

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023

Be-Longing: Praying for Unity amidst Injustice

Before the service: Lift Every Voice: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONgOH_tq7-Q

Order of Service

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Welcome **Fiona Charleson** theme plus mentioning 50 years of PCT

The Gathering

Leader God is here. **Cathie Ramsay**

Congregation **The Spirit is with us.**

Leader

How great is this place,
for it is the touching-place of God.

In Christ, we are gathered from the edges
and woven into the dream.

Here we feel the hint of heaven,
where justice, love and mercy meet.

Here we celebrate
the blessedness of unity in God.

We, who were once far off,
are brought near.

And so we pray,
God, creator of all,
in your love, you have made each one of us
in your grace, you gather us together in your image
in your mercy, you make us restless until we find our rest in you.

Disturb us in our contentment,
distract us from our comforts
deter us from our conflicts
until your kingdom comes and your will is done.

And all God's people say:

Amen. **Bless the Lord O My Soul** **Andrew and Caroline**

Invitation to Confession and Forgiveness **Marion Mather**

We gather to pray for the unity that is Christ's gift to the Church. We gather in hope that the world might believe and be reconciled to God.

We recognise that we are part of churches and communities that are divided by injustice, especially the sin of racism, which stands contrary to the image of God shining from every human face.

"And what does the Lord require of us but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with our God?" (Micah 6:8)

And so we come in penitence and faith to confess...

Silence

Leader Forgive us Lord, when we come to worship without walking humbly before you.

Congregation May we be forgiven

Leader We ask forgiveness for the complicity of churches in the evils of colonialism.

Congregation May we be forgiven

Leader We ask forgiveness for our sins of injustice and oppression.

Congregation May we be forgiven

Leader We have been called to unity. Forgive us anew and reconcile us to one another.

May God's mercy free us from our sins, to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

Congregation Amen! Thanks be to God!

Prayer – whole congregation *Marion, please remain at the lectern for this, perhaps saying: we pray together (or some such)*

God of all,

because of your great love

our sins have been washed away

and we are part of the beloved community.

We come before you, a holy family,

a rainbow people,

united in the beautiful diversity of your creation.

We celebrate the rich tapestry of the human family.

We commit ourselves to overcome prejudice and disunity wherever we find it

and to walk humbly in your presence.

Amen

Ministry of the Word

Micah 6:6-8)

Psalm 85:5-12-)Anne/Tom McEvoy

Reader Bring us back, O God, our saviour!
Put an end to your grievance against us.
⁶ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will your anger last from age to age?

⁷ Will you not restore again our life,
that your people may rejoice in you?
⁸ Let us see, O LORD, your mercy,
and grant us your salvation.

Reader ⁹ I will hear what the LORD God speaks;
he speaks of peace for his people and his faithful,
and those who turn their hearts to him.
¹⁰ His salvation is near for those who fear him,
and his glory will dwell in our land.

Reader ¹¹ Merciful love and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have kissed.
¹² Faithfulness shall spring from the earth,
and justice look down from heaven.

Luke 10:25-37 Bill Webster

Everyone Needs Compassion Andrew and Caroline

Stones and Stories Sheila Anderson – videos about racism in the church

PCT STORIES

Past – John McCulloch

Present – Fiona Charleson

Sheila What has the stone in your hand come to represent.....

As people move forward, Touching Place played here YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQCqNPZQASM>

Concluding Prayer Fiona

God for all,
we place before you
our willing complicity in the evil of racism,
our ready complacency in the face of injustice,
the hardness of our hearts and the heaviness of our souls.
Judge us, not for these things,
but for the manner in which we act
to transform the world
into the place of your Kingdom.

Plus prayers of thanks etc for the work of PCT

Amen

Concluding Hymn: Andrew and Caroline (or after the blessing)**The Sending: A Franciscan Benediction** church leaders

Attributed to the earliest followers of St Francis

- Graham Astles:** May God bless us with discomfort -
at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships,
so that we may live deep within your heart.
- Nick Bowry:** May God bless us with anger -
at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that we may work for justice, freedom and peace.
- Tom McEvoy:** May God bless us with tears -
to shed for those who suffer pain, rejection, hunger, and war,
so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them
and turn their pain into joy.
- John Urquhart:** And may God bless us with enough foolishness
to believe that we can make a difference in the world,
so that we can do what others claim cannot be done,
to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.
And all God's people say: Amen

Cutting the cake. Cuppa at the back of the church

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Interchurch House, 35 Lower Marsh, London SE1 7RL

info@ctbi.org.uk

Phone: 0203 794 2288

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