

KWANZAA FOR LIFE 2015

A TIME OF COURAGE, HOPE, AND TRUST

As 2016 dawns and 2015 sets, we enter new horizons. The turbulence which met us at the dawn of 2015 remains but we have endured. We still face natural disasters, broken relationships, bouts of illness and political upheaval. We still live with world hunger, devastating poverty, ugly racism and discrimination, and economies which favor the elite. Terrorist threats are as real as ever. Churches still do not welcome all. Yet, we live. We march on to one more year.

Kwanzaa reminds us to pray for the Light of Christ to shine ahead of us and lead us through to freedom. We must have Imani (faith) that God has not and will not abandon us. We must stand by each other.

The seven principles of Kwanzaa can serve as guidelines to lead us through the path of a new year 2016. We walk in UMOJA (Unity), KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination), UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility), UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics), NIA (Purpose), KUUMBA (Creativity), and IMANI (Faith).

We pray: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

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: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

UMOJA (Unity)

Lord, remove the blinders from our eyes which cause us to splinter instead of to unify. Shine your light and lead us to each other so together we can overcome adversity. May we all recognize that we are all created in your image.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

KUJICHAGULIA (Self-Determination)

Lord, help us to know who we are. Shine your light so we can see the way to love ourselves as you created us. May we cease to allow others to define who we are and what we can become.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

UJIMA (Collective Work and Responsibility)

Lord, open our hearts and hands. Shine your light to guide our minds to strive together to ensure safety in our communities. Teach us the ways to ease the hardship and suffering of our brothers and sisters.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE !

UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics)

Lord, give us the wisdom we need to cherish and preserve your earthly gifts to us. Shine your light on our will to support businesses which uphold our dignity and self-worth. Keep us mindful to share our time and talents.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

NIA (Purpose)

Lord, keep our focus on appropriate priorities. Shine your light on a life path which is worthy of the inheritance we receive from previous generations of greatness. Keep us aware to avoid the empty values of the present age.

Response : LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

KUUMBA (Creativity)

Lord, awaken in us the gifts of your Spirit. Shine your light to help us to use these gifts so we can rise from the ashes of despair and hopelessness to the heights of joy and happiness.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

IMANI (Faith)

Lord, surround us with your protective arms. Shine your light of faith on us so that we can step along in the new year with the belief and courage we need to live this life.

Response: LORD, SHINE ON OUR SPIRITS AND SET US FREE!

During **Kwanzaa** for **Life** (December 26, 2015 – January 1, 2016)

let us also offer the following prayers:

The Lord's Prayer,

The Marian Prayer:

Hail Mary,

Psalm 27 (The Lord is my light and my salvation...)

KWANZAA FOR LIFE PRAYER

Lead us, kindly light, amid encircling gloom, Lead Thou, us on;
The night is dark, and we are far from home; Lead Thou, us on;
Keep Thou our feet; We do not ask to see the distant scene—one step enough for us!
(Adapted from the hymn "Lead, Kindly Light, John H. Newman, 1833)

Lord, give us Imani, Faith, to walk the journey of life for yet another year. By your grace and mercy we can move along. May we never forget the sacredness of the gift of life. May we dignify all of your creation with respect. We ask these things because we believe that You are God and all things are possible with You!

AMEN! AMEN! AMEN!