



KWANZAA FOR LIFE 2018

Yearning for hope amid so much despair

As we look to the new year 2019 we stand yearning for hope. The year 2018 has brought us many challenges. Some of them are old. Many we believed we had overcome. However, some are new and greater than those we have already faced. Even in such a climate, those of us who keep holding on to the gift of faith know in our hearts that God is still in charge.

Advent has been a time to renew our hope for the future. The great feast of Christmas has led us to a rebirth in grace. This grace of Christmas will carry us through the journey of 2019.

No matter how bleak the picture seems, we know time is winding up and it won't be long before the victory will make us whole as we are born again for eternal life.

Kwanzaa gives us a road map for a life of faith blessed with works. Faith without works is simply vanity. We must do more than offer praise in worship. Praise in worship is merely the fuel which empowers us to make His kingdom a reality for our brothers and sisters right now!

KWANZAA ROAD MAP

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF NGUZO SABA

SEVEN SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF FAITH IN ACTION

UMOJA - UNITY

KUJICHAGULIA - SELF-DETERMINATION

UJIMA - COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY

UJAMAA - COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS

NIA - PURPOSE

KUUMBA - CREATIVITY

IMANI - FAITH

KINARA OF THE SOUL

The kinara is a seven-place candle holder that represents the original stalk from which all African people sprang. It also represents reason and social structure. In Kwanzaa for Life it represents the soul of each individual, the vessel which contains the spirit of life.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

UMOJA (UNITY)

Faith without unity is senseless. We recognize the powers that are emerging to divide humanity. Some of them are old. Some of them are new. We pray to be active in our words and deeds to discourage all that hinders unity. Let us not support or encourage divisions of race, ethnicity, gender, orientation, age, class, religion or denomination. Dispel despair in our minds and hearts. Move us to be unifiers and not dividers.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

KUJICHAGULIA (SELF-DETERMINATION)

In order to be unifiers, we must be self-determined. Each of us must define who we are and make no apology for what God designed and created. Grant us the courage to bless our faith with works. May we participate fully in all civic responsibilities which enable us to live in the dignity for which we were created. Give us the means to enable our brothers and sisters to be self-determined without fear of repression.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

UJIMA (COLLECTIVE WORK AND RESPONSIBILITY)

We cannot be self-determined unifiers without collective work and responsibility. We must renew in us the past values by which we worked together to uphold our communities. Renew in us a mission to educate our youth about the rich history of our ancestors – a history that sustained us through adverse times. Teach us to build each other up instead of tearing down. Give us the grace to work together with hope!

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

UJAMAA (COOPERATIVE ECONOMICS)

To be self-determined unifiers working responsibly together we must use resources which will keep our hope alive. Teach us to recognize the materialism and greed of these days. Keep us from becoming selfish and indulgent. Help us to share our material wealth, our natural gifts, and

our acquired knowledge- knowledge about such things as preventive care, healthy diet, and all products which work to improve our life journey. Most importantly, guide us to seek ways to respect and take care of the gift of planet Earth.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

NIA (PURPOSE)

In order for us to remain hopeful self-determined unified responsible collective workers we must always keep in mind what we have been called to do as receivers of God's grace. We have survived trials and tribulations already. We believe we shall continue to survive. Our purpose must always stay focused on the prize. When we despair, we must pray and call upon the wisdom of our elders and ancestors. This wisdom is often found in the written word of our literature and the songs and hymns of Zion that were left to us.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

KUUMBA (CREATIVITY)

To keep hope alive in order to fulfill our life mission often requires us to use the creative genius given to us. Temptation abounds around us to misuse our gifts and talents. We must continue to temper social miseries with wise solutions. We must be persistent in our prayer and works in order to bring about a more just existence for all. Always moving forward we must remain in the realm of hopeful grace avoiding the valley of despair.

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

IMANI (FAITH)

Faith is the beginning of the victory which defeats despair. The year 2018 has been marked with trying times- times of hate, doubt, pain, suffering, dishonesty, and disloyalty. However, we also have been blessed with prosperity, knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. In faith we believe that as the year has passed, the misfortunes of the times shall also pass. Help us to live a life in faith with good works. Give us what we need to impart hope to the future generations of our youth. Unfold your kingdom to us in 2019 and beyond!

RESPONSE: Jesus, keep our hope alive so we won't despair!

We will not! We shall not! We must not despair! AMEN! HALLELUJIA!

During KWANZAA FOR LIFE 2018 (December 26, 2018- January 1, 2019) let us also offer the following prayers: The Lord's Prayer, The Marian Prayers: Hail Mary and Memorare, Psalm 27 (The Lord is my light and my salvation...)

KWANZAA FOR LIFE PRAYER

Lord God, light our souls with a renewed hope in your power. May the celebration of Kwanzaa encourage us to remain hopeful rather than to despair. Give us the courage to believe that You are in charge and will protect us from the evils that surround us. Give us the wisdom to impart to our brothers and sisters the road map for the journey. Help us to have self-respect and self-love. Guide us to respect all of your creation and therefore acknowledge that it must be good.

Finally, wipe away our despair and keep our hope alive so that we may enrich your kingdom both now and forever. Amen.

MEDITATION

(W.C. Martin, 1902 The Hymn: Though the Angry Surges Roll)

Though the angry surges roll on my tempest driven soul,
I am peaceful, for I know, wildly though the winds may blow,
I've an anchor safe and sure that can evermore endure!

...By His grace I shall not fail,

For my anchor holds, my anchor holds!

For my anchor holds, it firmly holds.

IN THANKSGIVING

Give Him all the praise!

He's worthy, He's worthy,

Give Him all the praise!

Worthy to be praised!

He's worthy to be praised.

He deserves the praise!

