

# Prayer Gathering for Peace and Racial Reconciliation

**Sunday, August 20, 2017**

*Westgate Church, Weston MA*

## WELCOME

Last weekend's events in Charlottesville, Virginia, were horrifying. White supremacists marching with torches, Nazi flags paraded down the street, violent outbursts that claimed the life of one woman and injured dozens more. It can only be described as a satanic display of racism and hatred, an offense against God and an assault on people made in his image.

But those events are also indicative of a larger and much deeper problem in American society—one that is not buried in our nation's history of slavery, segregation, and racial discrimination (as some might like to think), but has continued to poison relationships and systems for decades, and is now finding fresh energy in the alt-right white nationalist movement.

Our Savior weeps over this. And we should too. There is no supreme race; only a Supreme Savior. Racism is an abomination in God's eyes and antithetical to his gospel. But violence is not the answer either. In times of racial tension and evil, we must rally around the only thing powerful enough to bring true and lasting healing: the cross of Jesus Christ.

And so we're gathered here to pray.

# GOD'S MAJESTY AND THE BEAUTY OF HIS DESIGN FOR HUMANITY

## Responsive Reading: Psalm 8

Leader: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

**All: You have set your glory above the heavens.  
Out of the mouth of babes and infants,  
you have established strength because of your foes,  
to still the enemy and the avenger.**

Leader: When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

**All: Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.**

Leader: You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

**All: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

## Readings: The Glory of God's Design for Humanity

### Genesis 1:1-2, 26-28; 3:20

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

<sup>1:26</sup> Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." <sup>27</sup> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. <sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

<sup>3:20</sup> The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

### **Acts 17:24-28**

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for "In him we live and move and have our being"; as even some of your own poets have said, "For we are indeed his offspring."

### **Genesis 17:1-8**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old the LORD appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless, <sup>2</sup> that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may multiply you greatly." <sup>3</sup> Then Abram fell on his face. And God said to him, <sup>4</sup> "Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup> No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. <sup>6</sup> I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup> And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup> And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

### **Matthew 28:16-20**

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup> And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

### **Galatians 3:28**

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

## **Prayer of Praise and Adoration (open)**

## Readings: Our Duty to God and Fellow Man

### Matthew 22:35-40

And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup> And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

### Romans 13:8-10

Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup> The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

## Responsive Reading: Micah 6:6-8

Leader: With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high?

**All: Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?  
Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?  
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"**

Leader: He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you

**All: but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?**

# LAMENT FOR RACISM IN OUR COUNTRY'S PAST AND PRESENT

While you, LORD, made all people in your image, and call all men and women to love you with all that we are and to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with you, we lament that this is not the world we live in. One of the most painful indicators of that is the perennial hatred and discrimination based on the color of one's skin. And so we lament.

## **Responsive Reading: Habakkuk 1:2-4**

Leader: O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear?  
Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save?

**All: Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong?  
Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise.**

Leader: So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth.

**All: For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted.**

## **Readings: Our Lament for Injustice**

### **Psalm 10:1-11**

Why, O LORD, do you stand afar off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? <sup>2</sup> In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised. <sup>3</sup> For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the LORD. <sup>4</sup> In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, "There is no God." <sup>5</sup> His ways prosper at all times; your judgments are on high, out of his sight; as for all his foes, he puffs at them. <sup>6</sup> He says in his heart, "I shall not be moved; throughout all generations I shall not meet adversity." <sup>7</sup> His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity. <sup>8</sup> He sits in ambush in the villages; in hiding places he murders the innocent. His eyes stealthily watch for the helpless; <sup>9</sup> he lurks in ambush like a lion in his thicket; he lurks that he may seize the poor; he seizes the poor when he draws him into his net. <sup>10</sup> The helpless are crushed, sink down, and fall by his might. <sup>11</sup> He says in his heart, "God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it."

### **Psalm 13:1-4**

How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? <sup>2</sup> How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? <sup>3</sup> Consider and answer me, O LORD my God; light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death, <sup>4</sup> lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

### **Psalm 55:1-8**

Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy! <sup>2</sup> Attend to me, and answer me; I am restless in my complaint and I moan, <sup>3</sup> because of the noise of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked. For they drop trouble upon me, and in anger they bear a grudge against me. <sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen upon me. <sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling come upon me, and horror overwhelms me. <sup>6</sup> And I say, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest; <sup>7</sup> yes, I would wander far away; I would lodge in the wilderness; Selah <sup>8</sup> I would hurry to find a shelter from the raging wind and tempest."

## **Prayer of Lamentation over Racism in our Country's Past and Present (open)**

### **Reading: God's Response to Injustice**

#### **Isaiah 2:11-22**

The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. <sup>12</sup> For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up- and it shall be brought low; <sup>13</sup> against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; <sup>14</sup> against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; <sup>15</sup> against every high tower, and against every fortified wall; <sup>16</sup> against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. <sup>17</sup> And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. <sup>18</sup> And the idols shall utterly pass away. <sup>19</sup> And people shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. <sup>20</sup> In that day mankind will cast away their idols of silver and their idols of gold, which they made for themselves to worship, to the moles and to the bats, <sup>21</sup> to enter the caverns of the rocks and the clefts of the cliffs, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty, when he rises to terrify the earth. <sup>22</sup> Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?

# CONFESSION OF SIN

While we lament the wickedness of racism in this country and this world, we also acknowledge, LORD, that it is born of a heart that is rebelling against you. And so we confess—on behalf of fallen humanity, on behalf of our nation and our cities, and from our own hearts.

## **Responsive Reading: Romans 3:9b-18**

Leader: For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written:

**All: "None is righteous, no, not one;  
no one understands;  
no one seeks for God.  
All have turned aside;  
together they have become worthless;  
no one does good, not even one."**

Leader: "Their throat is an open grave;  
they use their tongues to deceive."

**All: "The venom of asps is under their lips."  
"Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."**

Leader: "Their feet are swift to shed blood;  
in their paths are ruin and misery,  
and the way of peace they have not known."

**All: "There is no fear of God before their eyes."**

## **Reading: Our Common Rebellion against God**

### **Daniel 9:3-19**

Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. <sup>4</sup> I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, "O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>5</sup> we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules. <sup>6</sup> We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. <sup>7</sup> To you, O Lord, belongs righteousness, but to us open shame, as at this day, to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to all Israel, those who are near and those who are far away, in all the lands to which you have driven them, because of the treachery that they have committed against you. <sup>8</sup> To us, O Lord, belongs open shame, to our

kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you. <sup>9</sup> To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness, for we have rebelled against him <sup>10</sup> and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God by walking in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets. <sup>11</sup> All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice. And the curse and oath that are written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out upon us, because we have sinned against him. <sup>12</sup> He has confirmed his words, which he spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us, by bringing upon us a great calamity. For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> As it is written in the Law of Moses, all this calamity has come upon us; yet we have not entreated the favor of the LORD our God, turning from our iniquities and gaining insight by your truth. <sup>14</sup> Therefore the LORD has kept ready the calamity and has brought it upon us, for the LORD our God is righteous in all the works that he has done, and we have not obeyed his voice. <sup>15</sup> And now, O Lord our God, who brought your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and have made a name for yourself, as at this day, we have sinned, we have done wickedly.

<sup>16</sup> "O Lord, according to all your righteous acts, let your anger and your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem, your holy hill, because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and your people have become a byword among all who are around us. <sup>17</sup> Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his pleas for mercy, and for your own sake, O Lord, make your face to shine upon your sanctuary, which is desolate. <sup>18</sup> O my God, incline your ear and hear. Open your eyes and see our desolations, and the city that is called by your name. For we do not present our pleas before you because of our righteousness, but because of your great mercy. <sup>19</sup> O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive. O Lord, pay attention and act. Delay not, for your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people are called by your name."

## **Prayer of Confession for our Common Guilt of Racism, Past and Present**

As Daniel owned the sin of his people, even when he himself was not guilty, but recognized a common stain shared by all, and so brought that sin and guilt in confession to God, so we come before you now, LORD, confessing our nation's racist past—slavery, lynching, segregation, discrimination, inequality, arrogance, and pride. And confessing our nation's racist present—discrimination, marginalization, profiling, fear, indifference, violence, and offense.

(Open)

## Readings: Our Personal Complicity

### Psalm 55:12-14, 20-21

For it is not an enemy who taunts me- then I could bear it; it is not an adversary who deals insolently with me- then I could hide from him. <sup>13</sup> But it is you, a man, my equal, my companion, my familiar friend. <sup>14</sup> We used to take sweet counsel together; within God's house we walked in the throng. . .

My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. <sup>21</sup> His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.

### Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! <sup>24</sup> And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

## Prayer of Confession of our Personal Guilt in Racial Division and Disunity

LORD, we recognize that your church has not been faultless in contributing to sin of racism in this land. In the name of your gospel, claiming the authority of your Scripture, your people have defended and advanced the ideas of slavery, segregation, and white supremacy. Forgive us, LORD. For it was not an enemy who taunted your children of color, it was their companions, their siblings, their friends.

Search our hearts to expose in us any ungodly attitudes, actions, or words that demean other image-bearers because of ethnicity or race. Let us confess our sins to you, that we might bring them to you in repentance and find mercy at your cross.

(Open)

## Responsive Reading: Psalm 130:1-4

Leader: Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!

**All: O Lord, hear my voice!**

**Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!**

Leader: If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

**All: But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.**

# ASSURANCE OF THE GOSPEL'S SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY AMID SIN AND SUFFERING

In view of your mercy we now confess together our hope in your Son, Jesus, and the power of his death and resurrection, the only hope able to bring true repentance and lasting healing in the face of racial sin.

## **Responsive Reading: Romans 3:19-30**

Leader: Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

**All: But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.**

Leader: For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

**All: and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.**

Leader: This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

**All: It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

Leader: Then what becomes of our boasting?

**All: It is excluded.**

Leader: By what kind of law? By a law of works?

**All: No, but by the law of faith. For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.**

Leader: Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles also?

**All: Yes, of Gentiles also, since God is one. He will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith.**

## **Readings: God's Promise of Justice and Redemption for All Nations through Jesus Christ**

### **Isaiah 11:1-6**

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. <sup>2</sup> And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. <sup>6</sup> The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

### **Isaiah 53:1-12**

Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup> For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup> Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

<sup>7</sup> He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup> By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup> And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

<sup>10</sup> Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup> Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. <sup>12</sup> Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

### **Isaiah 61:1-4**

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup> to grant to those who mourn in Zion- to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. <sup>4</sup> They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

### **Ephesians 2:11-22**

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands- <sup>12</sup> remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. <sup>13</sup> But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. <sup>14</sup> For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility <sup>15</sup> by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, <sup>16</sup> and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. <sup>17</sup> And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. <sup>19</sup> So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, <sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

### **Revelation 5:9-10**

And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, <sup>10</sup> and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

## **Prayer of Praise and Assurance for Christ's Redeeming and Reconciling Work for All People (Open)**

## Responsive Reading: Colossians 3:1-11

Leader: If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

**All: Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.  
For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**

Leader: When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**All: Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.**

Leader: In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.

**All: But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.**

Leader: Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

**All: Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.**

# PRAYER FOR MERCY AND HELP IN OUR TIME OF NEED

LORD, as we set our hearts on things above, where Christ is seated, it is in his name and on the basis of his redeeming power that we now seek your mercy and help for our nation and neighborhoods, for our own lives and relationships, that you might bring about peace and racial reconciliation amid the chaos, fear, and division of this fallen world.

## **Responsive Reading: Psalm 13**

Leader: How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?

**All: How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day?**

Leader: How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**All: Consider and answer me, O LORD my God;  
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,**

Leader: lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him," lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

**All: But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.  
I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.**

## **Readings: God's Answer to Lament**

### **Psalm 10:12-18**

Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; forget not the afflicted. <sup>13</sup> Why does the wicked renounce God and say in his heart, "You will not call to account"? <sup>14</sup> But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless. <sup>15</sup> Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer; call his wickedness to account till you find none. <sup>16</sup> The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations perish from his land. <sup>17</sup> O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear <sup>18</sup> to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.

### **Psalm 55:16-19, 22-23**

<sup>16</sup> But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. <sup>17</sup> Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice. <sup>18</sup> He redeems my soul in safety from the battle that I wage, for many are arrayed against me. <sup>19</sup> God will give ear and humble them, he who is enthroned from of old, Selah because they do not change and do not fear God. . . .

Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you; he will never permit the righteous to be moved. <sup>23</sup> But you, O God, will cast them down into the pit of destruction; men of blood and treachery shall not live out half their days. But I will trust in you.

### **Hebrews 4:14-16**

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

## **Prayer for Mercy and Help amid our Racial Crisis (Open)**

### **Reading: God's Promise of Victory**

#### **Romans 8:31-39**

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup> Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died- more than that, who was raised- who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup> Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup> As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

#### **Revelation 7:9-10**

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

## **Responsive Reading: Revelation 21:1-5; 22:20-21**

Leader: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth,

**All: for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more.**

Leader: And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem,

**All: coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.**

Leader: And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

**All: "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

Leader: He will wipe away every tear from their eyes,

**All: and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."**

Leader: And he who was seated on the throne said,

**All: "Behold, I am making all things new."**

Leader: Also he said, "Write this down,

**All: for these words are trustworthy and true."**

Leader: He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon."

**All: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!**

Leader: The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all.

**All: Amen.**