

# **The Diocese of Christchurch**

*The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia*



## **A Liturgy of Lament**

**The Christ Church Transitional Cathedral**

**7.00 pm Thursday 5 September 2024**

## **Our Purpose**

This service is an attempt to

- Acknowledge, name, and repent of the evil perpetrated by those in the church, and by church institutions and processes.
- Lament and grieve the incalculable harms caused
- Continue a process of truth-telling and reform.

## **How to ‘Lament’**

The practice of lament will be new to some. It can be tempting to 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 ... 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 the role those vestments represent. 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 Smedes' *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 support people in the offices next to the Cathedral.

# A Liturgy of Lament

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

## Welcome

The people are welcomed informally by the Dean and Bishop, offering some history to this service. Ven. Megan Herles-Mooar will share some notes on emotional safety.

## 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.**

*Sung by male voices*

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

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

*Sung by female voices*

Men and women in your service,  
in our care and in our Faith,  
speaking out but not believed, and  
made to feel that they caused the pain.

**All: Lord we cry to you for mercy;  
penitent we fall at your feet.**

**All: Lord we tremble at our ign'rance,  
in our weakness and our own fault,  
Help us take a stand for your justice  
in your body and your world.  
You are good and just and hate all wrong.  
Help us change, O 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

*Passion Chorale*

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a hymn. The first staff begins with a treble clef and contains a melody of quarter and eighth notes. The second and third staves continue the melody with similar note values. The first staff ends with a double bar line and repeat dots. The title 'Passion Chorale' is written in italics above the first staff.



**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

*Rev'd Canon Mandy Neil and Ken Clearwater ONZM present a memorial plaque*

Bishop Peter, we request that you take this plaque, first promised in 1996, and charge you to lead Standing Committee in relationship with those who survived abuse within the church, to mark the courage of survivors, supporters, and those who spoke out.

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

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

## The Beginnings of Hope

### Lighting of Paschal Candle

*The Paschal candle is lit. It is normally lit during Easter and at baptisms and funerals as 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 resurrection hope.*

### Taizé Chant

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a bass line. The lyrics are: "With-in our dark-est night, you kin-dle the fire that nev-er dies a-way, nev-er dies a-way. With-in our dark-est night, you kin-dle the fire that nev-er dies a-way, nev-er dies a-way." The chords indicated above the notes are: B, Em, D, G, C, G, D, G, Em, C, Am, B, Em, Am, B, Em, Am, B.

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

## **Prayer**

*We join in the prayers of the people with bidding and response*

Lord, hear our prayer,  
**and let our cry come to 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.**

### **Blessing**

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.

*During the hymn, the ministers will process out*



### **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  
Text or call this number 24/7 to speak to a trained counsellor

### **For longer-term support**

- Petersgate  
(03) 343 3391  
Christchurch-based counselling centre offering affordable, professional counselling to all age groups and genders
- Arahura  
(03) 338 1080  
Christchurch-based counselling centre, offering holistic counselling that is rooted in Christian spirituality
- 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
- Canterbury Men's Centre (Male Survivors)  
(03) 365 9000  
Christchurch-based counselling service for men who have experienced sexual trauma
- 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 wishes to engage with the Church about that abuse is encouraged to email **[contact@anglicanredress.nz](mailto:contact@anglicanredress.nz)**

Details on how to make a complaint can be found at **<https://ministrystandards.org>**

Anyone wishing to make a current complaint can contact the Ministry Standards Commission registrar by email at **[registrar@ministrystandards.org](mailto:registrar@ministrystandards.org)**

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