

**A Service of Repentance and Lament
First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro
June 11, 2020, 8:46pm**

Welcome and Statement of Purpose

Repentance

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Call to Confession

Confession:

Merciful God, we come before you and one another to confess our sin.

**You call us to be the Church of Jesus Christ,
but when you were hungry,
we gave you no food;
when you were thirsty,
we gave you nothing to drink;
when you were a stranger,
we did not welcome you;
when you were naked,
we gave you no clothing;
when you were sick and in prison;
we did not visit you;
when you could not breathe,
we gave you no air.**

**You call us to stand where you stand—
against injustice and with the wronged,
but we often side with the powerful and the privileged.
At our founding,
we participated in the sin of slavery.
In your house, a place where all people are equally your children,
we upheld systems of inequality and failed to live into your kingdom.
We have benefitted and continue to benefit
from the privilege, safety, and comfort
which we denied our neighbors of color.
We cling to our power and hoard our resources,
rather than sharing so that there might be enough for all.**

**You call us in our baptism to renounce evil and its power in the world
but we turn away from the suffering of others,
failing to condemn racism as sin.
We remain silent in the face of injustice,
void of empathy,
and slow to act on behalf of our neighbors,
preventing justice from rolling down like waters
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.**

**You call us to go into the world as your reconciling community,
but we continue to segregate ourselves.
We have failed put down our greed, pride, and anger which divide us.
Out of fear, we build up walls rather than tear them down.**

**God of grace,
Forgive what we have done and what we have failed to do.
Set us free from the powers of sin and death,
and send us into the world as the Church of pardoned sinners,
to testify in the midst of a sinful world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

8 Minutes and 46 Seconds of Silence

Pardon: Joel 2:12-14a

Lament

Scripture Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-4

Poem: A Small Needful Fact by Ross Gay

Litany of Lament (adapted from “Worship in a Matthew 25 Church”)

One: From the cross, from the lynching tree, and from the city street, our Savior cries:
My people, my church,
why have you forsaken me?
Woe to you
when you satisfy yourselves with a rich feast
and pass by those who beg for bread —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: **Lord, have mercy upon us.**

One: Woe to you
when you are drunk with power and privilege
and ignore those who thirst for justice and dignity —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

One: Woe to you
when you open your hands to grasp and take
and close your doors to strangers in need —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

One: Woe to you
when you adorn yourselves with honor
and despise the naked because of their skin —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

One: Woe to you
when you anoint yourselves with precious oil
and deny healing and wholeness to others —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

One: Woe to you
when you flaunt and abuse your freedom
and allow the oppressed to remain in captivity —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

One: Woe to you
when you sing my praise
and study my teaching
and say your prayers in my name
and still fail to recognize me
in the faces of your neighbors —
for you have made a cross for your Savior.

All: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Commitment

Scripture Reading: Psalm 146

Liturgy of Commitment

One: Blessed are those who open doors,

All: for they will be called the children of God.

One: Blessed are those who break down walls,

All: for they will be called the children of God.

One: Blessed are those who challenge hate and racism,

All: for they will be called the children of God.

One: Jesus says: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.

I invite us all, in the name of Christ,

to turn from what is evil and turn to what is good,

rejecting all that is contrary to the gospel.

Do you renounce all evil,

and powers in the world which defy God's righteousness and love,

including the powers of white supremacy?

All: We renounce them.

One: Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate us from the love of God,
including the sin of structural racism?

All: We renounce them.

One: Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Lord and Savior,
following his call to break down the walls of hostility
that separate us from one another?

All: We do, with God's help.

One: Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,
obeying his Word and showing his love,
resisting racism in word and deed,
and working on behalf of the marginalized?

All: We will, with God's help.

One: And now, using words from the Confession of Belhar,
let us affirm together what we believe:

All: We believe that the Church must stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the Church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream; that the Church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged. Amen.