

Opening Prayer Service

894th Gathering of the Presbytery of Baltimore

March 10, 2022

Presented by the Dismantling Racism Team

Introduction – Elder Charese Jordan Moore

Music Video - Woke Up This Morning – The Freedom Singers(2:40)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsziXdKfOsE&list=RDxvd2EX_rDSA&index=12

Scripture – Elder Annette Snyder (1)

Galatians 3:26-28

New International Version

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Holy wisdom, Holy Word, Amen.

Prayer of Confession – Rev. Ray Muete (2)

Introduction to the Prayers (do not include in PPT):

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Presbytery of Baltimore are institutionally White (that is, majority White membership and White European in its origins and polity). At the same time, we are also a community with Black Americans, Indigenous Americans, and other people of color, persons of many different nationalities and ethnic origins. It is the burden of the White members to apologize to our Black American siblings. As the church, however, we also join in these confessions together and repent together as members of one body, one community of faith, and one institution. Let us pray.

Gracious God,

Today, we remain far from the justice you demand for all your children. We know what you require of us, O God, because you have spoken it for thousands of years through prophets of old and prophets of today to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you. You have shown us what is right through a brown-skinned, radical preacher, whom we have come to know as the Christ, the one you sent to save us from ourselves.

Loving God, to the degree that I or any white persons praying here have participated—knowingly or in ignorance—in 400 years of unjust practices, we humbly confess our complicity and ask your forgiveness here and now. And each person here this morning cries out to you for every time we have sown hatred instead of love, exemplified doubt not faith, fallen into despair

when we should have hoped for your promise, or hidden in darkness when you called us to be beacons of your radical love.

Too often, those of us with privilege do not walk hand-in-hand with our siblings of color. We do not listen always with open hearts and minds. We are often slow to strive for the equity you demand of us as your people. We are not always open to new possibilities for all who come to the table, regardless of the color of our skin, who or how we love, or how we choose to worship you.

For all these things, we humbly ask your forgiveness and abundant grace in the name of love personified, our Savior, Jesus Christ, Amen

(Prayer adapted from the words of Guy Moody)

A Litany Of Compassion For Those Not Ready For Healing –

Elder Charese Jordan Moore and Rev. Jose Lopez (3)

Charese

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound. Let us not rush to offer a bandage, when gaping wounds requires surgery and complete reconstruction. Let us not offer false equivalencies, thereby diminishing the particular pain being felt in a particular circumstance in a particular historical moment.

All: Lord, in your Mercy, hear our prayer.

Jose

Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations and restoration, or how we can repair the breach and how we can restore the loss. Let us not rush past the loss of this mother's child, this father's child...someone's beloved son. Let us not value property over people; let us not protect material objects while human lives hang in the balance. Let us not value a false peace over a righteous justice. Let us not be afraid to sit with the ugliness, messiness, and the pain that is life in community together.

All: Lord, in your Mercy, hear our prayer.

Charese

Let us not offer clichés to the grieving, those whose hearts are being torn asunder. Instead... Let us mourn black and brown men and women, those killed extrajudicially in the US every 28 hours. Let us lament the loss of a teenager, dead at the hands of a police officer who described him as a demon. Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.

All: Lord, in your Mercy, hear our prayer.

Jose

Let us call for the mourning men and the wailing women, those willing to rend their garments of privilege and ease and sit in the ashes of this nation's original sin. Let us be silent when we don't know what to say. Let us be humble and listen to the pain, rage, and grief pouring from the lips of neighbours and friends. Let us decrease, so that our brothers and sisters who live on the underside of history may increase. Let us pray with our eyes open and our feet firmly planted on the ground. Let us listen to the shattering glass & let us smell the purifying fires, for it is the language of the unheard. God, in your mercy... Show me my own complicity in injustice. Convict me for my indifference. Forgive me when I have remained silent. Equip me with a zeal for righteousness. Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness.

All: Lord, in your Mercy, hear our prayer.

(Prayer adapted from the words of Rev Dr Yolanda Pierce, Princeton Seminary)

Prayer of Assurance – Elder Annette Snyder(2)

Introduction to Prayer (do not include in PPT): We are free to confess sin and repent because we are assured of and confident in God's faithfulness in Christ to redeem, to save, to forgive, to renew, to make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). Let us pray:

O Lord our God, in your mercy and kindness, no thought of ours is left unnoticed, no desire or concern ignored. You have proven that blessings abound when we fall on our knees in prayer, and so we turn to you in our hour of need. Surrounded by violence and cries for justice, we hear your voice telling us what is required, "Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Mi 6:8). Fill us with your mercy so that we, in turn, may be merciful to others. Strip away pride, suspicion, and racism so that we may seek peace and justice in our communities. Strengthen our hearts so that they beat only to the rhythm of your holy will. Flood our path with your light as we walk humbly toward a future filled with encounter and unity. Be with us, O Lord, in our efforts, for only by the prompting of your grace can we progress toward virtue. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Prayer adapted from Sisters of Mercy of America)

Closing – Elder Charese Jordan Moore (2)

[Insert invitation for the Offering to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainians forced to leave their homes.]

God of the nations, our hope is ever in you. We hold before you this day the people of Ukraine as they face the tragedy of war in their land. Strengthen and comfort them in their fear and protect them from danger. Have compassion on the broken-hearted and all in harm's way, especially the most vulnerable who are unable to find places of safety. Pour out your grace and

wisdom on the hearts and minds of the leaders involved that war may cease and a peaceful resolution found. May truth, justice, and freedom prevail. We ask this in your most holy name. Amen.

Prayer from National Cathedral

Music Video – Ella's Song - Resistance Revival Chorus 4:07

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aYmaOzaGI-Q&list=RDxvd2EX_rDSA&index=2