

GENERAL CONFESSIONS:

We confess to you, Lord, what we are:

We are not the people we like others to think we are;
We are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies
In the depths of our souls.

But we do not want to hide our true selves from you.

We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us.

Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge;

Teach us to respect ourselves for your sake;
Give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding and power.

We confess to you, Lord, the unrest of the world,
to which we contribute and in which we share.

Forgive us that so many of us are indifferent to the needs of others.

Forgive our reliance on weapons of terror,

Our discrimination against people of different races,
And our preoccupation with material standards.

And forgive us Christians for being so unsure of our good news,
And so unready to tell it.

Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt

Into the freedom and energy of forgiven people.

And for those who through long habit find forgiveness hard to accept,

We ask you to break their bondage and set them free.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who created the universe and deemed it good;

We confess that we have misused our dominion and ruled unwisely.

You have given us bounty, and we have hoarded.

You have given us wholeness, and we have fragmented creation.

You have given us good earth, and we have plundered it.

You have given us each other,

And we have used and manipulated our brothers and sisters for our own profit and gain.

You have given us wisdom, but we have been content with convenience.

You have given us compassion, but we have offered poor imitations in our daily living.

You have given us yourself in covenant to be our God, but we have relied on our own passions.

You have given us your Son, and we have called ourselves by his name,

Yet lived as though we had few responsibilities beyond ourselves.

O Lord, we have conserved the bounty of your love as though it could be exhausted,

And we have wasted the bounty of your universe as though its resources were imperishable.

Receive us as ones who are broken, unreasoning, and afraid.

Receive us as ones returning again to claim life in the name of your Son, Jesus the Christ.

Renew your covenant with us, and forgive us, O Lord, in the name of your Son. Amen.

GENERAL LAMENT:

Shepherd and Savior of Israel, Creator of our world – I hope in you.

Compassionate Redeemer, you who live in Jesus Christ – Apart from you, life is empty.

From the lips of family and friends, I have heard of you.

In experience, marked by routine and surprise, I have felt the brush of your presence.

But, Divine Friend, there is an absence in your presence that makes me uneasy.

In thoughtful periods, I feel the pain of being alone;

I am burdened with the suspicion that there is no caring eye upon any of us.

There are marvelous moments of happiness when we experience your sun-like brightness and warmth.

But there is the night! What do you do in the night?

Must there be these long hours when the rays of your love are unseen?

Darkness and light may be the same for you;

for us, however, the darkness is scary and uncertain.

Maker of the universe, do you know how hard it is just to face normal, everyday life?

Are you aware of those moments when we are almost empty of strength and feel like giving up?

Dear God, we are devastated by the death of loved ones,

We are made anxious by serious, continuing illness;

Our hands hang down at the loss of job and the put-downs of colleagues;

Family strife and divorce wither our desire to continue on;

Rejection by friends leaves us lonely and solitary.

In these times it is hard to pray to you; difficult to praise you because as much as we want you present, you seem absent.

It is not only your absence, however, that causes pain, even your presence afflicts us with questions.

Why are you present with a few and not to all?

Why do you help individuals in small matters and ignore large populations dying from hunger and persecution?

Are these matters too difficult for us to understand?

Mysterious, incomparable God, Ruler over all the earth,

We are awed by you, but we are also confused by the manner in which you rule this world.

In order for you to be God, is it necessary to be so mysterious and distant?

We long for you, God-with-us; we fervently seek you, our Sovereign.

Sometimes we say I will no longer seek you, will no longer wait upon you, will reject the thought that you care for us.

But we continue to seek after you because, although we feel as if we are singing a song in a strange land, we trust that you hear.

From Covenant Offices “Love Mercy/Do Justice” department:

This “Lament for America” is meant to be spoken by the church during worship with sackcloth and ashes. It was originally used as an introduction to a sermon titled “The Gospel and Racial Reconciliation.”

Voice 1: Lord, how long shall we have to endure the ugly sins of racism? How many more years will we live in this deeply divided land?

Voice 2: People shout in the streets, “Black lives matter!”

Voice 3: Yet others speak with their silence saying, “No, they really don’t.”

Voice 2: Our leaders proclaim, “We need unity, we need peace, we need reconciliation,”

Voice 3: but when it comes time to act they don’t practice what they preach.

Voice 2: People throughout the land declare that we live in a post-racial society,

Voice 3: but then they drive their cars into their segregated neighborhoods filled mostly with people who look just like them.

Voice 1: And to make matters worse, Lord, sometimes we can’t even tell the difference between the Body of Christ and the world. Because Sunday (or “Segregated Day”) is still the most racially divided day of the week.

Voice 2: Lord, you burn inwardly when you see your children—who are called out from every race, tribe, and nation—smile in each other’s face in public

Voice 3: and then slander each other behind closed doors.

All: But you, Lord, are a God of reconciliation.

Voice 1: You are the God who sent your Son to destroy hostility on that old rugged Cross.

Voice 3: When we cry out to you, mighty God, you answer us from your heavenly throne.

Voice 2: The gates of hell have not prevailed against us, because of your powerful right hand.

All: Arise, our Lord! Deliver us, O God

Voice 3: from the sins of a segregated nation

Voice 2: and the heresy of division in your church.

All: Call us to repent

Voice 2: for not loving our brothers and sisters, who we can see,

Voice 3: but claiming to love you, Lord, who we can’t see.

All: Let us weep and wail before your holy altar!

Voice 1: Then and only then can we worship you in Spirit and in truth.

INTERCESSIONS:

Local: Pray for our schools; the challenges of education at this time; teachers, administrators and staff, school board members – and for Hilmar Christian Children’s Center.

Pray for Hilmar businesses, groups, and organizations affected by the pandemic.

Pray for Hilmar Helping Hands, Merced County Rescue Mission, and Turlock Gospel Mission as they serve the poorest and homeless among us.

Pray for Hilmar Covenant as we welcome our interim pastor, Bud Locke. Pray that we will be sensitive to and aware of what it is that Christ would have us learn, embrace, and become so we will continue to be a viable, vital church in the future.

Pray for our church staff and council members, especially during this transition time.

Pray for those on our long-term prayer list: Eliza Alves, Joe Bello, Betty Boehme, Dwight Bryant, Wade Fullmer, Cynthia Johnson, Woody Jorritsma, Lynn Lea, Anna Medak, Paul & Connie Medak, Wes Peterson, Lynn & Sam Pierce, Cindy Postma, Melanie Shackelford, Don Sparks, the Tinley family

State: Governor Newsom, Senator Anna Caballero, Rep. Adam Gray

Pray for our state water needs.

Pray for all those affected by the fires that have ravaged our state.

Pray about immigration reform – an issue affecting millions of people, including members of our Covenant churches (Deut. 10:17-19).

National: President Trump, Vice-President Pence, Senators Feinstein & Harris, Rep. Jim Costa

Pray for an end to the divisiveness, anger, false information, and incivility that is rampant in our nation now. Pray that we can return to that time when mutual respect, peaceful debate, and policy disagreements were embraced as normal and essential elements of political life.

Pray for the election that is looming – that the constitutional and peaceful acceptance of the voting public will be embraced by both parties.

Pray over the COVID crisis – and ALL that it has done to our nation (and the world).

Pray over our nation’s economy, and for those most negatively affected by lack of employment.

Pray over the continuing racial division and deep issues that are involved. Pray that we who are in the majority culture can pause, listen to those whose life experience is so different from ours, reflect on the hidden and unconscious ways race plays in our American society, and learn things that will help us better address the deep-seated racial divisions that we now see were never fully resolved during the Civil Rights movement of the last century.

Pray for those affected by the hurricanes that have devastated the South.

Pray for wisdom for our leaders regarding international decisions, cooperation, trade and treaties, and our response to aggression, global threats, terrorism, antisemitism, and interference in the workings of other nations.

Pray for our military leaders, soldiers, and those involved in the defense of America.

International: Pray for specific nations facing challenges and conflict: Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iran, Turkey, North Korea, South Sudan, Venezuela, Armenia/Azerbaijan, and our continuing stressful relationship with China and Russia.

Pray for Puerto Rico and other nations that have suffered devastation from hurricanes and earthquakes.

Pray for the needs of so many around the world: clean water, food/nutrition, safe housing, freedom from government corruption and injustice, valid law enforcement, etc.

Pray for ongoing tensions – and hopeful movements – between Israel, the Palestinians, and other Arab nations.

Pray for the Persecuted Church around the world; for our brothers and sisters in Christ to hold fast to our Savior as they face discrimination of all kinds – and to be a strong witness for Christ in the midst of the struggles and challenges that they face.

Covenant: Pray for our denominational and conference leaders.

Pray for our Covenant institutions and ministries: North Park University, Alaska Christian College, CHET, Covenant Kids Congo, Paul Carlson Partnership (and the clinic we funded), Covenant World Relief, all of our Covenant camps and conference centers (especially Mission Springs and Alpine)

Pray for our Covenant missionaries around the world, and especially those we support:

Roy & Aleta Danforth, Don & Lillian Dwight, Ken & Adrienne Satterberg, Harvey & Linda Lundquist, Paul & Sheryl Noren, Todd & Carrie Minturn