

## **We Are Here Interfaith Litany**

“We are here; we are poor; we don’t have any money; you have made us this way . . . and we’ve come to stay until you do something about it.”

—Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1966)

**Voice 1:** Today we stand as truth-tellers witnessing to the pain and suffering caused by the injustices within our community and across this country. We gather to declare that we need a moral revival, a radical revolution of values. And we call on the prophets of old from the sacred texts of the world’s religions who proclaimed:

**Voice 2:** “The believers, both men and women are in charge of and responsible for one another; they all enjoy the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong...” (Qu’ran 9:71)

**Voice 3:** “All the workers you’ve exploited and cheated cry out for judgment. The groans of the workers you used and abused are a roar in the ears of God.” (James 5:4)

**Voice 4:** “Arjuna, whenever righteousness is on the decline, unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I am reincarnated. For the protection of the virtuous, for the extirpation of the evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma [righteousness] on a firm footing, I am born from age to age.” (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 4:7-8)

**Voice 5:** We uphold our Constitution and the founding creed of our Nation, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [and women] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain

unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.” (Declaration of Independence)

**Voice 1:** Fifty years ago, Rev. Dr. King said, “There comes a time when silence is betrayal. The truth must be told.”

**All Voices:** *We are here, we are ready, We will break the silence!*

**Voice 2:** The truth is that half the United States is poor or low-income, and that more than 250,000 people die each year from poverty, the lack of education, and the lack of healthcare and thousands more from the denial of Medicaid expansion.

**All Voices:** *We are here, we are ready, We will break the silence!*

**Voice 3:** “The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.” —Rabbi Joachim Prinz

**Voice 4:** We must break the silence of systemic racism in our society. We must speak out against the attack on voting rights and extremist policies that criminalize, incarcerate, kill and deport communities of color and divide the dispossessed.

**All Voices:** *We are here, we are ready, We will break the silence!*

**Voice 5:** “I must remind you that starving a child is violence. Discrimination against working [people] is violence. Ghetto housing is violence. Ignoring medical need is violence. Poverty is violence. Contempt for equality is violence; even a lack of will power to help humanity is a sick and sinister form of violence.” —Coretta Scott King

**Voice 1:** The violence of the war economy and militarism is exacerbated by the structural violence of poverty. True security will only come when communities around the world have access to living wage jobs, healthcare, and quality education.

**All Voices: *We are here, we are ready, We will break the silence!***

**Voice 2:** “We are not faced with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.” —Pope Francis

**Voice 3:** Climate change, ecological devastation, and pollution are wreaking havoc on our communities, displacing millions of people because of super-storms and “man-made” disasters. We must protect the environment and the people living in it so that all creation can thrive.

**All Voices: *We are here, we are ready, We will break the silence!***

**Voice 4:** We are here, we are ready to follow in the footsteps of the prophet Isaiah: If you remove the yoke of oppression, 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. You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. (Isaiah 58:10-12)

**All Voices:** As with these sacred texts, we, too proclaim revival across this land:

We sound the alarm and shout WE ARE HERE!

It is time to break the silence!

It is time for a Poor People’s Campaign!

It is time for a moral revival!