



**Healing Waters: Churches Working to End Violence Against Women** by Carol Penner (English only, 164 pages) is a practical handbook, which includes advice on responding to a woman who has been abused; handouts on abuse, myths and shelters; workshop, Bible study and workshop resources; a historical overview of violence against women; theological and biblical background; and church and community action ideas.

It's available from the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada for free plus the cost of shipping.

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not overcome it.



**WICC**  
Rooted in faith,  
called to action ✠  
De la foi à l'action

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**December 6, 2015**

Prayer Service for the  
National Day of Remembrance and Action on  
Violence Against Women



## Hymn

### Blessing and Sending Forth

**One:** Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, bless this time of prayer and fellowship.  
Make us stewards of your peace, that others will see your good works  
reflected in all that we do.

**One:** As we were taught, each in her own language, let us pray the Lord's  
Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be your Name.  
Your Kingdom come.  
Your will be done on earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
The power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever.  
Amen.

**Amen, sung in a round**

This service of remembrance was written by Patricia Burton-Williams, Executive Director of the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada and is published by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada. You are welcome to download from our web site, photocopy, print and share this service with your community.

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December 6, 2015



Prayer Service for the  
National Day of Remembrance and Action on  
Violence Against Women

Call to Worship

**One:** Friends, we gather in our brokenness to be strengthened, healed and renewed by the power of grace. We are gathered today to give thanks for God's many blessings, to be uplifted by one another, and to remember that we are part of a community that is constantly being nurtured by God. As we set aside this time to remember all those who were and are victims of gender-based violence, we pray for strength and peace.

**All: Amen.**

Hymn

Scripture reading

A Reading from Matthew.

<sup>21</sup>Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

<sup>22</sup> A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

**Voice 7:** I light this candle for disabled women who are victimized, be it physically, emotionally or otherwise. I pray that their dignity is preserved and their humanity highlighted.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 8:** I light this candle for elderly people who suffer abuse. I pray that they be respected and dignified, their knowledge and wisdom cherished by all.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 9:** I light this candle for all those who suffer verbal abuse. Though their scars may not be visible to all, they suffer in silence. I pray that their self-esteem is restored and they are comforted by the knowledge that they are created in the image of God.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 10:** I light this candle for women living in shelters. I pray that they may find solace, grace and comfort in a new environment.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 11:** I light this candle for all who work in shelters and care for people who are experiencing some of the worst days of their life. I pray that they may be sustained by the good that they do, and strengthened to continue this important ministry to others.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 12:** I light this candle for perpetrators of violence. I pray that their hearts be touched by God and that their eyes be opened to the suffering of others.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 13:** I light this candle for politicians and policy-makers. I pray that they may have empathy in their hearts when laws and policies are drafted, that they be sensitive to the outcome in society.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 14:** I light this candle for the families of the victims of l'École Polytechnique. I pray that their loss will continue to not be in vain, but will serve to educate others about the struggle faced by women globally.

**All: Your light shines in the darkness, O Lord, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, “Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us.”

<sup>24</sup> He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.”

<sup>25</sup> The woman came and knelt before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

<sup>26</sup> He replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to the dogs.”

<sup>27</sup> “Yes it is, Lord,” she said. “Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

<sup>28</sup> Then Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed at that moment.

*(Matthew 15:21-28)*

### Silence

### Reflection

**One:** Quite often in scripture, Jesus is depicted as a peaceful person— ‘gentle Jesus, meek and mild’. At Christmastime, we sing *Away in a Manger* and in that hymn we are told that, as a baby, Jesus did not cry. Through his ministry we learn of a new way of being: turning the other cheek and giving your shirt to one who has stolen your coat.

In this passage from Matthew we see a very different version of Jesus. His ministry is gaining in popularity, and peace and solitude are harder to come by. This growing frustration is compounded when Jesus is asked by a Canaanite woman, a Syrian woman to heal her child. Now the Jews and the Canaanites were natural enemies. Jesus’ initial rebuke of the woman ‘you dog’ shows us some of the tension that existed between the two groups. He tells her he was sent only for the children of Israel, not for her. But her persistence and her faith convinces Jesus to reconsider, and he does. In the end, he listens to the cries of the woman in distress, ‘have mercy on me’. As Christians we are often told that we are to aim to be more Christ-like in our thoughts, words and deeds. Will we hear the cry of the Syrian woman and come to her aid?

## Intercessory Prayers

December 6, 1989 awakened in all of us a profound need to acknowledge our inhumanity towards each other and bear witness to a world that has lost its way. As we pray now for all victims of violence, whether victims of planned or random acts, victims of war, or victims of systemic hatred, may we be healed and strengthened to hear the cries of our sisters and in turn bring healing to others. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (*John 1:5*).

As each intercessory prayer is read, please light a candle for each intention.

**Voice 1:** I light this candle for victims of war. I pray that a love of peace and concord will overcome the need for power and control.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 2:** I light this candle for victims of domestic violence. I pray that they may no longer suffer alone and in silence. I pray for an end to the heaviness of carrying this burden.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 3:** I light this candle for victims of child abuse. I pray that they may be healed in body, mind and spirit.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 4:** I light this candle for victims of human trafficking, in Canada and around the world. I pray that the women and children who are made to suffer in this way are finally freed and restored to themselves.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 5:** I light this candle for missing and murdered First Nations women. I pray that cries for an inquest will finally fall on compassionate ears and that justice will be served in each case.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**

**Voice 6:** I light this candle for victims of school shootings worldwide: for L’École Polytechnique, Dawson College, Columbine and Sandy Hook Elementary. I pray that these violent outbursts in environments that are meant to be safe spaces in which to learn will stop and become a thing of the past, never to be repeated.

**All: Let your light shine in the darkness, O Lord.**