

Making Things Right: Reparation and Reconciliation

A Longest Night Service

This service and liturgy uses the communion prayer from Rev. Andrew O'Neill (Advent Unwrapped 2018), and selections from Bruce Harding's Intercultural Hymn Sing (Advent Unwrapped 2017). It invites people to reflect on the work of reparations as people seeking a better world and the work of reconciliation as people seeking wholeness in Christ. It could be done as a longest night service (on or around December 21st) or as part of a watch night service leading into New Years.

For the extended time of silence, consider having tools available for folks who require other forms of reflection (blank paper, sensory boxes, a gentle 5- and 2-minute warning). There are also several scripture sentences that could be read from the same spot throughout the service, or with multiple voices.

Consider how you might make the physical space warm and engaging for the congregation. Do you have a room with a fireplace? Could you gather around a large table or in a circle? Could there be warm cider for people as they enter? Can you provide any instructions about communion before the service to alleviate anxieties?

Prelude

"In the Bleak Midwinter" VU 55

Land Acknowledgement

Share where you are worshiping from and your relationship to the land.

Introit

"Asato Mā Sadgamaya" (TLUS! 160)

Consider having a choir or small ensemble sing this.

"Asato mā sadgamaya," the Pavamana Mantra, is a true interfaith song, originally from ancient Hindu tradition and adopted by Christians in India as a bhajan (a devotional song), with many different melodies. Our version here is a traditional melody, with the addition of a prayer for peace—the "Om Shanti" at the end. Try singing it in unison before adding harmonies, with simple percussion for accompaniment and a chordal instrument such as guitar or piano. For the final repetition, repeat the "Om Shanti" prayer three times to close. (Bruce Harding)

Making Things Right

There are things in our world that we say are not "right," that are not in balance... interpersonal relationships, systems of racism and exclusion, violence and conflict, the ways in which we misuse Creation. When we say we want to make things right, we are talking about reparation. The work of reparation and reconciliation seeks to sort out these wrongdoings so that we can move forward in a good way.

In society, *reparation* is often defined as the fulfilment of five factors: Restitution (the righting of a wrong); Compensation (the repayment of damages or cost incurred); Rehabilitation (the holistic healing of the wronged parties); Satisfaction (the meeting of ethical and moral obligations and responsibilities); and Guarantees of Non-Repetition (the protection of human rights).¹

As Disciples of Christ, our calling to the work of reparation goes beyond these five legal factors. We believe that we are called by Christ to restore wholeness to all things: wholeness with ourselves, each other, creation and our Creator. This wholeness is dependent on relationships, individually and collectively; if we are not right with each other or with creation we cannot be right with the Holy.

In this sacred time of Advent, we await the arrival of Christ our leader in this long journey towards God's commonwealth of Justice and Peace, the ultimate fulfillment of a creation restored and a world mended.

On this long night, in the stillness of this worship, and with the hospitality of Christ's table, we are invited to reflect on what "making things right" might look like in our world, in our society, in our community, in our homes and within ourselves.

Sung Response

"Asato Mā Sadgamaya" TLUS! 160

Call to Worship

All earth is bound together in suffering

All earth is waiting for liberation

All earth is waiting for justice

All earth is bound together in healing

All earth is waiting for peace to blossom

All earth is waiting for love to flourish

All earth is bound together in creation

All the earth is waiting for hope to be born again!

Opening Hymn

"All Earth is Waiting" VU 5

(Consider singing the first verse in [Spanish](#).)

This hymn was written in the early 1970s by the Spanish priest and composer Alberto Taulé. The hymn speaks to Advent's promise of liberation.

¹ See article 35 of <https://undocs.org/en/a/74/321>

Opening Prayer

Where is Peace?
Where is Justice?
What is Shalom?
Where do I find Salaam?

Silence – heart beat/drum beat

Where are the fruits of Justice? Where are the signs of Peace?
How long must we suffer? How long can we mind?
How much longer must we wait?
When will the wronged be righted? When will the kin(g)dom come?

Silence

When will we feel the touch of Peace
in our bodies, in our minds, with in our families,
among our communities, and in the world?

Silence

As many cry, “Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?”
We have gathered here O God, to listen to your still voice saying,

Voice 2

I, the Lord will bless my people with peace. (Psalm 29:11)
(World Council of Churches)

Sung Response

“Oré Porajú” MV 68

The Guaraní people, an Indigenous community in Paraguay and surrounding areas of Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Bolivia, have been violently persecuted for centuries by colonial powers. This hauntingly beautiful song is often translated as a cry for mercy using the traditional language of the ancient Kyrie. We sing it in solidarity with the Guaraní, and with Indigenous peoples throughout the world who struggle for freedom, dignity, and the right to preserve their culture and homelands. (Bruce Harding)

Words of Our Faith

A Song of Faith

Made in the image of God,
we yearn for the fulfillment that is life in God.
Yet we choose to turn away from God...
 we bring harm to ourselves and others.
This brokenness in human life and community
 is an outcome of sin.
Sin is not only personal
 but accumulates
 to become habitual and systemic forms

of injustice, violence, and hatred.

We are all touched by this brokenness:

the rise of selfish individualism
that erodes human solidarity;
the concentration of wealth and power
without regard for the needs of all;
the toxins of religious and ethnic bigotry;
the degradation of the blessedness of human bodies
and human passions through sexual exploitation;
the delusion of unchecked progress and limitless growth
that threatens our home, the earth;
the covert despair that lulls many into numb complicity
with empires and systems of domination.

We sing lament and repentance.

Psalm 122

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

from where will my help come?

My help comes from the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

They will not let your foot be moved;
the Lord who keeps you will not slumber.

Invitation Into Silent Reflection

Working towards “making right” is hard. It takes courage to truthfully acknowledge where our relationships are broken. In naming that something is wrong we set our intentions to work towards making things right, however impossible it might seem. Courage does not always mean heroism; it often means acts of faith. Naming our brokenness is an act of faith that leads us closer to God’s dream for us and the world.

In this silence, courageously reflect on the areas of your life and world that are not right. Do what helps you to reflect: doodle, draw, roll, stroll, cry pray. Supplies are available throughout the sanctuary for these 10 minutes of silent reflection.

Time of Silence

Have a gentle 2-minute warning to help gather people after the silence.

Words of Assurance

Beloved, be assured that nothing can
undermine or overcome the love of God.

God forgives.

God reconciles.

God transforms.

And God calls us to participate in the sacred work of healing and mending creation.

2 Corinthians 5:18

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.

Affirmation of Faith

A New Creed

Hymn

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” VU 2

“In a far-off place” TLUS! 132

Invitation to Sharing

As you wish and are comfortable, we have 10 minutes for collective sharing to name the places and relationships that are not yet right. Before we go into a time of sharing, remember that these are personal, vulnerable stories that take courage to share, and courage to hold in community. To help us hold this sacred space, we are invited to keep the following norms:

- **safety first**—try to prevent harm, and address it when it happens
- **keep confidentiality**—don’t share what’s been shared without permission
- **speak for yourself**—use “I” statements; speak from your own experience
- **listen to others**—receive others’ stories with grace and openness
- **share the space**—be conscious of how much time you take (for people sharing, try to aim for two minutes)
- **be accountable**—take responsibility for your words and actions here
- **practice self-care**—be honest with your needs, and step away if you need to
- **embrace the messiness**—don’t force closure on these stories
- **you are your own expert**—affirm your own feelings and intuitions²

² Holy Norms from Ren Ito

As we open ourselves to one another in courageous vulnerability,
We commit to honouring each other by keeping these holy manners.

Allow for time of sharing

After each person who wishes to has shared, offer the following response:

For <<insert name>>, and the sacred truths that have been set upon their heart,
We are forever thankful.

Hymn

“Ya Rab as-salami” TLUS! 135

“En la lucha hay vida” TLUS! 119

Words of Our Faith

A Song of Faith

To point to the presence of the holy in the world,
 the church receives, consecrates, and shares
 visible signs of the grace of God.

Carrying a vision of creation healed and restored,
 we welcome all in the name of Christ.

Invited to the table where none shall go hungry,
 we gather as Christ’s guests and friends.

In holy communion
 we are commissioned to feed as we have been fed,
 forgive as we have been forgiven,
 love as we have been loved.

The open table speaks of the shining promise
 of barriers broken and creation healed.

In the communion meal, wine poured out and bread broken,
 we remember Jesus.

We remember not only the promise but also the price that he paid
 for who he was,
 for what he did and said,
 and for the world’s brokenness.

We taste the mystery of God’s great love for us,
 and are renewed in faith and hope.

Invitation to the Table

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

In the rich dark of winter, God makes an astounding promise:

Voice 2:

“I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up.” (Jeremiah 33:15)

In the wilderness, a voice cries out, longing for
the Refiner’s fire, repair, and renewal,
the promised birth (and rebirth) of hope.

Called to bear the weight and fruit of promise,
Mary sings ancient trust—the song of generations—
that God comes to fill the hungry and lift the humble.
She sings that love and truth will meet, that justice and peace will kiss.

In the midst of uncertainty, Jesus assures his disciples:
Just as the tree blooms, so the signs are clear
that the kingdom of God is near.

In the deep of our own winter, we look for them:
bud of hope, branch of peace, sprig of joy, blossom of love.

While around us the snares of fear and conflict lie in wait of infant hope,
you, O Wisdom, O Endless Love, O Radiant Dawn, are there,
keeping vigil with us, in this season of expectation.

We gather at this table, praying that crooked ways be made straight,
that valley’s peaks be lifted up and mountain’s might brought low
so that all God’s people might rejoice together, saying:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest!

Blessed is the one that comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest!

We give thanks for the mystery and wonder revealed that first night,
as humble people led by hope gathered in a quiet stable
and were witness to your promise reborn.

We give thanks for the blessing and love Jesus shared
with all whom he met, in food and story.

We remember that, on the night before he was handed over to die,
Jesus broke bread with his friends, blessed it, gave thanks, and said,
“Take, eat. This is my body, which I give for you. When you share it, remember me.”

We remember that he took the cup and, giving thanks, said,
 “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. When you drink it, remember me.”

Revealed in stable, cross, and empty tomb, we give thanks, O God, for your limitless love for all.
 With your people of all times and places,
 we await with hope the fulfillment of your vision for all creation.

***Bless us, O God, and these your gifts.
 Encourage us to share your life and love,
 which make us, and the gifts we share, truly holy.***

Transform us, God, and your world, and bless your children:
 those who feel alone or afraid...
 those who whose souls and homes are broken by violence...
 those who will go hungry, thirsty, and cold tonight...
 those who long only to hear that they are loved...

God made known in Jesus Christ,
 receive our prayer.

We pray these things, trusting in God’s faithfulness revealed:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Communion Hymn

“O Ancient Love” VU 17, or

“In the singing” TLUS! 26

Prayer After Communion

At this table, Christ is the host, welcoming all who hunger.
 At our tables, may Christ be our guest this day and always,
 that we might welcome hope, peace, joy, and love into our lives,
 and become hosts to God’s presence and people.

God of Love, guide us to the stables of our world,
 where the lonely and longing gather.
 Lead us to the mangers of our time,
 where hope and renewal are born again.
Make us heralds of your love and joy. Amen.

Scripture

Luke 1:46–55 (the Magnificat)

Closing Hymn

“El amore de Cristo” TLUS! 133

“We shall overcome” TLUS! 129

Blessing and Commissioning

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 15:13)

160 असतो मा सद्गमय asato mā sadgamaya

From all falsehood, lead to the truth

Unison

♩ = 88



Sanskrit: अ - स - तो मा स - द्ग - म - य त - म सो मा

a - sa - to mā sad - ga - ma - ya, ta - ma - so mā

English: From all false-hood lead to the truth, and from shad - ow



ज्यो ति र्ग - म - य मृ - त्यो - र्मा अ - मृ तं ग - म य

jyo - tir - ga - ma - ya, mṛ - tyor - mā am - ṛ - tam ga - ma - ya.

lead us to your light. From death lead us to whole-ness and life.



ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः

om shan - ti, om shan - ti, om shan - ti.

Om shan - ti,* om shan - ti, om shan - ti.



ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ

Om shan - ti, om shan - ti, om shan - ti. Om shan - ti, om

Om shan - ti,* om shan - ti, om shan - ti. Om shan - ti, om



शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः ॐ शा - न्तिः

shan - ti, om shan - ti. Om shan - ti, om shan - ti, om shan - ti.

shan - ti, om shan - ti. Om shan - ti, om shan - ti, om shan - ti.

* shanti = peace

This ancient prayer is shared in Hindu, Buddhist, and Christian communities.

Words: The Pavamana Mantra, Sanskrit prayer from *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad* (1.3.28.); English paraphrase: Bruce Harding, 2017
Music: Bruce Harding, based upon a traditional mantra chant formula.

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