

**A Liturgy for Human Trafficking Awareness Day**  
**(The day after this Sunday)**  
**January 10, 2017**  
**Shelia O'Mara**

**Reflection before worship:** “But today, in too many places around the world—including right here in the United States—the injustice of modern slavery and human trafficking still tears at our social fabric. During National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we resolve to shine a light on every dark corner where human trafficking still threatens the basic rights and freedoms of others.”

*—Presidential Proclamation  
National Slavery & Human Trafficking Prevention Month, January 2017*

**Call to Worship (responsive)**

Leader: For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent.

**People: They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes.**

Leader: They trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground  
and deny justice to the oppressed.

**People: Let us step outside where Jesus is, speak out and give hope.**

Leader: Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with you.

**People: Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts.**

**All: Let us worship God, step outside where Jesus is, speak out and give hope.**

*—Based on Amos 2:6-7, 5:14-15*

**Call to Confession**

There are 21-30 million people around the world who are victims of human trafficking in a \$150 billion industry: 68% in forced labor, 26 % are children and 55% are female. Let us together ask for God’s forgiveness for the times we have not sought justice and defended the oppressed.

**Prayer of Confession (unison)**

We are guilty, Almighty God, of not seeing the 4.5 million people, including children, who are trapped in sex trafficking industries or the 14 million forced labor workers. We buy 136 different products made in 74 countries where victims of forced labor are attracted by promises of jobs and education. Forgive us our sins and the lack of awareness of those who suffer. Help us to build communities that prevent and protect from human trafficking and promote justice for those who are in bondage. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon**

Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.”

**Prayer for Illumination**

Open our eyes and ears Lord, so that we can hear your words of restoration and that we may stand with those who suffer. Motivate us to take action to free those who are enslaved and restore their dignity. Amen.

### **Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon**

Lectionary reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Exodus 3:7-12

Psalm 9

Psalm 10

Psalm 140

Isaiah 42:22-23

Isaiah 61:1-3

Amos 2:6-7; 5:14-15

Matthew 25: 31-46

Hebrews 13:3

### **Prayers of the People (responsive)**

Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**We pray for those who are abused and exploited. Restore their spirit.**

**Replenish those who work to rescue those who have no voice.**

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

**We pray for those whose tears are not seen and whose cries are not heard.**

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

**We affirm that justice comes from God**

**and that pursuit of justice and reconciliation is central to God's holiness.**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

**We pray for an end to exploitation and abuse.**

**We lift up the police, firefighters, lawyers, judges, medical personnel  
and counselors who work for freedom and restoration.**

Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy.

**We pray for a reduction in the demand for sex trafficking and forced labor.**

**Convict the hearts of those who exploit that they may repent of their evil ways.**

Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.

**We pray for the oppressed that they may receive hope, peace and healing.**

Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.

**We pray for those who confront evil that they may be strengthened with courage.**

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,  
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

**We pray for those without hope and that the church rises up  
to defend and protect men, women and children from all human trafficking.**

**ALL: Let us go outside where Jesus is, speak out and give hope. Amen.**

*—Based on Matthew 5:3-10*

**Invitation to the Offering**

Let us return to God the offerings of our lives and the gifts of the earth.

*—Book of Common Worship*

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Every good thing is a gift from God—the food we eat, the things we have, the time we spend, our whole lives. We give our lives back to you O God as a way of saying thank you—sharing money with those who are in need, giving food to those who are hungry, and spending our time to help others. Amen.

*—Book of Common Worship*

**Benediction**

Go out into the world, break the chains of injustice, get rid of exploitation in the workplace, free the oppressed and cancel debts. Share your food with the hungry, invite the homeless poor into your home and put clothes on the shivering. May the God of love and grace give you peace. Amen.

*—Based on Isaiah 58:6-7*