

A Liturgy of Lament

Draft date: 9 Aug 2024

Our Purpose

In this service we hope to

- Acknowledge, name, and repent of the evil perpetrated by those in the church
- Lament and grieve the incalculable harms caused
- Begin a process

How to 'Lament'

The practice of lament may be new to many of us. For many of us it is something we gloss over or try to move through quickly to try to get to “hope” as soon as possible without allowing ourselves to truly sit with the discomfort, pain, and horror. In this lament we allow ourselves to face and name evil directly. Lament can point us toward hope and light, but it does not expect us to arrive at that destination.

Richard Rohr writes...

Our culture avoids lament. We are prone to move quickly to try to fix things, and often we need to lament, mourn, and grieve first to fully experience and understand what has taken place... Scripture teaches us that we can't move toward hope, peace, transformation, and reconciliation without going through sorrow, mourning, regret, and lament

Lament is a demonstrative, strong, and corporate expression of deep grief, pain, sorrow, and regret. Lament and repentance deal with issues of the heart. They pave the way for outer change... It is about mourning the painful, shameful, or sorrowful situation, about confessing sin and complicity and sorrow, about calling God to intervene and to change the situation. Finally, lament is about offering thanksgiving and praise to God, knowing that God will intervene and bring change, hope, and restoration.

We lament as a community, owning not just our own sins, but those of our colleagues and our institutions.

There is a risk this may come across as “performative and sanctimonious brow-beating”, or creating a sense of collective punishment. We acknowledge that some in the church have abused, some have covered up, some have wilfully ignored, while others have been genuinely unaware and still others have tirelessly fought for truth and justice. We are choosing to lament on behalf of the church collectively but are aware that the church remains a wide collection of individuals.

What this is not

- This is not a “one-and-done” event, but part of a wider process of acknowledging and addressing pain caused
- This is not an attempt by the church to absolve itself but a statement of repentance to God, and apology to those harmed.

Who is Here

This service takes place as the Diocese gathers for its synod, which means most ministry units are represented. This is done to acknowledge that *all* of our churches and institutions have likely had some abuse take place and certainly *all* of our churches and institutions have a responsibility to learn how to better protect and uphold those in their care.

We hope this service will speak to those who have experienced abuse. But we also acknowledge that many will feel unable to enter a church or be around clergy because of the abuse they have endured at our hands and in our spaces.

Key church leaders will be wearing the vestments of office. We are aware this may be a trigger to some, but we have chosen to wear them so that our apology comes not just from a particular person, but from that role. The stoles are made of sackcloth, with an ashen cross, these are ancient images of repentance and lament.

A note on forgiveness and absolution

Forgiveness is foundational to our faith and is an expression of God’s nature. Forgiveness is holy and freeing. However, we acknowledge that it has frequently been used by the church to minimise, excuse, avoid punishment and even to lay an extra burden of guilt and shame on the shoulders of the abused. Weaponising forgiveness is wrong.

This service includes statements of repentance, but no absolution. We do not have the right to absolve ourselves, and so leave our repentance before the people we have harmed, and before God.

Learning from Lewis Smeades’ *The Art of Forgiving*, we are reminded that forgiveness is not

- Ignoring or forgetting
- Condoning or excusing
- Tolerating or allowing further abuse
- Reconciliation or restoration
- Expecting things to go back to the way they were
- An opportunity for offenders to escape consequence or justice.

A note on Safety

Liturgy is the work of the people, so we hope you are able to join with the responses, however your emotional wellbeing is of paramount importance, so please participate only as you are able

If you require further support during or immediately after the service, we have some **trained counsellors** in the offices next to the Cathedral.

The Liturgy

People are invited to light a votive candle in the tray in the middle of the Cathedral as they enter.

Welcome

Sentence

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
To the voice of my pleading

Psalm 130:1-2

Please stand for the opening hymn

Hymn

First verse solo

Lord we come, we're broken and tearful,
and with fear and trembling fall;
fall before Your Throne of Justice;
we have sinned and hurt our own.

[All:]

**Lord we cry to you for mercy,
Lord we've sinned and we've done wrong.**

Men all sing

In your name we hurt your children,
turned our ears and eyes away,
Callously chose ease and silence,
letting sinners have their way.

**Lord we cry to you for mercy,
Lord Your Church has sinned and done wrong.**

Women all sing

Men and women in your service,
in our care and in our Faith,
speaking out but not believed, and

made to feel they caused the pain.

**Lord we cry to you for mercy,
Penitent we fall at your feet.**

All sing

**Lord we tremble at our ignorance,
in our weakness and our own fault,
Help us take a stand for Your Justice
in Your Body and in Your world.
You are Good and Just and hate all wrong,
Help us change, Oh Lord Most High.**

Words: Jo Bean | Tune: Picardy

Please be seated

Psalm 13

We pray to the Lord:

**I trust in your steadfast love;
My heart shall rejoice in your salvation**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**I trust in your steadfast love;
My heart shall rejoice in your salvation.**

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed";
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

**I trust in your steadfast love;
My heart shall rejoice in your salvation.**

Pause

I will sing to the Lord,
Because he has dealt bountifully with me.
Amen

Reading

Lamentations 5:1, 14-22

Remember, O Lord, what has befallen us;
look, and see our disgrace!
The old men have left the city gate,
the young men their music.
The joy of our hearts has ceased;
our dancing has been turned to mourning.
The crown has fallen from our head;
woe to us, for we have sinned!
Because of this our hearts are sick;
because of these things our eyes have grown dim:
because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate;
jackals prowl over it.
But you, O Lord, reign forever;
your throne endures to all generations.
Why have you forgotten us completely?
Why have you forsaken us these many days?
Restore us to yourself, O Lord, that we may be restored;
renew our days as of old—
unless you have utterly rejected us
and are angry with us beyond measure.

A Litany of Confession

Each section of the litany will be led by a sole voice on behalf of the church. You are invited to join with the confession in bold at the end of each section

We, the church, have failed to listen
We have failed to take reports seriously
We have failed to ask questions
We have failed to follow processes designed to protect.
We have failed to create safe spaces
We have failed to act on suspicion
We have failed to act

We have failed to follow your bias for downtrodden, dispossessed and marginalised and instead have preyed upon the vulnerable.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, mercifully hear us.

We have minimised

We have hidden from truth

We have turned away

We have been wilfully ignorant

We have broken trust

We have protected the reputation of the church, and of perpetrators, at the cost of truth and justice.

We have protected the powerful at the expense of the abused.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, mercifully hear us.

We have bullied

We have ostracised

We have assaulted

We have abused

We have raped

We have stolen innocence and destroyed faith

We have desecrated holy spaces: homes, sacristies and schools, churches and altars.

We have permanently injured body, mind, and spirit. We have left bruises on the soul

Lord, hear us.

Lord, mercifully hear us.

We have abused mentally and spiritually.

We have warped the Bible to excuse or condone our behaviour.

We have used fear and shame to control and coerce.

We have added trauma to those already disproportionately suffering: Tangata whenua, the disabled, LGBTQI+ and takatapuhi communities.

We have taken God's good gifts and used them to satisfy our own desires.

We have distorted and corrupted the Good News of God's forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

We have marred the divine image in both the perpetrator and survivor.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, mercifully hear us.

We have sinned in thought, word, and deed.

We have sinned in ignorance, in weakness, and through our own deliberate fault

We have sinned against God and against God's children.

We have sinned.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, mercifully hear us.

E te Ariki, kia aroha mai.

E te Karaiti, kia aroha mai.

E te Ariki, kia aroha mai.

Silence

**In God's presence we cry out in lament
for the pain caused,
for the dignity robbed,
for the truth rejected,
for the freedom denied.**

Silence

We entrust ourselves to God's judgement and mercy, to God's forgiveness and love.

Please stand

Hymn

**O God, when trust is shattered
by wolves among your sheep,
when youth and children suffer,
when those remembering weep,
when victims tell their stories,
when leaders hide abuse,**

**bring healing, love and mercy!
Bring justice, God of truth!**

**When leaders side with evil,
when people do their worst,
may we reach out to victims
and put their healing first.
If any member suffers,
we all will suffer, too.
Bring healing, love and mercy!
Bring justice, God of truth!**

**We pray that the abusers
will learn sin's awful cost,
and— making no excuses—
will know that they are lost.
Then may they find redemption—
as we all need it, too.
Bring healing, love and mercy!
Bring justice, God of truth!**

**May all who serve in churches
be careful, watchful, wise.
May we prevent abuses
and hear your children's cries.
We pray that institutions
will seek your way anew.
Bring healing, love and mercy!
Bring justice, God of truth!**

Text: Carolyn Winfrey Gillette 2018, Tune: PASSION CHORALE

Please be seated

Statement of Apology

Including the presentation of a plaque, first promised 30 years ago, to mark the courage of survivors, supporters, and those who spoke up.

The Rt Rev'd Dr Peter Carrell – Bishop of Christchurch

The Most Rev'd Justin Duckworth – Tikanga Pakeha Archbishop of New Zealand

The Beginnings of Hope

Lighting of Paschal Candle

The Paschal candle is lit during Easter and at baptisms and funerals. It is a reminder of the presence of Jesus, and the hope of life springing from the tomb of death. We light it now to remember that hope.

**Within our darkest night, you kindle the fire that never dies away,
never dies away**

Prayer

Lord, hear our prayer

And let our cry come unto you

Reading

Isaiah 58: 5-11

Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice,
to undo the straps 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 the Lord shall be your rear guard.
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;
you shall cry for help, and he 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 darkness
and your gloom be like the noonday.
The Lord 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.

Hear God's prophetic words to the church
Thanks be to God

Affirmations of Change

Saying what we will do in the future does not atone for the sins of the past. Nor does it guarantee a perfectly safe church. However, it is important to collectively affirm our longing to better protect all in our care.

We have listened to the cries of those we have wounded.
We have named our failure.
We have expressed our deep sorrow,
We repent the wrong we have done
and the actions we have failed to take.
We have expressed our intention to change now and in the future.

We have failed so badly.
We are fearful of lapsing back into familiar ways: failing to keep
vulnerable people safe; protecting our good name instead of caring for
those who have been wronged.

We have already begun to put in place better safety procedures, and reporting processes; more robust accountability and consequences for those who harm others.

For this intention to change to become reality needs a commitment from every member of the church.

We need to know that we all stand together; we will not be silent and we will hold one another to account.

Are we able to stand as the people of God,
and state our intentions together.

As members and leaders of this church we commit ourselves to change.

We will challenge structures that disempower the vulnerable.

We will actively support the marginalised in our communities.

We will not turn our faces away when we notice injustice.

We will not remain silent if we believe someone is not being heard.

We will not remain silent if we hear victims being blamed for their abuse.

We will not allow concern for the reputation of a perpetrator, or of the church, to keep us silent.

We will hold our leaders to account if we believe they are ignoring an ongoing danger to the vulnerable.

When we take on leadership roles we will be committed to safe practices.

God give us courage to live by the words we have spoken.

Please remain standing

Departing Prayer

**In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

During the hymn, the ministers will process out

Hymn

**O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us
and fit your church to meet this hour.**

**O Breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part!**

**O Wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then, in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore — for this we plead.**

Words: Elizabeth A. P. Head (1850-1936) Tune: ST CLEMENT

Dismissal

Let us pray together

**The blessing of God, the eternal goodwill of God, the
shalom of God, the wildness and the warmth of God, be
among us and between us, now and always.**

The divine Spirit dwells in us
Thanks be to God

Organ voluntary

Please do join us for refreshments following the service.

For immediate support

- Safe to Talk *Kōrero mai ka ora*
National sexual harm helpline
0800 044 443
Free text 4334
- Shine
Domestic violence helpline
0508 744 633
- Lifeline
0800 543 354
Free text 4357
- 1737

For longer-term support

- Cambridge Clinic
Sexual Assault Services: Free medical services for anyone in Canterbury or the West Coast who have been sexually assaulted either recently or in the past.
(03) 366 0067
- Male Survivors Canterbury
(03) 365 9000
- START
Specialist sexual abuse counselling work with children, youth, and adults
(03) 355 4414
- STOP
Assessments and intervention for adults and adolescents with concerning sexual behaviour
(03) 353 0257

Next Steps

Anyone who is a survivor of historic abuse in the Anglican Church who wish to engage with the Church about that abuse are encouraged to email

contact@anglicanredress.nz

Details on how to make a complaint are at <https://ministrystandards.org>. Anyone wishing to make a current complaint can contact the Ministry Standards Commission registrar by email: registrar@ministrystandards.org

You will find more about the Diocesan safeguarding processes and resources at <https://www.anglicanlife.org.nz/about-us/safeguarding/>