

Prayers of Lament

Voice 1: Why, God? Why? When our need is desperate, when all other help is vain, do you turn away from us?

Voice 2: Why? Why, when the darkness is deepest and our midnight is starless do you hide yourself from us?

Voice 3: Why? In times of grief and distress, when there is no light in the window, do we find a door slammed in our face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting from within?

Voice 4: Why forsake us when we need you most? Why are you present when the skies are clear, our help in our days of prosperity, but so absent in our time of trouble?

Voice 1: We know that faith does not exempt us from sorrow or shield us from evil; we know that; we know, too, that the earth is wet with the blood of the innocent but why this? Why now? Why?

Voice 2: Know this, God, know this: if faith were dependent on feelings, if our trust in you were no more than a matter of the mind, we would be done with you, done with you now, done with you forever.

Voice 3: And hear this, God, hear this: if it were not for that man who was a friend of the poor and the distraught for that man who healed the sick and gave sight to the blind; if it were not for that man whom we cursed and crucified, and who is crucified still, for that man who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and who carries them still;

Voice 4: God, God eternal, God of Jesus, God who said Yes to his life, his love, his suffering, his death, God of the cross, crucified God, sharing our pain, bearing our sin, if it were not, O God, for you, for you our lover, you our judge, you our hope, you our friend, we would indeed be lost.

**ALL: God of Christ,
God who raised him from the dead,
God with whom life can begin again,
come to us now, hold us, help us, heal us,
for you and you alone are our salvation.**

Prayers of the People

One: Let us pray, responding to the phrase "Jesus Christ, lover of all" with the words "**bring healing, bring peace.**"

One: Abiding Saviour -- long ago in Galilee many who were sick and suffering needed friends to bring them to your side. Confident of your goodness, we now bring to you those who need your healing touch.

One: We name before you those who are ill in body:
whose illness is long, or painful, or difficult to cure;
who suffer restless days and sleepless nights.
(names of particular individuals may be said aloud)
Jesus Christ, lover of all,
People: bring healing, bring peace.

One: We name before you those who are troubled in mind, distressed by the past, or dreading the future; those who are trapped and cast down in fear.
(names of particular individuals may be said aloud)
Jesus Christ, lover of all,
People: bring healing, bring peace.

One: We name before you those who for whom light has been turned to darkness: by the death of a loved one; the breaking of a friendship; the fading of hope.
(names of particular individuals may be said aloud)
Jesus Christ, lover of all,
People: bring healing, bring peace.

One: In silence we pray for those things that overwhelm us and leave us with groans that words cannot express...
(silence)
Jesus Christ, lover of all,
People: bring healing, bring peace.

*The Sending of the Community

One: We thank you, gracious God. You have loved us from the beginning of time and remembered us when we were in trouble.

Many: Your mercy endures forever.

One: We thank you, redeeming God.

You have come to us in Jesus Christ, who heals us and saves us from sin.

Many: Your mercy endures forever.

One: We thank you, Holy God.

You have sent us your spirit, to comfort us and lead us in the way of deep, lasting life.

Many: Your mercy endures forever.

**All: Gracious, redeeming and holy God,
glory and praise be yours, now and forever. Amen.**