Liturgy of Repentance, Lament, and Courage to Act:
A collection of prayers, liturgy, songs, and scriptures gathered by the Office for Spiritual Life, Intercultural Resource Center, Portland Seminary, and the Office of the Chief Diversity Officer
George Fox University
June 2020

Listen: Dee Wilson, Rose Petals
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-3KkfQo_E

Pray:
Lord, come into our brokenness and our lives with your love that heals all. Consume our pride and replace it with humility and vulnerability. Allow us to make space for your correction and redemption. Allow us to bow down with humble hearts, hearts of repentance. Bind us together in true unity and restoration. May we hear your voice within the words of these pages. Give us collective eyes to see our role in repairing what has been broken. Allow these words to be a conduit for personal transformation that would lead to collective reproduction. --Latasha Morrison

Read:
Psalm 13 NIV
How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me? Look on me and answer, Lord my God. Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death, and my enemy will say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes will rejoice when I fall. But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the Lord’s praise, for he has been good to me.

Pray Together:

Leader: Cry aloud before the Lord, O walls of beautiful Jerusalem! Let your tears flow like a river day and night. Give yourselves no rest; give your eyes no relief. Lam. 2:18

People: We lament the murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, and George Floyd. We grieve with their families and friends. We are grieved, enraged, and fatigued by a society that refuses to see some of us as image-bearers of God.
Leader: Lift up your hands to him in prayer, pleading for your children, for in every street they are faint with hunger. Lam.2:19b

People: We lament the wicked realities being revealed by the pandemic. We lament the rise in anti-Asian and Asian American racism. We grieve how Latino and Latina immigrants and migrants have been scapegoated, harassed, detained, and separated from family members.

Leader: Your prophets have said so many foolish things, false to the core. They did not save you from exile by pointing out your sins. Instead, they painted false pictures, filling you with false hope. Lam.2:14

People: We lament corrupt leaders who care more for personal gain and for their own reputations than for those they have been elected to serve. We lament churches that turn away from injustice and suffering. We lament those who claim to follow Jesus while plugging their ears to the cries of the oppressed.

--A Time to Lament (An Excerpt) by David Swanson, New Community Covenant Church

Read:

Joel 2:12-13 NIV
“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.

Repent: Offer personal prayers of repentance as the Holy Spirit directs you

Listen: Urban Doxology, God Not Guns

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtl2ugNcFfk

Read: Isaiah 58:1-12 NIV
“Shout it aloud, do not hold back. Raise your voice like a trumpet. Declare to my people their rebellion and to the descendants of Jacob their sins. For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God. They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

‘Why have we fasted,’ they say, ‘and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?’ “
Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers. Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for people to humble themselves? Is it only for bowing one’s head like a reed and for lying in sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?

“Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness] will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

“If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Read:

Amos 5 NIV

Hear this word, Israel, this lament I take up concerning you: “Fallen is Virgin Israel, never to rise again, deserted in her own land, with no one to lift her up.”

This is what the Sovereign Lord says to Israel: “Your city that marches out a thousand strong will have only a hundred left; your town that marches out a hundred strong will have only ten left.”

This is what the Lord says to Israel: “Seek me and live; do not seek Bethel, do not go to Gilgal, do not journey to Beersheba. For Gilgal will surely go into exile, and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.” Seek the Lord and live, or he will sweep through the tribes of Joseph like a fire; it will devour them, and Bethel will have no one to quench it. There are those who turn justice into bitterness and cast righteousness to the ground.

He who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns midnight into dawn and darkens day into night, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out over the
face of the land—the Lord is his name. With a blinding flash he destroys the
stronghold and brings the fortified city to ruin.

There are those who hate the one who upholds justice in court and detest the
one who tells the truth. You levy a straw tax on the poor and impose a tax on
their grain. Therefore, though you have built stone mansions, you will not live in
them; though you have planted lush vineyards, you will not drink their wine. For I
know how many are your offenses and how great your sins. There are those who
oppress the innocent and take bribes and deprive the poor of justice in the
courts. Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such times, for the times are evil.

Seek good, not evil, that you may live. Then the Lord God Almighty will be with
you, just as you say he is. Hate evil, love good; maintain justice in the courts.
Perhaps the Lord God Almighty will have mercy on the remnant of Joseph.

Therefore this is what the Lord, the Lord God Almighty, says: “There will be
wailing in all the streets and cries of anguish in every public square. The farmers
will be summoned to weep and the mourners to wail. There will be wailing in all
the vineyards, for I will pass through your midst,” says the Lord.

Woe to you who long for the day of the Lord! Why do you long for the day of the
Lord? That day will be darkness, not light. It will be as though a man fled from a
lion only to meet a bear, as though he entered his house and rested his hand on
the wall only to have a snake bite him. Will not the day of the Lord be darkness,
not light—pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

“I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me.
Even though you bring me burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept
them. Though you bring choice fellowship offerings, I will have no regard for
them. Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your
harps.

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

“Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings forty years in the wilderness, people of
Israel? You have lifted up the shrine of your king, the pedestal of your idols, the
star of your god—which you made for yourselves.

Therefore I will send you into exile beyond Damascus,” says the Lord, whose
name is God Almighty.

Pray:

Father in heaven, our hearts are heavy and our tongues fumble to describe the
pain we feel. But we call upon You because You are the one true God and you
are our God. We trust that You hear us whether by morning or night.
Father, we confess that You are the God of justice. You hate wickedness and
evil. You bring low the proud and You shut the mouths of liars. Because of Your
justice, we hope in You.
Father, we also humble ourselves before You because we are debtors to Your grace. There is nothing great in us. Everything that we are is because of Your goodness and mercy. Lead us further into truth and justice. Apart from You, our ways are not straight.

As for unjust people, their words cannot be trusted. Though they speak alluring words, their tongue is a sharp fang. Their actions are led by injustice and they ultimately rebel against You.

So, Father, put an end to their evil and injustice. Make right what was taken away. Restore those who have been robbed. May Your justice prevail. Keep not silent, O Lord. For we take refuge in You. You are our hope. Justice is hard to come by among humans. But with You, the innocent will be covered. With You, those who trust in You will be protected. You are our hope. Amen.

--A Prayer by the Asian American Christian Collaborative:

**Read:**

Luke 4:16-21 NIV
He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**Read:**

Acts 2:1-47 NIV
1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. 5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” 13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”
14 Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15 These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. 18 Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. 19 I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. 20 The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. 21 And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

22 “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him: “‘I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. 26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest in hope, 27 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, you will not let your holy one see decay. 28 You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’ 29 “Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “‘The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand 35 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”’ 36 “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” 38 Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” 40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.
42 They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Pray:

Observe 8 minutes and 46 seconds of silence, as was observed at George Floyd’s memorial service, in remembrance of his brutal death at the hands of injustice. In your silence and grief, listen for how God may be urging you to take steps of courageous action that it may be on earth as it is in heaven.

Prayer:

Lord, grant us wisdom and compassion as we pursue your heart for reconciliation with our brothers and sisters within the church body. Give us open minds and open hearts. Show us where we need to be more Christlike. Lord, help us to discern those things that divide us and help us bring them to the light. Use us as vessels of your Holy Spirit so we may be your hands and feet to spread your heart for the reconciliation of your children. Illuminate for us, Lord, the path to reconciliation, and help us to look at our own hearts and thoughts. Equip us to be bridge builders for your kingdom. In Jesus’ name, amen.

--Manijeh Huereca

Closing Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.