



REMEMBERING #CHARLOTTESVILLE LITURGY

As we approach the one year anniversary of the violent white supremacist gathering that overtook Charlottesville, VA on August 12, 2017, and reflect on the impact that event had in catalyzing people of faith and conscious to stand up and refuse the violence and hate of white supremacy in cities across the country, we also recognize our failure to transform the racist systems and reckon with a racist history that continues to give space and breath to these festering, explicit displays of violence and hate. The lived reality of our black and brown siblings has not changed. The racist systems built on white supremacy are still destroying black and brown communities from educational disparity to economic suppression to mass incarceration to family separation and the detainment of asylum seekers to police violence. Though some of the Jim Crow era Confederate monuments came down around the country in the aftermath of August 12, they still stand in Charlottesville and in too many communities refusing to deal with a racist history that continues to dehumanize. The good news is that within our communities, we have the power and resources to repair. The Living Spirit of God is present in the continuing struggle for life, humanity and liberation, and the testimony of this reality is the resilience and perseverance of the communities and individuals most affected by the violence of racism and white supremacy.

The purpose of this liturgy is to help your community remember the tragic events of last August, allow your community to repent for complicity in white supremacy, honor the resiliency of marginalized communities, and enter into streams of repair. We recommend offering spaces of mobilization, learning and action after this liturgy. If your community is still finding its way, we recommend consulting the [platform of the Movement 4 Black Lives](#) as well as the [demands of the Poor People's Campaign](#) as starting points in identifying priorities and work to be done in your own communities.

May you be humble in your work, bold in your witness and radical in your commitment to love and justice in the way of Jesus.

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****For the ritual in this service, designate three spaces, one for remembrance, one for repentance and one for repair. At each space offer the opportunity to write, either directly on a wall, or on notecards or paper that can be posted.*

ACKNOWLEDGING INDIGENOUS LAND*

One: We who are gathered here, in the building of _____ ,
in the city of _____ ,
pause to acknowledge the indigenous people of this land.
The _____ people, speakers of the _____ language,
existed for thousands of years.
We acknowledge them as the original stewards of this land,
and we recognize the presence of their ancestors who still ask for justice.

CALL TO WORSHIP

One: Let us come and gather together in community.
Let us bring our full selves.
Let us bring our despair, bring our fear, bring our remorse,
and bring our hope.

Many: We gather to remember, we gather to repent, we gather to repair.

One: Let us gather together in the name of the one who binds us all together.
Let us call on the Way of Jesus.
Let us place ourselves in God's story of relationship, transformation and justice.

Many: We gather to remember, we gather to repent, we gather to repair.

One: Let us gather together knowing that we have work to do.
Let us acknowledge our complicity in injustice.
Let us turn our hearts and our minds toward sacrifice and radical living.

Many: We gather to remember, we gather to repent, we gather to repair.

One: Let us gather together with a yearning for restoration.
Let us commit our lives to enacting God's dream of a mended creation.
Let us call on God to move us.

Many: We gather to remember, we gather to repent, we gather to repair.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

One: As disciples of Jesus Christ,
we are called to struggle against everything that leads us away
from loving ourselves, loving God and loving our neighbors. Let us pray...

**Many: Living God,
we confess our complicity in the violence of racism and white supremacy, some of us
chained by its oppression
and some of us addicted to the privilege it creates.
We acknowledge that white supremacy is not what God intends for us,
that power built on lies and dehumanization
must be confronted and dismantled.**

**We have betrayed our neighbors
with our lack of urgency and our desire for decorum.
We repent for the ways we have failed to show up.
We repent for the ways we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.
We have refused to sacrifice our comfort, our wealth and our reputation when the
lives of others have been on the line.**

**Oh God, accept our repentance today,
for the ways we have neglected the humanity
of those who suffer under the evil system of racism and white supremacy. Let our
indifference to injustice and our avoidance of culpability
end here and now,
and may we devote our lives to honoring the full humanity
and the full God-like-ness of ourselves
and all our black and brown siblings.**

ASSURANCE OF GRACE

One: The enduring presence of God is true.
God's grace and Life-Giving Spirit are abundant,
forgiving our sin and offering the power of transformation,
despite what lies have been internalized
or our role in the injustice and death caused by racism and white supremacy.
In the strong and beautiful name of Jesus, you are forgiven.
In the strong and beautiful name of Jesus,
you are called to transform your life and community in love and justice. **Amen.**

RITUAL OF REMEMBRANCE, REPENTANCE, REPAIR

REMEMBRANCE

****After the remembrance scripture is read, people are invited to write the names of specific people or communities of people who have made tremendous sacrifices resisting the lies of racism and all its intersecting forms of violence, as well as remembering and writing the names of communities and individuals enduring the violence and racism and white supremacy.*

Psalm 126, NRSV, adapted

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
when God was faithful to those in the struggle and new legislation passed,
abolishing slavery, guaranteeing voting rights,
affirming the humanity of people long oppressed,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then it was said among the nations,
"GOD has done great things for them."
Our GOD has done great things for us,
and we rejoiced.
But the struggle is not over.

Indigenous communities are still exploited,
their land and sovereignty ignored.

We have not seen the end of slavery in this age of mass incarceration
and we witness new forms of dehumanization and violence
with family separation and privatized immigration detention.

Restore our fortunes, O HOLY ONE,
restore our hope and our sense of call to work for love and justice,
like the watercourses in the Negeb.

May those who sow in tears
reap with shouts of joy.

Those who go out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
carrying their sheaves.

Go and remember...

REPENTANCE

****After the repentance scripture is read, people are invited to write specific things for which they repent regarding the internalization of the lies of racism and/or participation in the systems of injustice and white supremacy.*

Matthew 4:16-17, NRSV adapted

...the people who sat in the night
have seen a great light,
and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death
light has dawned.”

From that time Jesus began to proclaim,
“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

Go and repent...

REPAIR

****After the repair scripture is read, people are invited to write specific actions of repair they will commit too. In addition people might write and remind one another what the stakes are and what they are willing to sacrifice to see the end of racism and white supremacy.*

Isaiah 58:3-12, NRSV (for one, or many, voices)

“Why do we fast, but you do not see?
Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?”

Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day,
and oppress all your workers.

Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight
and to strike with a wicked fist.

Such fasting as you do today
will not make your voice heard on high.

Is such the fast that I choose,
a day to humble oneself?

Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush,
and to lie in sackcloth and ashes?
Will you call this a fast,
a day acceptable to the Lord?
Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the thongs of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover them,
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up quickly;
your vindicator shall go before you,
the glory of GOD shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and God will say, Here I am.
If you remove the yoke from among you,
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 night
and your gloom be like the noonday.
Our GOD will guide you continually,
and satisfy your needs in parched places,
and make your bones strong;
and you shall be like a watered garden,
like a spring of water,
whose waters never fail.
Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt;
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.

Go and repair...

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING/HONORING OF RESILIENCY

God who does not forget,
we give thanks for the indigenous peoples, whose land we now inhabit.
We repent for the violent destruction of their communities
and we repent for believing that this land is ours.

**We give thanks for indigenous resiliency
in the face of atrocity.**

May we honor and acknowledge indigenous communities.

God who does not forget,
we give thanks for the African-American community,
people who have survived and thrived in the midst of white terror.
We repent for stripping humans of their humanity
and we repent for ignoring continuing oppression.

**We give thanks for the resiliency of blackness
in the face of white supremacy.**

May we honor and acknowledge African-American communities.

God who does not forget,
we give thanks for immigrants and refugees,
who demonstrate the meaning of courage.
We repent for our American exceptionalism and nationalism
that cause us to harm and turn away those who should be our neighbor
and we repent for our refusal to share our abundance.

**We give thanks for the resiliency of immigrants
in the face of violent national fervor.**

May we honor and acknowledge our immigrant neighbors.

We are blessed to be witnesses.
We are blessed to be invited into solidarity and action.
We give thanks in the strong and beautiful name of Jesus, **Amen.**

BEATITUDE BLESSING

Blessed are you, in your emptiness and in your desperate cries to God,
For yours is the Grace of God,
the Love that surpasses all understanding.

Blessed are you who cry for your own pain and for the suffering you witness.
For the Holy Spirit is promised to you,
groaning herself where words fall short.

Blessed are you who respond in nonviolence
For you belong to God and one another,
and life will flourish where you seek to protect it.

Blessed are you who ache and fast for justice,
For you will witness the Love of God
acting upon this earth.

Blessed are you who are led by empathy, quick to listen and slow to judge.
You will sow gentleness, kindness and mercy.

Blessed are you who push deeper into your faith.
You will be refreshed to go on.

Blessed are you who work for justice.
You will know the binding Love of God in your life.

Blessed are you who suffer for that work.

You make way for Resurrection.

SENDING

Go forth to remember, repent and repair,
confident that God is with you,
guiding, encouraging,
making all things new.

*Resources:

Why and how to do an acknowledgement of indigenous territory: <http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/acknowledging-the-territory.pdf>

Policy Platform of the Movement For Black Lives:
<https://policy.m4bl.org/platform/>

Demands of the Poor People's Campaign: <https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/demands/>

Charlottesville Resilience Fund:
<https://secure.actblue.com/donate/resilience-fund>

Congregate Cville:
<https://congregatecville.com/>

Remembering #Charlottesville Liturgy written by Rev. Brittany Caine-Conley and Rev. Tracy Howe Wispelwey



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