*We Shall Overcome – A Liturgy of Thanksgiving and Hope*

**Call to Worship**

Let the rivers clap their hands;

**let the hills sing for joy together before the Lord,**

For God comes to judge the earth.

**God will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.**

Hymn #539 (MBW\*): **All People That on Earth Do Dwell**

O God, we praise you today for the hope and inspiration that you continue to give to oppressed people everywhere. Give us the resources to join hands and hearts with those who continue to strive for equal rights.

**For our desire is to love righteousness and justice as you do—living in a way that is just and fair—evidence that we are your children, reflecting your glory and bringing honor to your holy name.**

Creator God of all that is, we praise you today, lifting up our voices in thanksgiving for the lives of all persons of African ancestry:

Who have led our nation;

Who have stood up to injustice;

Who have pointed the way to freedom;

Who honor you through the arts;

Who have made great discoveries in the sciences;

Who have celebrated the gifts of life and the wonders of your creation.

**For we acknowledge that these actions are for our mutual benefit, so that your grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to your glory.**

Almighty God, empower and guide us to be voices of justice, of hope, and of peace in our world.

**Holy Spirit, guide us to use this moment to examine our hearts, to determine how self-serving we are and the extent to which we look out for the wellbeing of the less privileged around us. Help us to be quick to forgive instead of being quick to judge and stereotype others.**

O Holy One, heal our hearts of the pain caused by racism. Work within each of us to heal our world, our communities, and our lives; that our children will grow up in a world unscathed and untouched by this sin.

**Lord, make us more holy, make us more holy.**

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

**Correct me, O Lord, but in justice; not in your anger, lest you bring me to nothing.**

I alone am the one who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

**The earth is full of your steadfast love, O Lord. Fill our hearts with love for you and our neighbor. Amen.**

**Intercessory Prayer** *(Adapted from “Prayer” by Maya Angelou)1*

*(Pause after each prayer statement)*

In your mercy hear us today:

For those who have no voice, we ask you to speak through us.

For those who feel unworthy, we ask you to pour your love out in waterfalls of tenderness.

For those who live in pain, emotional and physical, we ask you to bathe them in the river of your

healing.

For those who are lonely, we ask you to guide us to be their companions.

For those who are grieving all kinds of loss today, help us to share their pain and be a strong

shoulder on which to lean.

For those who struggle with forgiving those who have wronged them, be their peace and path to

total healing.

For those who are depressed, we ask you to help us to be beacons of hope along their path.

**ALL: Dear Creator, you who are the borderless sea of goodness and love, by the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us that our lives will manifest your reign in your world.**

Hymn # 542 vv. 1-3, 5 (AAHH\*): **“We Shall Overcome”**

1 We shall overcome (x 2)

We shall overcome someday  
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe  
We shall overcome someday  
  
2 We'll walk hand in hand, (x 2)

We'll walk hand in hand someday  
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe  
We'll walk hand in hand someday

3 We shall live in peace, (x 2)

We shall live in peace someday  
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe  
We shall overcome someday

4 God will see us through (x 2)

God will see us through someday  
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe  
The truth shall set us free someday

Sources:

\*AAHH: African American Heritage Hymnal, 2001

\*MBW: Moravian Book of Worship, 1995

Psalm 98:8-9, Psalm 33:4-5, Jeremiah10:24, Psalm 51:4; II Corinthians 4:15

1 <https://danceforallpeople.com/prayer-by-maya-angelou/>

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