



## Peace Song Approved Lyrics w/ Rationale

By Richard Mekdeci

I travel pretty extensively to Unity churches all over the United States and Canada. I rarely hear the “Peace Song” sung the same way twice. In my 70 plus retreats as Music Coordinator at Unity Village, whenever the Peace Song was sung, there would be retreatants from all over the world and from different churches who would sing those lines “their” way creating a bumbled jumble of words, breaking the sacredness of the moment, even causing many to stop singing all together.

I feel if all churches used the same lyrics to “Let There Be Peace On Earth”, it would be a huge step to galvanizing our tradition. Wherever you went to church, when they sang the Peace Song, you would know the lyrics! What a concept! Not to mention the fact that we are all now in compliance with the copyright laws around un-authorized lyric changes to copyrighted works.

This beautiful letter from Jan Tache’, owner of Jan-Lee Music, is in response to the suggestion that churches that use the Peace Song in their services change the lyrics to “Now there is Peace on Earth and it has begun with me. . .” changing the meaning to affirm peace now. Jan explains in paragraph three the reason she and her attorney felt such drastic changes were not necessary and denied the right and permission to our churches to altar the lyrics in this way. The gender-related updates usually used in our churches are fine, however if you are altering the lyrics beyond that, you are doing it out of compliance.

RM

*Dear Mr. Mekdeci,*

*My name is Jan Tache’ and I am the owner of Jan-Lee Music and daughter of the composers. Peter (the lawyer for Jan-Lee) has sent me copies of the correspondence between you and he, as well as consulting me, and I wanted to add a personal note*

*First, thank you very much for making us aware of the open letter regarding lyric changes. (Changing to the present tense, “Now there is peace on earth . . .”) We have a very long and happy relationship with Unity; I was raised going to Unity Sunday School and came to Lee’s Summit for the Youth of Unity Conference one summer years ago. And I understand the viewpoint of affirming as opposed to asking.*

*Philosophically, apart from the copyright considerations, I believe that the creation of peace in one’s own life is an ongoing process and that the song doesn’t discuss whether there is or is not peace already. It simply affirms one’s own commitment to creating peace in every moment. I believe that that is where we human beings have the greatest power--in the present moment, in our own lives.*

*Since the song was written, there have been lyric changes and many requests to tailor the words to different settings. Jill Jackson, the lyricist and my mother (whose dream the song was) created alternate lyrics when the gender sensitivity issues came along, and again we created an alternative so that schools could sing the song without the word “God.” Jill’s biggest worry was that when people sang the song, they would each mumble different lyrics and thus weaken the power of the commitment to peace. Since the song is*

*sung in many different venues all over the world, it has turned out to be a legitimate concern.*

*I just wanted to give you a little personal background on the situation and to tell you how happy my parents and I have always been that Unity sings the song so often. It was a particular joy to my mother.*

*Best wishes,*

*Jan Tache'  
Jan-Lee Music  
[tache@together.net](mailto:tache@together.net)*

The **OFFICIAL copyrighted alternative lyrics** approved by the publisher are reprinted at the end of this article. I would urge all of the churches who still end their service with this wonderful, endearing song to use only these alternative lyrics. The only change not addressed here is the substituting “joyous” for “solemn” vow. This is what Jan wrote regarding that change:

*“I appreciate your willingness to use “solemn” rather than “joyous.” I like “joyous,” but it isn’t a good practice to change lyrics just because we like a word better. I freely admit that we should have checked into this a long time ago. It is difficult for Unity to go back and change something that has become established. So I apologize for that. And I really appreciate the efforts made by Unity to change back closer to the copyrighted version.”*

So, here are the lyrics and the approved, copyrighted updates from the Jan Lee website for “Let There Be Peace On Earth”. Please consider changing your printed and projected copies to reflect these changes.

Pray for peace,  
RM

## **Copyrighted Lyrics for “Let There Be Peace on Earth”**

*By Jill Jackson and Sy Miller*

Let there be peace on earth  
And let it begin with me;  
Let there be peace on earth,  
The peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father  
Brothers all are we,  
Let me walk with my brother  
In perfect harmony.\*

Let peace begin with me,  
Let this be the moment now;  
With every step I take,  
Let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment  
In peace eternally.  
Let there be peace on earth  
And let it begin with me.

**Copyrighted alternate lyric:**

With God our Creator  
We are family  
Let us walk with each other  
In perfect harmony

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Note: If in your venue you do not choose to use the word “God,” you may use the phrase, “With Earth as our Mother, her children all are we.”