

Service of Lament for the Sin of Racism

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Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in IL/ WI
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Worship Center

*One black 4" pillar candle
one black taper in holder
one white taper in holder*

Place the black candle in the center with one taper on each side

Have all three candles lit prior to the opening song

Order of Service and Liturgy

Opening Song

Keep Your Eyes on the Prize by Sweet Honey In the Rock
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_tcZAqQUAg.

Invocation

YaH in the time before time You moved and were, You spoke a word calling forth creation. Making men and women, You declared all was good.

And, then it was not.

Yah in the time when humanity first broke relationship with You and with one another, You mourned and began to speak a word instructing us on how to return and restore relationship with You and one another.

At times, we listened, and at times, we did not. Yah, you did not abandon us. You spoke through prophets and you came to us through Jesus Christ to show us the way. You entered into the places of deepest pain and spoke of love and justice.

God, we come asking that you send your Spirit that moved over a cosmic chaos and created peace in the place of turmoil. Send your Holy Spirit to help comfort our communities whose troubles have been compounded by systematic inequality that have

led to long term, unresolved abuse and oppression. Look over our communities that are sick and tired or being unheard, outnumbered and overpowered. Help us to find justice, even when the hope of justice is being choked out of us. Help us to breathe, when life makes it hard to breathe. Breathe on us, so that our spirits may be made whole, you spoke through your prophets, boldly and prophetically and.....

Today, You are still speaking, still instructing, and still calling us back to You and to one another. And, so YaH we come to you in this moment. We come to you from places of pain and apathy. We come to you from places of privilege and places of oppression. We come to you tired because we have been fighting this fight for a long time. We come to you energized for we have just recognized our call to be a part of the struggle We come to you uncertain of where we are but trusting that in You we find the way.

We come because in this moment in time we sense the Spirit moving over the chaos of our world. We recognize your voice saying, "You are good my black child. You are good my brown and my red children. You are good my almond and golden children. You are good my white child. My Children, in all your wondrous shades, I create you in my image. And, together you are good."

We come because we want to see the world as You do, YaH. We come because we want to live as sisters and brothers who see the image of God in the eyes of every person. We come because we want to love as You love.

YaH, You have led us to this place, to this moment in time, so speak to us as you spoke to Moses at Sinai.

Confession of the Unnamed Sin

Scripture Amos 5: 7 – 13, 18 – 24

*Doom to you who turn justice into poison,
and throw righteousness to the ground!*
⁸ *The one who made the Pleiades and Orion,
and turns deep darkness into the morning,
and darkens the day into night;
who summons the waters of the sea,
and pours them out on the surface of the earth—
this one's name is the Lord—*
⁹ *who causes destruction to flash out against the strong,
so that destruction comes upon the fortress.*
¹⁰ *They hate the one who judges at the city gate,
and they reject the one who speaks the truth.*
¹¹ *Truly, because you crush the weak,
and because you tax their grain,
you have built houses of carved stone,*

*but you won't live in them;
you have planted pleasant vineyards,
but you won't drink their wine.*

¹² *I know how many are your crimes,
and how numerous are your sins—
afflicting the righteous,
taking money on the side,
turning away the poor who seek help.*

¹³ *Therefore, the one who is wise will keep silent in that time;
it is an evil time....*

¹⁸ *Doom to those who desire the day of the Lord!
Why do you want the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, not light;*

¹⁹ *as if someone fled from a lion,
and was met by a bear;
or sought refuge in a house,
rested a hand against the wall,
and was bitten by a snake.*

²⁰ *Isn't the day of the Lord darkness, not light;
all dark with no brightness in it?*

²¹ *I hate, I reject your festivals;
I don't enjoy your joyous assemblies.*

²² *If you bring me your entirely burned offerings and gifts of food—
I won't be pleased;
I won't even look at your offerings of well-fed animals.*

²³ *Take away the noise of your songs;
I won't listen to the melody of your harps.*

²⁴ *But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

Prayer

God of the moon and the stars, the day and the night, we confess that we have failed to love you with our hearts and minds, with our words and in our deeds. We have failed to keep your word and to follow your instruction.

We fail to love our neighbours as ourselves. We oppress the vulnerable. We exploit the poor and place heavy burdens upon their backs. We cling to privilege and demand that our power be protected. We celebrate and hold our religious services in the midst of evil times seeking our own safety and well-being. We idolize law and order as we sacrifice justice and holiness. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

God, we confess that as white people, we have benefitted from systems built on 246 years of slavery and 75 years of Jim Crow laws. We confess that we benefit from the ongoing legacy of economic disparity, and unequal access to health care, mass incarceration, the school to prison pipeline, and theologies that have failed to name the evil of the legacy of colonization and embracing the false narrative of race. We have sacrificed to the gods of violence, prosperity, and self-interest. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

(extinguish the black taper)

We have failed to grasp the reality that when sins of the fathers and forefathers are not acknowledged and changes are not made, subsequent generations must live with the consequences of these sins. We have said, "Not me, not my generation" and denied the continuity of the past with the present. We have turned blind eyes as black men and women have been shot and brutalized by those who are suppose to protect them. We have had deaf ears failing to responded to the gasping cries, "I cannot breathe." We have sought to define how others must feel, express, and act upon their grief and mourning, their outrage and despair. And in doing so, we seek to create a false security, to not be made to feel uncomfortable or called to account for the sins of our generation. We hold on to the false reality that we know what is best and we are the bearers of all truth. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

We have been comfortable in the seats of power and privilege. We pray for daily bread and then are glutenous in our desire for what is perceived as the good things in life. We are complacent with an economic system that is built on concepts of have and have nots. We cooperate in keeping some down so that we may be a bit more comfortable. We have watched as COVID 19 takes a disproportionate number of lives of persons of colour due to illnesses related to poor nutrition, high levels of stress, and inadequate access to health care. We fail to recognize the generosity and abundance of God who has created a sufficiency to meet the needs of all, to assure the wellbeing of all. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

We have failed to recognize the image of God in the faces of those who look different than us. We are complacent with a Eurocentric Western religion, that has recreated God in our image. We fail to recognize that we confess faith through and covenant to follow a brown, Palestinian man named Jesus. In doing this, we have denied the Christ in our Black, Native American, Asian sisters and brothers and others. In doing this we betray and deny the Christ in ourselves. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

(extinguish black pillar candle and the white taper)

For these sins and others, including but not exclusive to our own personal prejudices, the microaggressions that we engage in, the failure to stand with persons of colour as equals and as friends and advocates, we are sorry. We have not had eyes to see our brothers and sisters nor ears to hear their cries. In your mercy,

People: Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Unison: We ask forgiveness. We ask for wisdom, knowledge, courage and strength to move from this point as persons who seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you, O Lord, and with one another.

Silence

(at the end of at least 3 – 5 minutes of silence relight the black pillar candle)

Assurance of Empathy and Genuine Hospitality

***Unison Voice - We did not believe you because we were taught not to,
but today we are committed to believing.
We would not listen because we did not know how,
but today we are committed to listening.
We allowed our fear to weaponized our faith,
but today we are committed to rebuking fear.
We supported policies and behaviors that valued our privilege,
but today we are divesting of our privilege.
Today we are committed to dismantling any
form of Christianity that values whiteness over
blackness
Today we are committed to extracting supremacy
out of our interpretation and presentation of the
Gospel.
Today we are committed to radical hospitality that seeks,
not to silence or mute the voices and experiences of
people of color, but seeks to center them,
make room for them and count their stories as sacred.
Today our commitment is to know more so that we can do better.***

(at the end of the prayer relight the black taper and the white taper)

Charge and Sending to Build the Beloved Community

In Hebrews 6: 6 it is stated, "They are crucifying again the Son of God and are holding him in contempt." Now as then, this is happening in the streets of Minneapolis, Atlanta, Louisville, Ferguson, New York, and more.

The good news, my brothers and sisters, is that God has said "No" to that evil on Golgotha and down through history. God has shown us that evil and death of crucifixion is not the way. As the curtain in the Temple was split, God refused to be separated from us and said no to all that separates us from one another - Resurrection, New Life, New Ways happen.

As Mircea Eliade said, "Life is not possible without an opening to transcendence." This is our Kairos time, our opening to transcendence- our time to echo God's eternal "No!"

In the Spirit of David, who became vile and turned a political moment into a spiritual one. In the spirit of Christ, who rebuked and whipped money changers in the house of worship. We take up that same spirit. Our Kairos moment starts with not, just *no*, but ***hell no***.

Hell no to mass incarceration!

Hell no to excessive punishment of brown and black school children!

Hell no to militarized police forces!

Hell no to continued killing of unarmed people of color!

Hell no to all that privileges some of YaH's children while oppressing other children whom YaH loves!

Closing Song

Change is Going to Come by Sam Cooke

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wEBlaMOmKV4>