

#CHARLOTTESVILLE PRAYER VIGIL: ONE-MONTH ANNIVERSARY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2017

The Tapestry Team of the Virginia Synod ELCA shares this liturgy in response to racist violence in Charlottesville on the weekend of August 12, 2017. We offer this as an aid for corporate prayer in our congregations and also for private prayer for families and individual use. While we encourage use of this liturgy on September 12, marking the one-month anniversary of #Charlottesville, we invite you to discern other appropriate times for its use as well.

Leaders lead prayers and readings in plain face type. People respond with bold face type.

Words of welcome followed by brief silence.

Charlottesville Prayer – *incorporating words by Lenny Duncan (edited for this liturgy), ELCA Vicar and Seminarian, from "Brown Shirts in the Streets and Fear in the Pulpit" published on medium.com. Used with permission.*

Voice 1

Then came #Charlottesville.

They had torches.

And they were in a mob.

And they were standing at the altars of the old Confederate States of America.

People

We looked at our notifications and there it was.

The face of America.

Raw and angry—screaming "blood and soil."

Voice 2

A church was surrounded by white supremacists with torches because clergy had the nerve to show up and declare the truth.

The truth is that a Jewish man of color overcame death and murder by Law

Enforcement in the form of centurions.

Jesus would not stand with Nazis. Or the Klan. Or those who come in the name of the Lord proclaiming hatred, desecrating the name of Christ.

Voice 1

The Gospel message is in direct opposition to the culture of empire and white supremacy. These folks gathered to say that. It seemed there may be a church burning. After Charleston the church offers no pause to white supremacy.

Voice 2

How many consider ourselves “Bonhoeffer Lutherans” who loved to imagine what we would have done in the face of the rise of fascism, suddenly knowing exactly what we would have done in his shoes. Because now we were doing it, whether we knew it or not.

People

And the first hint is when we said this word: Context.

“Well, in my context.”

Voice 2

It’s easy to hide behind “context” and offer our lame excuses.

Disavowing white supremacy, racist violence, and the terror of Confederate statues and monuments would never work in our context.

Or at least our context demanded a softer tone.

Voice 1

#Charlottesville is another in a long line of Golgothas. This country has crucified it’s marginalized since its inception and its birth a few hundred years later. It screams crucify them to it’s black and brown bodies. To its lgbtq+ bodies. To its Jewish bodies.

People

And yet we gather here today repenting of having done too little.

Too little since #Charleston Golgotha

Too little since #Ferguson Golgotha

Too little since #Baltimore Golgotha

Voice 1

You ask where is resurrection? Now is a time that doubt in the power of God would be understandable. All of those persecuted and crucified on the cross of white supremacy have waited by the tomb for the soul of this country to move the stone aside their whole lives. They await this country to see them with their wounds and to share the good news.

People

In the kingdom, we shall feast on justice, drink the wine of grace, and eat the bread of eternal life, and we will not cease to proclaim our millennia-old mantra: as it is in heaven, so shall it be on earth.

Hymn: “When the Poor Ones/Cuando el pobre” ELW 725

Readings

Proverbs 31:9

A reading from Proverbs.

Speak out, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Isaiah 1:17

A reading from Isaiah.

Learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 72 (*read responsively*)

¹Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;

²**that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

³that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

⁴**Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

⁵May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

⁶**Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

⁷In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

- ¹³**He has compassion on the lowly and poor,
and preserves the lives of the needy.**
- ¹⁴From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
and precious is their blood in his sight.
- ¹⁵**Long may he live! And may there be given to him gold of Sheba;
may prayer be made for him always, and may they bless him all the day long.**
- ¹⁶May there be an abundance of grain in the land, growing thick even on the hilltops;
may its fruit flourish like Lebanon, and may people flourish in cities like the grass of the
field.
- ¹⁷**May the king's name remain forever and be established as long as the sun
endures; may all the nations bless themselves in him and call him blessed.**
- ¹⁸Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of Israel;
you alone do wondrous deeds!
- ¹⁹**And blessed be your glorious name forever,
and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.**

Matthew 25:31-45

A reading from the gospel of Matthew.

¹When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.

⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?'

¹⁰And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' ¹¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ¹²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ¹³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?'

⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'

The Word of our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Vocal solo or hymn (suggested hymn: "Bring Peace to Earth Again", ELW 700)

Prayers of the People

People are invited to share a brief prayer petition in response to Charlottesville, racial violence, and our community.

Each petition concludes "Lord in your mercy..."

People's response: "Hear our prayer."

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord make his face upon you,

And be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,

And give you peace.

Hymn: "We Are Called"

ELW 720

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share a sign of that peace.

Sundaysandseasons.com.

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Tapestry Team, Virginia Synod, ELCA

www.vasynod.org/ministries/tapestry

Keeping the faith at the crossroads of justice, gospel, and Jesus' love.