

Except for the those places indicated this service is base on passages from the book of Lamentations. It is a service which mourns the fact that we have walked away from God's path, yet again, but also holds hope in God's mercy, love, and compassion for all of us. Hymn that are marked as insert are available on the United Methodist Church web page www.ucmworship.org. All other hymns and responses are in Voices United. All but the concluding hymn are from our history, (some aren't even in any modern hymn books) as we believe it is important for us to lament our ongoing acts of violence. The final hymn, however, is one of the newer ones, in order to use another sense in expressing hope for the future in God's path.

Service prepared by Rev. M.J. Perry, York Pines United Church

A SERVICE TO LAMENT A WAR AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

Call to Worship

One: Come all you who are confused and concerned. Come and lay your burden before God.

All: Cry aloud to the Lord! Let tears stream down like a torrent day and night!

One: Give yourself no rest, your eyes no respite! Give to God all your worries and ordeals.

All: Arise, cry out in the night, at the beginning of the watches! Pour out your heart like water before the presence of the Lord! Lift your hands to him for the lives of your children.

One: Come and offer to God your fears, your hopes and your prayers.
The grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

All: And also with you!

Opening Prayer of Praise:

Before you O Lord, we have hope: For the steadfast love you offer never ceases, your mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." You are good to those who wait for you, to the soul that seeks you. It is good that we should wait quietly for the salvation you offer, as we praise your name, for your compassion and the peace that is yours. AMEN.

Hymn: Our Hope is Built [insert]

Prayer of Confession:

We have rebelled against your word O God; young women and young men go into captivity. See, O LORD, how distressed we are; our stomachs churn, our hearts are wrung within us, because we have been very rebellious. In the street the sword bereaves; in the house it is like death. Our eyes are spent with weeping; our bile is poured out on the ground because of the destruction of people, because infants and babes faint in the streets. Forgive us, yet again, we pray. AMEN.

Kyrie VU 946

First Lesson - Lamentations 5:12-19

- ¹² Princes are hung up by their hands;
no respect is shown to the elders.
- ¹³ Young men are compelled to grind,
and boys stagger under loads of wood.
- ¹⁴ The old men have left the city gate,
the young men their music.
- ¹⁵ The joy of our hearts has ceased;
our dancing has been turned to mourning.
- ¹⁶ The crown has fallen from our head;
woe to us, for we have sinned!
- ¹⁷ Because of this our hearts are sick,
because of these things our eyes have grown dim:
- ¹⁸ because of Mount Zion, which lies desolate;
jackals prowl over it.
- ¹⁹ But you, O LORD, reign forever;
your throne endures to all generations.

Hymn: Our Earth We Now Lament to See [insert]

Dialogue with Psalm 23

One: Time is confusing. Who do we trust? Where can we turn? Who do we follow?

Two: The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

One: Anxiety levels are rising. How do we find calm? How do we find grace?

Two: He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.

One: There is too much information. There is not enough information. What do we believe? How do we decide? Which way do we go?

Two: He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

One: The threat of death is palpable. The threat of our own destruction is too close. How do we find courage? Where do we find strength? How can our fear be diminished?

Two: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

One: We feel we have lost control. Is there peace for the human family? Will we break bread together in the future? Will the stomachs of all the world's children be fed?

Two: You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

One: Leaders are concerned with power and might. What can we expect for the future? Will we find a way to peace and justice? Can we hold hope in our hearts?

Two: Surely goodness and merc shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

Silence

Hymn: Give Peace, O God [insert]

Matthew 18:1-6

¹At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

²He called a little child and had him stand among them. ³And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

⁵"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me.

⁶But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Lord of love, children were welcomed and enfolded by you. You declared that your heavenly realm belongs to them. Children are embraced by you and they demonstrate to us the meaning of your promise for the future. Children in Iraq, and children near them are at risk, and need to feel the heartbeat of your life giving embrace. You have entrusted your children to our care and have entrusted us to be responsible for them. You have asked us to protect them from violence, and to guard them from injustices. Give them strength, give them courage, give them hope, as powers over which they have no control rage violently around them. Each child has the right to joy, and we ask that those in Iraq may simply have their sorrow eased in the midst of war. Children belong in security of a home, with parents who are not called to arms. The media informs the world of what is occurring, may the children in our midst be relieved from nightmares and fear. Protect them from developing bigotry, hatred battle-glory and ideas superiority. May they join together leading us in play, so that we may have a foretaste of your world to come. We ask this of God in your name and through your Spirit. Amen.

Silence

Hymn: To Us All, to Every Nation #694

Prayer

God of Love and Compassion: We have come to ask for your protection for those who are being called to prepare for conflict. Before this season of unrest, we had grown comfortable with thinking of them only as they relate to us — as our parents and spouses, our sons and daughters, our neighbours and friends, those who perform search and rescue, those who respond to disasters. We look forward to a day when no community will ever be asked to release its loved ones for purposes of war. But today, Lord, history and circumstances have released them into your care. We pray they may all return home safely. As they face the myriad challenges and decisions that each day

is destined to bring, may they be anchored by their faith, protected by your presence, and comforted by the knowledge that they are loved by you. We pray for them, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evil men advance against me
to devour my flesh,
when my enemies and my foes attack me,
they will stumble and fall.

3 Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then will I be confident.

4 One thing I ask of the LORD,
this is what I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

5 For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle
and set me high upon a rock.

6 Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his tabernacle will I sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

7 Hear my voice when I call, O LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.

8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
O God my Savior.

10 Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.

12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,

for false witnesses rise up against me,
breathing out violence.
13 I am still confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Silence

Hymn: Come and Find the Quiet Centre #374

Silence

Isaiah 2:1-5

Lamentations 5:21

Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored;
renew our days as of old—

Hymn: We Turn to You#685

Prayer of Blessing and Benediction

One: Merciful and loving God: We know that your desire is for all your children to live in peace. We pray for those who are now in danger as they defend the cause of justice. Watch over them and keep them in your mercy and your care. Support and comfort those who are filled with anxious thoughts for their loved ones. Bless those parents and children, those husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, all loved ones, who are now divided in time of war. Restore to us the joy of your salvation and uphold us with your blessed spirit of peace. This we pray in the name of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

Depart in Silence