

PRAYER OF LAMENT, CONFESSION AND HOPE

This liturgy is offered for churches to use as a response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into Abuse in Care.

Our desire is to hold the stories of survivors with compassion and care and pray that we, individually and as a church, will not turn away from all that God calls us to do in response.

Please do what is needed to make yourself safe during this time of prayer, including stepping away from the space if necessary.

We keep silence as we enter and sit.

A candle is lit as a symbol of God's presence.

God of the chaos before the light,
we bring to you our horror
at all the harm
of which humanity is capable.

We hold before you all those
whose trust has been broken
whose innocence has been robbed
whose bodies, minds and souls have been damaged
whose voices have been silenced.

We cry out for justice and plead for healing for the lives that carry these scars
God, hear our cry

We grieve for those whose lives have been shattered by others' actions
God, hear our cry

We grieve that our communities have not been safe places for all
God, hear our cry

As a church we have failed
to listen and to respond:
turning away from claims of abuse
refusing to admit culpability
ignoring or condoning abusive behaviour.

In silence we call to mind our sins.

Silence

As a church, we confess our sins:

**Merciful God,
we confess that we have sinned
in what we have thought and said,
in the wrong we have done
and in the good we have not done.
We have sinned in ignorance:
we have sinned in weakness:
we have sinned through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry.
We repent and turn to you.**

We come in our brokenness and in need of your redemption, assured of the promise that you offer forgiveness to those who truly repent. Forgive us, renew us and reshape us as your people.

Give us courage to change:
to hear what needs to be said
to honour the stories entrusted to us
to be honest with and about ourselves
to be ready to work for truth, justice and reconciliation

O God, who is light, break through into our darkness.

You speak into the chaos and pain
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

You see our shame and love us still
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

You care for us and love us into being
Illuminate your world and rekindle our hope.

God, who gathers up
the broken pieces of humanity
and holds them with love,
**breathe your healing and hope
into our dark spaces.**

We commit ourselves to living in the light
to creating safe places
to listening and learning
to taking courageous action
to bringing healing and reconciliation.

Gracious God, we commit ourselves to You.
Strengthen and guide us by your Holy Spirit
towards more justice, more truth, more love
through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.
Amen.

Go now to love and serve the Lord. Go in peace.
Amen. We go in the name of Christ.

Guidelines for use:

These prayers can be used for both corporate and private prayer.

You may wish to add additional elements of silence, music or response.

Please be mindful of how we talk and pray about abuse in corporate settings. Please only use this liturgy in the context of an opt-in space, where people have been advised in advance that the topic of abuse will be covered.

A suggestion for those using this prayer, is to pray it for themselves first, in preparation.

Acknowledgments:

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