

**REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
RACISM TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION (SCRTR)
to the 225th General Assembly (2022)**

OPENING PRAYER

The Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation recommends that the 225th General Assembly (2022):

- 1. Direct the [Co-]Moderator[s] of the 225th General Assembly (2022) – in consultation with the General Assembly Nominating Committee and the General Assembly Committee on Representation – to appoint a seven-member committee to include three members (including at least one mid-council leader) of the current Special Committee on Racism Truth and Reconciliation to:**
 - a. Explore and expose where White supremacy is embedded institutionally and foundationally in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and its governing documents and make recommendations.**
 - b. Identify recommendations from previous General Assemblies related to racial equity, dismantling racism, and confronting White supremacy to 1) evaluate continued relevancy, 2) evaluate impacts on members who are Black/Indigenous/People of Color, 3) identify patterns of resistance to implementation, and 4) recommend strategies to overcome resistance/challenges to implementation.**
 - c. The committee shall provide an interim report to the 226th General Assembly (2024) and a report with recommendations to the 227th General Assembly (2026).**
- 2. Affirm Recommendation 00-29, 224th General Assembly (2020) that recommends “PC(USA) congregations, mid councils, . . . develop and adopt an antiracism policy in their by-laws....” and direct the Office of the General Assembly to provide model policies as a guide.**
- 3. Direct the Presbyterian Historical Society to create an online historical self-study tool for congregations and mid councils to investigate their own history. The tool should guide congregations and mid councils in exploring and reflecting upon their history’s impact on the lives of people of color past and present.**
- 4. Provide \$20,000 in funding to the Presbyterian Historical Society to help congregations and mid councils obtain records for their self-study.**
- 5. Affirm the Office of the General Assembly’s investment in Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) work and encourage expansion of access and support for IDI work for mid councils.**
- 6. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Foundation to collaborate and gather leaders of color to discern and propose recommendations for denominational reparative actions.**
- 7. Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to assess the resource needs and strengthen the financial capacity of Self-Development of People in its work to invest in local communities with ecumenical, interfaith, and nonprofit partners.**

8. **Direct the Committee on the Office of the General Assembly to identify models for new approaches to debate and decision-making that do not perpetuate white supremacy values¹ and report to the next General Assembly findings on alternative models that could be used at every level of the church.**
9. **Direct Mid Council Ministries of the Office of the General Assembly to create a model policy for mid councils that designates a specified percentage of any property sales/acquisitions for local reparative actions, and work with presbyteries to establish such policies.**
10. **Recommend the Board of Pensions develop a plan to address the larger issue of salary and retirement benefits for pastors of smaller congregations and the disproportionate impact of this issue on pastors who are Black/Indigenous/People of Color, considering innovative ways to offset this long-standing challenge.**
11. **Direct the Presbyterian Mission Agency to make repair and reparative action a priority in its commitment to antiracism, and a focusing point of the antiracism component of Matthew 25.**

INTROIT

“Worship is a collective activity of the people of God and an expression of our common life and ministry. It demands the full, conscious, and active participation of the whole body of Christ, with heart, mind, soul, and strength.” (W-2.0201)

A Commentary on Language

Language has the power to oppress and liberate. We affirm the complex dynamics of word selection. It can restrict, illumine, silence, or render invisible the very communities we seek to serve. Style guide standards constrain the ability to capitalize, lowercase, or change the spelling of words that emphasize new realities as language changes. We recognize that not everyone will self-identify using the language of their particular demographic. The language chosen in this report may become out of date with the emergence of new, more liberative language not yet imagined. We invite readers into our shared understanding of the fluidity of language and its restrictions, as we offer common terms that are encountered in this report.²

- **Race** – a social construct based on skin color that operates to install hierarchies of oppression and benefits
- **Racism** – race-based prejudice + institutional power
- **Repair/Reparative Action** – an orientation towards prioritizing fixing inequities caused by persisting racism with justice and reallocation of stolen resources
- **Reparations** – specific acts of reparative action intended to restore intergenerational wealth taken by discrimination, often through the power of the government
- **White Supremacy** – a system of beliefs and attitudes that subtly or explicitly more highly esteem those racialized as White and continue to grant advantages
- **Internalized White Supremacy** – the acceptance of the negative societal beliefs and stereotypes about marginalized racial and ethnic populations by themselves and White persons, and the different impacts on their self-identity.
- **Black/Indigenous/People of Color** – there are a number of ways that people of color identify by race; we will use Black/Indigenous/People of Color in this report, recognizing language

¹ [white supremacy culture](#) by Dr. Tema Okun, dRWORKS, www.dismantlingracism.org

² Some definitions adapted from the glossary of the White Privilege Conference.

limitations, the insufficiency in recognizing the identities of others, and people’s right to self-identify.

- **Biracial | Multiracial** – relating to persons of more than one race or ethnicity.
- **White/Whiteness/People Racialized as White**– those accorded certain benefits, privileges, and advantages based on the color of their skin because of undismantled White Supremacy that seeks to create social hierarchies by race. We capitalize “White” to emphasize that Whiteness is a particular phenomenon with a specific function.
- **(Micro)aggressions** – (micro)aggressions are words and behaviors, intentional or unintentional, that dehumanize marginalized groups of people, often excused as innocent or well-intended. We recognize that continuous subjection of pain is trivialized by calling these harms “micro”aggressions.
- **Beloved Community** – God’s call to share life in freedom and justice together as a family, referenced as kin-dom of God.

On Limitations of our Work

As a number of structural changes are anticipated across the PC(USA), those managing newly configured spaces of work, life, and worship have assisted us in identifying the scope of the structural implications of this report. Naming all of the necessary changes on every level of the denomination, though our desire, is beyond the scope of the labor of this particular Special Committee, as are some of the expanded charges from the 224th General Assembly. We also identified several [dual realities](#) that need to be held together, considering the *locus of the work, the role of experience, and navigating the work as White people*, that we could not include in the mandated word count.

CALL TO WORSHIP

“... ‘Look! I am making everything new!’... I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To those who are thirsty I will give drink freely from the spring of the water of life... I will be their God and they will be my [people]” (Revelation 21:5-8)

Learning and (Re)Awakenings

In faithfulness to God’s activity, we not only listened to voices long silenced, but also worked to identify the persisting silencing dynamics. Several patterns emerged:

1. We noticed how differently conversations were experienced by race. People racialized as White displayed fascination, as if seeking to learn “the fix” to racism, creating a distracting voyeurism of the trauma of Black/Indigenous/People of Color. When asked how we participate in White supremacy, White people commonly excused themselves by condemning the racism of others and sharing examples prior to the current decade. Black/Indigenous/People of Color largely received our work with a sense of weariness, sharing: “but we’ve already said our piece.” In faithfulness, we listened differently. We encourage the practice of caucusing by race in addition to multiracial learning spaces.
2. We gained an expanded understanding that the silencing of “voices long silenced” is still occurring in plain sight. We witnessed a disturbing pattern in the PC(USA) of giving platforms to Black/Indigenous/People of Color that are swiftly ignored. As a Special Committee, we are wearied at the prediction of sharing this cycle: mobilizing a small group to “fix racism,” proclaiming findings, celebrating the report, followed by prompt institutional amnesia until a new group is created. Unfinished business on previous commitments to racial justice remains. This pattern may correspond with increasing disengagement of those who have faithfully served to address community repair.

3. While we celebrate the inclusion of the Confession of Belhar explicitly naming racism as sin, we learned many grieve lost opportunities for a confession addressing racism in the American context. These conversations evidence that White communities most strongly condemn racism when 1) it is not our own, and 2) when it occurred generation(s) distance from us.
4. We identified a habitual call for undefined “reconciliation” that demands unity without repair. Such calls for reconciliation are not safe. True, healthy reconciliation includes the necessary work of truth-speaking, confession, apology, atonement, amends, repair, and assurance of no further harm. There can be no reconciliation without reparations.³ Truth + reparations = reconciliation.
5. We noticed a problematic inability within White spaces to recognize and address racist behavior as it arises. White people confronted with antiracism work give themselves permission to feel intimidated, incapable, or frustrated. This manifests in “opting out” and/or intentionally derailing, including analysis paralysis, low-goal setting, and demonizing those working for justice. We notably witness opting out among those who self-identify as White allies. While there are legitimate reasons to step away to tend to our personhood, opt-out tactics function to excuse us from our shared responsibility to cultivate beloved community.

Examples of “opting out” recognized in our listening work:

Distancing:

- “Yeah, but that was in the past”
- “It’s not that big of an issue.”
- “Let’s just pray about it.”

Self-excusing:

- “I’ve already studied this and don’t need another workshop”
- “Look at those racists over there with whom I am in no way affiliated”
- “My area is all White, so there is no racism here.”

Hopelessness:

- “We already tried.”
- “I’m White so I can’t do anything/will only make it worse.”
- “No, because that approach isn’t perfect.”

Derailment:

- “That’s too ‘political’/‘socialist’/‘communist’/‘anti-American!’”
- “The language is too scary/keeps changing.”
- “I’m too uncomfortable.”

Overt influences on the church, like the idolatry of Christian White Nationalism, intentionally discredit the work of antiracism, by encouraging opting out and capitalizing on anxieties around the difficulty and inexperience many have with these conversations. The Church must become fluent in the tactics used to delegitimize the work of antiracism and be able to identify who benefits, especially financially, from disengagement and the maintenance of the status quo. Preachers have a particular responsibility to use their platforms with care as they speak into the gospel applications of today’s world to unmask idolatry in the church. Regardless of how deeply ingrained the habits of opting out, denial is unacceptable.

6. We acknowledge the toll of racism on embodied selves. The impact of racism is the destruction of real lives, from the violence of (micro)aggressions to genocide. The intergenerational trauma

³ Jennifer Harvey, *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation*. 2014. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

of racism is carried in the body. Systemic racism creates physical harm, as evidenced in countless aggressions such as: environmental racism threatening the health of Indigenous communities, anti-Asian hate and violence, mass incarceration and abuse by police experienced by Black people, apathy towards Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), targeted attacks on Black trans persons, systemic violence against Black women and girls, the profiling and othering of Hispanic/Latin(o/a/x/e) people, disparate attention and resources following natural disasters, food and housing insecurity, poverty, and the way the model minority myth obscures embodied selves. The COVID-19 pandemic unveiled how long-existing inequities compound to dehumanize and physically harm bodies of color.

Many Presbyterians share a tendency to over-intellectualize as a way to distance from physical realities. The Church must embrace all the intersections of our embodied selves, such as gender and sexuality, in conversations about race. We must recognize the destruction of lives by racism, and the violence it causes. We are killing each other. *“If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it”* (1 Corinthians 12:26).

7. We grieve that past and present discrimination, segregation, and redlining have impacted the options for clergy persons who are Black/Indigenous/People of Color serving in our denomination. They are disproportionately represented in smaller congregations, which means consistently lower salaries and lower retirement benefits. This reality will continue unabated until it is courageously interrupted by moral conviction and financial innovation.
8. We cannot ignore that the construct of Whiteness continues to manufacture, sustain, and reinforce benefits for people racialized as White at the expense of Black/Indigenous/People of Color. White supremacy remains at the root of racial disparities in the church. As long as White supremacy is not addressed in our church, our institutional health and representation as the Body of Christ is at stake.
9. We realized there is no passivity in engaging the work of antiracism. Like mandated reporting, witnessing the harm of racism transforms bystanders to active agents of antiracism. Being entrusted with the message of those long silenced requires partnering to amplify the message. This includes increased responsibility to prevent trivialization of harm, managing derailment tactics, and recognizing the full humanity of those affected by White supremacy. Similarly, there is no passive reading of this report. You, also, are called as partners in a moral, ethical, and divine mandate to end racism in our denomination.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

The PC(USA) cannot move forward without looking back and cannot tell its history apart from White supremacy. Our denomination originated on this continent with colonization and provided theological justification for the Doctrine of Discovery and slavery. Our church buildings (some built with, funded by, or endowed from slave labor) inhabit stolen land. Our still largely-segregated worship services prefer liturgies of order and decency over liturgies of disruption, silencing those on the margins.⁴ Our polity and structures privilege long-held power and institutionalize the elevation of White voices. Our wealth is inequitably distributed, regularly bypassing Black, Brown, and Indigenous pastors and churches. We are timid in joining voices of protest against injustice and resist dismantling our own institutional racism. History always involves turning points—times of decision; opportunities for repentance, repair, and transformation. We listened to examples of when the PC(USA) missed those opportunities or turned away from calls for justice (“Middle Way” theology around slavery, lack of meaningful response to the Black Manifesto or the Report of the Committee on Reparations, and failure to confess at Reunion).

⁴ Raj Nadella @ Colnspire Conference, Montreat Conference Center 2019

We learned of times when the PC(USA) demonstrated commitment to and courage in the work of truth, repair, and reconciliation (Sage Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, partnership with the Westminster Neighborhood Association, programs like the Fund for Freedom and Self-Development of People). At times the church has taken courageous actions but failed to remain steadfast when faced with resistance. Surely history will judge this moment—this Assembly—as a time of decision, an opportunity for repentance, repair, and transformation in the denomination.

We, the PC(USA), have been an Isaiah 58 people, engaging in self-serving worship as we received and celebrated each report written, but sinned in not undertaking the recommended work of justice and continued oppressive behaviors. Jesus warns us about religious self-deception. *“It isn’t those who cry out, ‘My Savior! My Savior!’ who will enter the kin-dom of heaven; rather it is those who do the will of Abba God in heaven.”* (Matthew 7:21). We wonder where God is, but if we listen to the prophet—we know. God’s judgment is: Injustice invalidates Invocation.

Our call is not a new one. We have heard the voices of Rev. Dr. James Cone, Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, Rev. Dr. Gayraud Wilmore. We remember every report and study. We recite the words of the Confession of Belhar in our worship. We recall and we hear their cries and calls to justice.

In Luke’s gospel we find a model of repair and true redemption. Moved by Jesus’ presence, Zacchaeus realizes his sin and finds true redemption in turning away from his own religious self-deception and to the work of justice and repair. *“Here and now I give half my belongings to poor people. If I’ve defrauded anyone in the least, I’ll pay them back fourfold”* (Luke 19:8). The path to repentance has a cost, but the cost is the way of the cross.

The challenge for the Church, at every level from pew to Louisville, is to interrogate its own history and its tools—structures, polity, process, institutions, liturgy, finances, worship, mission programs, curricula, theology, and so on—that history might regard our time as a turning point of repair and not resignation, of resurrection and not return.

CONFESSION OF SIN

“If we say we are without sin, we lie, and the truth is not in us. But if we admit our sins, God, the faithful and just One, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all injustice” (1 John 1:8-9). We on the special committee no longer wish to deceive ourselves or be Isaiah 58 people. We want to follow Jesus in the true work of justice and repair so that we can find true redemption, so we can see Jesus. In humility and mutual contrition we invite you to join us.

Silencing Tactics

We confess specific and common silencing tactics that inhibit the health and righteousness of the Body of Christ as it is manifest in the PC(USA):

1. Relying on the General Assembly to be the primary voice of justice in the denomination.

Voices in the denomination faithfully bring necessary and robust justice and antiracism actions to the General Assembly. Once received, the larger PC(USA) community often

accepts reports with self-congratulation, applauds their approval, then promptly forgets that action took place. Without accountability, voices speaking become voices silenced.

2. Failing to immediately address behavior that silences/renders people invisible in real time.

We notice entities of the PC(USA), including congregations and mid councils, laudably have designated antiracism groups. We also see groups perpetuate the very behaviors they were created to combat. What norms and covenants are being established to prevent groups from silencing even their own membership?

3. Valuing formal procedures that are results-oriented at the expense of recognizing impacts.

The PC(USA) has formal procedures for doing our work, ranging from the ways our bylaws are used (or not used) to the use of parliamentary procedure in decision making. We challenge those in charge of deliberative processes to consider the ways rules function to achieve results at the expense of expressing our fullest selves. What values are exemplified by the way business is conducted? Do they codify White Supremacy Culture? Is truth-hearing and expression of personhood encouraged, measuring impacts on those not present or having no standing? Do Robert's Rules of Order create sufficient space for receiving the richness of the presence of minority demographics in the "room," or does it conceal a given decision's impact?

4. Limiting designated spaces and times for the work of antiracism or its follow-up

Community-building remains one of the top priorities of nearly every ministry in the PC(USA), yet antiracism work remains akin to an extracurricular activity. The reliance on volunteers for leading antiracism work makes the work unacceptably vulnerable to being set aside for other priorities. We notice a lack of accountability measures to accompany each other in keeping community safety and access a priority.

5. Missing depth in the work of those committing to antiracism

A critical lack of imagination remains for what antiracism work looks like in antiracist spaces. Capacity-building is vital to the work, but when education is the sole goal, the impact of racism can be over intellectualized and disembodied, limited to one-off event planning committees or book clubs, unfocused, or stalled altogether. Groups invested in calling out the sins of others miss the opportunity to dismantle White supremacy amongst themselves, and charity efforts risk perpetuating notions of White saviorism while avoiding root causes.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

To Whom We Belong

We, as a people of God, are blessed to proclaim that the God of Genesis 1 *created humankind in God's image*. The God of Isaiah 58 chooses *to break every yoke, satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong*. This is our God: a God of wholeness, Jubilee, and restoration.

A PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

“Besides, you know the time in which we are living. It is now the hour for you to wake from sleep...” (Romans 13:11)

Into a Difference Future

God of new beginnings, help us to be transformed from a church deeply stained by the sin of racism to the Church Christ called into being. As we hear your voice through the voices of all those you have sent, open our eyes to the pervasiveness of our sin. Call the church at every level to join the soul-searching transformative work of moving past the sin of racism to true worship that is pleasing to you. May those of us with ears hear God’s Word. Amen.

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Parables and Imagination Primes

Jesus used parables to help his listeners understand who we, as a community, could be together. We used four operative metaphors to synthesize collected data of our listening campaigns. While some may resonate more than others, these parables prompt imagination around what a positive antiracist response may look like for communities mobilizing action.

1. A parable of scaffolding: *“How can this be possible?” asked Nicodemus. Jesus replied, ‘You’re a teacher of Israel, and you still don’t understand these matters?’” (John 3:10).*

Scaffolding is a metaphor commonly used in education as a way to ensure students grasp what they need before advancing to a next step. For example, if a student does not know vocabulary, they cannot make sentences, let alone write paragraphs! Recalling Jesus as Teacher, we as a denomination need to be honest that creating certain theological, sociological, historical, and educational scaffolding is necessary to address where we have lagged. We should never limit anti-racism to only self-education but remember the importance of continuous education in all facets of this work.

2. A parable of a multi-lane freeway: *“A voice cries out: ‘In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of [God] shall be revealed.” (Isaiah 40:3-5, NRSV).* A [second metaphor](#), from Dr. Shelly Tochluk, White woman education professor and activist, considers how we might find ourselves situated in the work of building a road to Justice. Are there on-ramps and driver’s ed for those newer to the work, while the faster lanes are kept clear for those more experienced? Are there rest areas? What road maintenance is needed at our current mile marker? Is the highway being built ethically, or is our work loud, performative pageantry?

3. A parable of landing strips: *“We have nothing here, [the disciples] replied, ‘but five loaves and a couple of fish.’ ‘Bring them here,’ Jesus said. Then he ordered the crowds to sit on the grass...” (Matthew 14:17-19).* A third metaphor contemplates specific points for secure handoffs and follow-through in the coordination of our labor. When an action is approved by a council of the church, what becomes of that action? How smooth is the landing? Is there a gate to receive the recommendation? Does it ever reach its destination? What increases in maintenance, personnel, and procedures ensure that resourcing flows vertically and horizontally across the denomination? Furthermore, where are new community members being invited to land in our community? How hospitable are we to the arrival of new passengers, especially as racial demographics change? Is there access to representation in the power structure of the body?

4. A parable of the construction of a house: “Now Jesus’ mother and kin came to see him, but they couldn’t get near him because of the crowd. Someone told Jesus, ‘Your mother and kin are outside, waiting to see you.’ Jesus replied, ‘My mother and my kin are those who hear the word of God and put it into practice.’” (Luke 8:19-21). Fourth is a metaphor of a household, constructed with love and care, a place of safety not just for those deemed insiders, but for all. Who resides in our metaphorical home, and in what rooms? Are certain areas of our household more secure than others? What might a home inspection reveal about the current state of our home? What needs to be built, renovated, or demolished? At a conference speech at the Second Sex Conference in 1979, Audre Lorde is cited as saying, “*the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.*” New construction approaches may be required.

RESPONDING TO THE WORD AND OFFERING

“The church must therefore stand by people in any form of suffering and need, which implies, among other things, that the church must witness against and strive against any form of injustice, so that justice may roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream”
 (Confession of Belhar, Section 4).

Tangible Movements Towards Justice

The Movements below reflect some ways Presbyterians work towards racial justice. While we do not speak for all contexts, these Movements lend shape and direction to our shared work. Together, we may strengthen our focus and shape clear and actionable objectives. You are invited to picture the Movements as ever widening overlapping circles that incorporate more expansive dimensions of the work, while at the same time carefully maintaining the earlier movements. All those committed to antiracism are charged to identify how your *antiracism activity* might be reflected and measured in these Movements.



I. Antiracism as Solo Movements

Many engage antiracism work alone. While there is much to do solo, this is challenging work. Solo movements may mean less access to support and solidarity, leading to burnout and ineffectiveness. Ongoing isolation risks sidelining the work. Those in the solo stage are encouraged to look for partners, networks, coalitions, and alternate spaces to self-assess and draw upon community resources. Instruments such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

are important in identifying personal goals. Self-care is critical to sustain oneself in the work, as is continued personal development, learning, and maturity in the work.

II. Antiracism as Moving Towards Structural Work

Effective antiracism coordinates its efforts with partners, whether through group membership, ecumenical partnerships, or community alliances. Movements toward a codified structure can regularize this work in our routines, encourage one another, and pool resources. Designated spaces can resource questions and enable timely responsiveness. The challenge for a group that remains in this movement is a confined imagination, limiting goals to reading books, hosting single events, or issuing statements. Often, a kind of pageantry of appearing anti-racist can come at the expense of community transformation, evidenced by the absence of clear direction, lack of follow-up, resistance to receiving guidance, and inability to tend to those hurt in the course of the work.

III. Antiracism as Accountability Movements

While doing this work in community, being present with the full humanity in your space is vital. We noticed groups doing antiracism work often do not know how to respond to White supremacy that arises within their structure. We identified [four markers](#) of a group able to exercise healthy accountability Movements: *establishes norms*, *grasps basic conceptual knowledge*, *embodies critical humility*, and *is responsive to emergent dynamics*. A group struggling with a consensus around these accountability measures risks causing more harm than good.

IV. Antiracism as Moving Towards Repair Work

Movements of Repair are for those committed, ready, and capable of doing communal repair work. This Movement assesses the specific damages done by racism in their context and works to ascertain what would need to be given, created, restructured, paid, invested in, or surrendered to achieve repair. This can involve church endowments, mental health care, wellness and prevention programs, education systems, as well as the economic, criminal, political and social arenas affected by systemic racism. Only when resources are reallocated, and equity is achieved can our community experience justice.

V. Antiracism as Celebrating the Movement to Justice

Justice is the goal of our antiracism work and the manifestation of the prayer of Jesus Christ: *“Your Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”* We hope that the work will not stop, lag, or tarry until Justice is achieved by those seeking beloved community. If we all (re)mobilize now, justice is possible, whole or in part, within our lifetimes.

Whether these exact Movements are used or not, all entities of the PC(USA) on the national, regional, and local level are urged to create and report plans seeking the repair of the harms created by systemic racism.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

You hear our cries, O Lord, especially those who mourn
and cry out in agony.
There is courage in each cry;
we praise you for the sound, for your image is revealed in each wail;

we have broken the church.
Voices confront us and falling on our knees we seek forgiveness.
Set our faces toward justice and accept this offering.
Amen.

CHARGE AND BENEDICTION

Listen now, God's people!
Let us repent for those we have harmed.
Let us repair spirits we have crushed.
Let us restore those we have broken.
This is the fast that God has chosen for us.⁵

God, embolden us to pursue transforming the foundational structure of the church for justice work. Jesus, upon your resurrection you gave us the authority to be your disciples. You have shaken us awake. Holy Spirit, empower us to preserve all human life for your Kin-dom.

May it be so.

*All translations are from *The Inclusive Bible* unless indicated.

⁵ Isaiah 58:6