers, Bible

Hymn Suggestions:
- Amazing Grace (NEW BRITAIN)
- America (Smith)
- America the Beautiful (Bates, Ward)
- Eternal Father, Strong to Save (MELITA)
- For the Healing (ST. THOMAS)
- God Bless America (Berlin)
- God of Day and God of Darkness (BEACH SPRING)
- God of Our Fathers (NATIONAL HYMN)
- Let There Be Peace on Earth (Miller, Jackson)
- Lover of Us All (Schutte)
- This Is My Song (FINLANDIA)

Opening Prayer

Spirit of Life
whom we have called by many names
in thanksgiving and in anguish—
Bless the poets and those who mourn.
Send peace for the soldiers who did not make the wars
but whose lives were consumed by them
Let strong trees grow above graves far from home
Breathe through the arms of their branches
The earth will swallow your tears while the dead sing
“No more, never again, remember me.”
For the wounded ones, and those who received them back,
let there be someone ready when the memories come
when the scars pull and the buried metal moves
and forgiveness for those of us who were not there
for our ignorance.
And in us, veterans in a forest of a thousand fallen promises,
let new leaves of protest grow on our stumps.
Give us courage to answer the cry of humanity’s pain
And with our bare hands, out of full hearts,
with all our intelligence
let us create the peace.

Hymn

Psalm 34

Antiphon: As they announce peace with their lips, let them be careful to have it even more within their own hearts. (TOR Rule IX, 30)

I will bless Yahweh at all times; praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall rejoice in Yahweh, let the humble hear it and be glad. Magnify Yahweh with me and let us exalt God’s name together. I sought Yahweh who answered me, and freed me from all my fears. They looked to Yahweh and were radiant; their faces not put to shame. The poor called, Yahweh heard and saved them out of all their troubles. The angel of Yahweh encamps around those who revere God and rescues them. O taste and see that Yahweh is good; blessed are those who trust in God. Revere Yahweh, you saints, for there is no lack to those who revere God. The young lions do need and suffer hunger but those who seek Yahweh shall lack nothing good. Come sons and daughters, listen to me, I will teach you reverence for Yahweh. Which of you wants to live to the full, who loves long life and enjoyment of prosperity? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit; turn away from evil and practice good; seek peace and keep after it. The eyes of Yahweh are toward the righteous, and God’s ears open to their cry, The face of Yahweh is against the evildoers; to root up their memory from of the earth. The righteous cried, Yahweh heard and saved them out of all their troubles. Yahweh is close to the brokenhearted, and rescues those whose spirit is crushed. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but out of them all Yahweh delivers them.
Yahweh protects their very bones;
not one of them is broken.
Calamity shall slay the wicked
and the haters of the righteous shall be penalized.
Yahweh redeems those who serve,
all those taking refuge in God shall go free.
Glory . . .

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**Reading:** Ephesians 1:15-20 or Matthew 5:7-10

**Response:** Pray together.
Lead us from death to life,
from falsehood to truth,
from despair to hope,
from fear to trust.
Let peace fill our hearts,
our homes, our world, our universe.
Let us dream together,
pray together,
work together,
to build one world
of peace and justice for all — anonymous

**Intercessory Prayer:**
Leader: Let us call to mind and name those individuals who have served their country in times
of war and have died doing so. . . .
Our Father . . .

**Concluding Prayer:**
Compassionate One, lover of all nations and people, on this weekend when we remember and
honor those who have been killed in our nation’s wars, we are confronted anew with issues of
peacemaking in our time. We see how violence and war are taking many forms, fueled by
religious intolerance, historical hatreds and divisions, poverty and powerlessness, and by our
self-righteousness and fear. Still our spirits long for another way. Receive our prayers of
intercession for all those places where hostilities rage from within and without, and for all who
need love and healing. Amen.

(Sisters of St. Francis, Aston, PA)