

Litany of Lamentation and Hope

“How long, O Lord, how long?” How long can we endure in the face of acts of hatred and terror in our nation and around the globe? How can we be agents of resiliency of hope where there is discrimination and oppression? How can we strengthen our bonds of community from a deep respect that we each have a unique contribution to make, that we belong together, that indeed we are bound together by love?

Leader: We remember the loss of life of our African American brothers and sisters due to senseless and racist violence, including the murder of the Charleston 9, amounting to the “desecration of the soul of our country.”

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We are saddened and outraged by the state of gun violence in the United States, the suffering that this inflicts and our reluctance to speak truth to power.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit for your embracing justice.

Leader: We are heartbroken by the horrific and violent act of hatred and terror perpetrated in Orlando last weekend and pray for the victims and their loved ones.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We denounce the targeting of the LGBTQ community in Orlando and all forms of discrimination against LGBTQ populations in the nation.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We lament and seek transformation for ways we have failed to recognize and affirm the dignity of every human being and pledge to practice a love without exclusions.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We ask forgiveness for our culpable blindness and for all the ways that – unless we are African American or Native American – we are either coopted by or otherwise complicit in the racism that persists in the United States and Seattle today.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We cry out against the system of mass incarceration and the racism that fuels it and lament the times we have failed to express outrage and work for its transformation.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We are saddened by the Syrian and Central American refugee crises and the walls and barriers that are put up to victims of war and economic and social dislocation and grieve the tepid response of Western nations, including the United States.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We deplore the unfettered access to guns, assault weapons and the idolatrous belief that the right to bear arms extends to weapons of massive destruction of human beings.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We know that more than 10,000 people are homeless in King County on any given night and yet as a people and society we so easily turn away from responding to this tragedy.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We speak a language of tolerance, yet sometimes fail to provide solidarity in the face of religious persecution and discrimination.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit, for your embracing justice.

Leader: We know that in our midst the environment is being devastated and communities working for change are ignored, failing to receive their strategies for climate justice.

All: We cry out in pain and ask you, Divine Spirit for your embracing justice.

And yet we believe in a liberating Source of Life who draws us to healing and reconciliation and leads us to overcome every oppression.

Leader: We draw strength from the memory of our brothers and sisters in Charleston and Orlando and commit to live life fully in service to others, honoring the integrity of every human being.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We stand together with our Muslim brothers and sisters who are so often the objects of discrimination and pledge to accompany and support them during these times of rhetorical divisiveness.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We affirm life with dignity for all people and pledge to act as wounded healers and people of compassion.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We commit to building the Beloved Community where our hunger and thirst for righteousness is met with the justice that rolls like an ever-flowing stream.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We will see the divine in our brothers and sisters who are homeless, ill, refugee, incarcerated, left out and lonely.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We will restore the foundations and repair the breaches when any community is targeted for attack.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We will work for the renewal of planet Earth and for right relationship with Creation that we experience as sacred.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We will work for an economy where a sufficient, sustainable livelihood for all is promoted and prioritized.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Leader: We will honor our diverse religious and spiritual expressions and give thanks for all the wonderful pathways of Wisdom.

All: We will act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Thank you, Divine Spirit, for the gift of life and for inspiring us, transforming us and infusing us with hope.

This Litany of Lamentation and Hope was written by Church Council of Greater Seattle Executive Director Michael Ramos for the "Lest We Forget: Remembering the Charleston Nine" remembrance held on Friday, June 17, 2016, at First A.M.E. Church, Seattle.