

In Lament, Penitence, and Faith

Introduction

In his book, *Dark Cloud, Deep Mercy: Discovering the Grace of Lament* (Crossway, 2019), Mark Vroegop describes the shape of biblical laments using four words: *turn*, *complain*, *ask*, and *trust*. Patterned on those steps, and in the form of a Service of the Word, the following *Liturgy of Lament* is offered as a means of crying out to God in the wake of recent cases of abuse in evangelical church contexts.

The liturgical form of service may be unfamiliar to some. However, the *givenness* of the service is designed to shape our response in the midst of troubling and dark times. When we do not know how or what to pray, it will orient us to God and enable us to inhabit the grace of lament.

What follows can be used in individual or corporate settings. Yet, in recognition of diverse backgrounds, contexts, and proximities to cases of abuse, we have included alternative readings, prayers, collects, and suggested songs and hymns in the appendix. If used in public worship, you may wish to include a sermon. It may be better, however, in some settings to hold a prolonged period of silence and reflection instead. Either way, sufficient space and times of quiet should be provided throughout, especially between the sections. Without a sermon and hymns, the service takes approximately 30 minutes.

None of the liturgical elements included are newly written but are derived from authorised sources. The structure itself is based on *In Penitence and Faith: A Service in Lent* (New Patterns for Worship), but the service draws upon other resources, where indicated, including *Facing Pain: A Service of Lament* (New Patterns for Worship) and *Towards a Safer Church: some liturgical resources* (2018).

We are immensely grateful to the survivors of abuse who have shared their stories to accompany this liturgy. Out of a desire to hear their authentic voices, we have elected not to condense or edit their words.

Overall Structure

Preparation – Turning to God in and about our pain

Opening responses, prayers, and the beatitudes.

Sharing the Story – Bringing our Complaint to God

Psalm of Lament and stories of abuse.

The Word – Finding Hope in God

Scripture readings, psalms, a period of reflection, and prayers of penitence and lament.

Prayers – Asking for God's Help

The Lord's Prayer and other intercessory prayers.

Moving into the Future – Trusting God

Affirmation of Faith and final prayers.

In Lament, Penitence, and Faith

A Service of the Word

We say together the words printed in bold.

Preparation – Turning to God in and about our pain

Opening sentence of scripture

The psalmist writes:

O LORD, God of my salvation;
I cry out day and night before you.
Let my prayer come before you;
Incline your ear to my cry!
(Psalm 88:1-2)

*Opening Prayer*¹

We meet in the presence of God
Who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

A hymn or song(s) may be sung.

The Beatitudes

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied.
Blessed are the merciful,

¹ From New Patterns for Worship: 18. *Facing Pain: A Service of Lament.*

for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,

for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

for they shall be called children of God.

Blessed are those who suffer persecution for righteousness' sake,

for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Silence is kept.

Prayer of Preparation

All Almighty God,

to whom all hearts are open,

all desires known,

and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts

by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you,

and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Sharing the Story – Bringing our Complaint to God

Psalm 13:1-2

How long will you forget me, O Lord; for ever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long shall I have anguish in my soul and grief in my heart, day after day?

How long shall my enemy triumph over me?

Experiences of those who have been affected may be shared²

Psalm 13:3-6

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;

Lighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death;

Lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him,"

And my foes rejoice that I have fallen.

But I put my trust in your steadfast love;

My heart will rejoice in your salvation.

I will sing to the Lord,

For he has dealt so bountifully with me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

² From New Patterns for Worship: 18. *Facing Pain: A Service of Lament.*

The Word – Finding Hope in God

Reading

Job 2:11-13; 3:1, 20-26

¹¹ Now when Job's three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. ¹² When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. ¹³ They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

¹After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth.

²⁰ “Why is light given to one in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul,

²¹ who long for death, but it does not come,
and dig for it more than for hidden treasures;

²² who rejoice exceedingly,
and are glad when they find the grave?

²³ Why is light given to one who cannot see the way,
whom God has fenced in?

²⁴ For my sighing comes like my bread,
and my groanings are poured out like water.

²⁵ Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me,
and what I dread befalls me.

²⁶ I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest; but trouble comes.”

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Psalm 130

This psalm is used between the readings

Out of the depths I have called to you, Lord.

Let your ears be open to hear my voice.

All My hope is in God's word.

If you recorded all our sins
who could come before you?

All My hope is in God's word.

There is forgiveness with you:
therefore you shall be feared.

All My hope is in God's word.

My soul is longing for the Lord,
more than those who watch for daybreak.

All My hope is in God's word.

O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy.

All My hope is in God's word.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

All My hope is in God's word.

Reading

Revelation 21:1-4; 22:1-5

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,

“See, the home of God is among mortals.

He will dwell with them;

they will be his peoples,

and God himself will be with them;

⁴ he will wipe every tear from their eyes.

Death will be no more;

mourning and crying and pain will be no more,

for the first things have passed away.”

¹ Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city. On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³ Nothing accursed will be found there any more. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; ⁴ they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Prolonged Period of Silence and Reflection

Or a sermon may be preached

Prayers of Penitence and Lament

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

We come into God’s presence aware of past failures and seeking his forgiveness. We pray for all who have been abused and for the healing of minds and memories. In the silence we bring before God our community in penitence and faith.³

After a period of recollection, the following petitions may be offered by the minister or others:

³ This and the following petitions are from *Towards a Safer Church: Some Liturgical Resources* (2018).

Lord God, our maker and our redeemer,
hear us as we cry out to you in our need and anguish: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

We have not loved you with all our heart, or our neighbours as ourselves. Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

For sins of negligence and ignorance: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

For feeble faith and judgemental attitudes: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

For self-deceit and colluding with falsehood: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

For complacency and lack of vigilance: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

For the times when people have been abused: Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

Bind up the wounds of those who have been hurt, and in your mercy make us whole.

Lord,

All forgive us and heal us.

The minister may conclude by saying:

May almighty God,
who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,
bring *you* his pardon and peace, now and for ever.

All Amen.

A hymn or song(s) may be sung.

Prayers – Asking for God’s Help

The Lord’s Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

*Prayers of Intercession*⁴

Loving God, we lay before you the challenges that confront us
at home, at work, in our communities and churches.

May your Son, the Good Shepherd,
guide and shape the life of your Church
that all may find a welcome, secure in your presence.

Jesus, Lord of the Church:

All in your mercy, hear us.

Renew your Church in the love of truth and in passion for justice.
take from us all hypocrisy and deceit,
and teach us to serve with humility and honesty those whose lives are broken.

Jesus, Lord of the Church:

All in your mercy, hear us.

⁴ From *Towards a Safer Church: Some Liturgical Resources*. Other examples of prayers can be found in this resource.

Help us to cherish children and all in our community who are vulnerable,
to protect them and keep them safe.
may this place rejoice to be a place
where your love is celebrated with integrity.

Jesus, Lord of the Church:

All in your mercy, hear us.

Bring into your healing presence
all who have been damaged and diminished by abuse,
or whose lives continue to be overshadowed by guilt or fear,
May sorrows be shared and memories be healed.

Jesus, Lord of the Church:

All in your mercy, hear us.

May those who have been damaged by abuse
not simply survive, but flourish.
May young and old discover your life-giving love,
and delight in your gift of life,
so that fun, laughter and joy overflow to your glory.

Jesus, Lord of the Church:

All in your mercy, hear us.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen**

The Collect

The Collect is said.

Lighten our darkness,
Lord, we pray,
And in your great mercy
Defend us from all perils and dangers of this night,
For the love of your only Son,
Our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Moving into the Future – Trusting God

Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

All Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

A hymn or song(s) may be sung.

*Final Prayer*⁵

God the Father,
By whose glory Christ was raised from the dead,
Strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life;
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

⁵ From New Patterns for Worship: 18. *Facing Pain: a Service of Lament.*

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Appendix: Alternative Material

Survivor Stories

Survivor Story I

It's taken me over fifteen years to share my experience of sexual abuse. Looking back now, I still don't know why. I can only describe the *confusion, shame, and anger* I experienced, which caused me to conceal it.

Confusion – because I *wanted* to move on and forget the experience. I didn't want it to ruin my life and ministry. I was resolved to forgive my abuser and, somehow, it even felt 'ungodly' to hang onto the memories of the abuse. What reason would I have to share the story with others? Surely too many years had passed to re-open the wounds. Unfortunately, the memories didn't fade. In fact, the suppression of them led to a greater sense of disharmony in my person, manifesting in doubts and distrust of others.

Shame – because I didn't want to look or feel weak. Moreover, I worried that I wouldn't be believed. Over time, I wondered whether too many years had passed to share the experience. I didn't want the attention and stress disclosure would inevitably bring. I dreaded having it taken out of my hands and control. What impact would it have on my abuser, someone who was close to me at the time? On my relationships with close friends, none of whom I'd felt able to disclose my abuse to? On my ministry? Would this expose my weaknesses and inadequacies?

My **anger** is perhaps the most difficult emotion to describe because, at times, I have directed it at myself, for being so foolish and not addressing things sooner, at my perpetrator, for the abuse and manipulation, but also at some of my mentors in the faith, who'd nurtured me in a sometimes simplistic, prescribed, and therefore inadequate, method of Christian discipleship. I feared a blunt and trite treatment of my wounds. Whether my fault or theirs, I simply didn't feel confident that my church leaders would be genuinely understanding or gentle enough with me.

Although that's left me lacking in trustworthy mentors to guide me, I have found solace in God, and in particular the divine attribute of his *goodness*. The knowledge that God *is* good has anchored my cries and complaints to him. In my confusion, shame, and anger, I am consoled that, in Christ, God's goodness remains perfectly present to me – without distance or measure. His goodness continues to nourish me and bring wholeness to my divided self. The light of his goodness has also given me courage to open up about things previously hidden, which I trust will produce further healing – in me, the church, and even, I pray, my abuser.

Survivor Story 2

I was sexually abused as a child and young adult and those who did that would spread rumours about me being sexually promiscuous as a way of covering their abuse. These memories were suppressed until years later when I was again sexually assaulted and abused by someone, this time in a ministry role at church. The person refused to take responsibility and instead told a counter-narrative that it was, in fact, my fault. This was retraumatizing for me, particularly given the similar pattern to what had happened before.

Complaint

What has been most painful for me is the betrayal and powerlessness and confusion and being manipulated. And I think the thing I found most painful was I was kind of ok with my own sin, but it's finding it confusing because of different narratives about what is my fault and what is the other person's fault.

It's not altogether surprising that we are a bunch of sinners and therefore need forgiveness, but I think the church is worse than most places in that when people do sin significantly there's almost more of a desire to keep up appearances and project being godly and good, which just further takes away from any sense of apology and reconciliation.

I feel a bit blank towards God sometimes.

Asking

I don't really understand why he [God] just can't make it right again and why he allowed it to happen in the first place. I didn't see what was happening but he did. I don't really understand. I never wanted to do the wrong thing and I wanted to please him and do the right thing, so I don't really understand why this keeps happening to me.

Trusting

He [God] has given me the courage to do what is right and to not fear people or the consequences. It is easier to just not talk about it and make it go away by ignoring it.

I know that he [God] is trustworthy and true and even if I don't understand why, he is going to make all things new and he is the only one who can fix things – that's precious. And he's coming back.

God is trustworthy and doesn't change. This is important because people are not who I thought they were. He is good and he does good. He's not going to change, he's not going to become untrustworthy.

Survivor Story 3

Long term effects

I still struggle to call what happened to me abuse. I feel I don't have the right to use that word when I hear the stories of others who I consider to have been through much worse. But then when I recount the events and see the open mouths I think again. When I am moved to tears every time I think about what I went through, when I realise that every relationship I have is impacted by the events in Holland, then I am able to see that it was really, really bad. I wouldn't wish what happened to me on my worst enemy.

Trust

I find it very difficult to trust my employers. It is almost beyond me to really believe that I am capable of doing a good job and every time I am given positive feedback it is a shock. It has taken me a decade to develop any sense of professional confidence. I don't think I always believe that what I am being told is the truth, I think that behind kind words is something different, just waiting to be said when I expect it the least. I live in fear that what happened in Holland will happen to me again, that I will completely trust a Christian leader and then in one moment when I am least expecting it they will take everything away from me and leave with me nothing.

Scars

The best way to describe what happened is that it is a scar that will never completely heal. Most of the time I don't think about, and then something happens and I hit the scar and I return to that room. I wish I could distance myself, I wish that I could just forgive him and move on but I don't seem to be able to. So now it is always in the back of my mind, lurking and continually undermining me.

Giving it to God

I know I need to forgive him and I remember sitting in church quite soon after I had come back and really praying that I could trust God and give him all my pain and hurt. I knew I could trust a God of justice to judge him. That is the only way that fifteen years on I can think about it. I pray that one day I will be able to completely forgive and that the scar would have completely healed.

While it will probably always be a scar, I do feel that God used the experiences I went through to help form me into the person I am today. I know that God works in all things, when I was at my worst all I could do every day in my quiet times was read one passage from James and one from Hebrews about how God can work through our suffering. It is hard to reconcile the deep sense I had that God wanted me in Holland with what I had to go through by working there.

Survivor Story 4

Manipulation and abuse is not confined to any one arena where people have authority, and that includes those who have spiritual authority; and it took me a long time to come to appreciate that the way in which I was being treated by a mentor and friend was wrong and had to stop. He was highly respected, a respect which I shared; and this, together with my circumstances, led to an unhealthy dependence. While there is so much I learned from him for which I remain grateful – indeed, most of what I learned from him was nourishing and beneficial – the combination of respect, admiration, a sense of indebtedness and an unhealthy dependence led to my consenting, confidentially, to deeply damaging actions and activities, even though I had a growing sense of unease. He had an unhealthy hold over me, the source of which was this combination of spiritual authority, respect, indebtedness, dependence, and confidentiality.

The process which followed my disclosures, although ultimately helpful and constructive, left me completely traumatised and questioning the wisdom of my decision to come forward. I felt as though I was being treated as an abuser myself, or at least as one colluding in abuse. The trauma was compounded by the circulation of rumours and false information which were both hurtful and wounding. It took months of counselling for me to comprehend fully what had been going on and what I had endured. Coercive control and abuse are a misuse of power and they give rise to powerful emotions. I know this from personal experience. But, equally, to hijack, manipulate and weaponize these emotions – and to speculate publicly about what has happened – is also a misuse of power which can, and in my case did, compound the primary abuse.

Through all of this I have lost one of my closest friendships and I have found it difficult to regain the desire to trust anyone other than my wife – although my relationship with my wife has grown and strengthened, despite her feeling violated by the depth of the friendship I had had.

While I am still finding it hard to come to terms with the elusive line between control and consent – and the dynamics of power – I know that the Lord restores us, even though we don't deserve it. I know that he will restore me, and that he deals with overflowing grace with those who truly turn to him, and I trust that includes my friend.

The Beatitudes from Luke 6

Let us hear our Lord's blessing on those who follow him.

Blessed are you poor,

for yours is the kingdom of God.

Blessed are you that hunger now,

for you shall be satisfied.

Blessed are you that weep now,

for you shall laugh.

Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, on account of the Son of man!

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

But woe to you that are rich,

for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you that are full now,

for you shall hunger.

Woe to you that laugh now,

for you shall mourn and weep.

Woe to you, when all men speak well of you,

for so their fathers did to the false prophets.

Readings

1 Samuel 2:1-10

¹ Hannah prayed and said,

'My heart exults in the Lord;

my strength is exalted in my God.

My mouth derides my enemies,

because I rejoice in my victory.

²'There is no Holy One like the Lord,

no one besides you;

there is no Rock like our God.

³Talk no more so very proudly,

let not arrogance come from your mouth;

for the Lord is a God of knowledge,

and by him actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.

⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

⁶ The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷ The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.

⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honour.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.

⁹ 'He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.

¹⁰ The Lord! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king,
and exalt the power of his anointed.'

Isaiah 40:1-11

¹ Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

⁶ A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.

⁹ Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'

¹⁰ See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹ He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Isaiah 59:9-15

⁹ Therefore justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not reach us;
we wait for light, and lo! there is darkness;

and for brightness, but we walk in gloom.

¹⁰ We grope like the blind along a wall,
groping like those who have no eyes;
we stumble at noon as in the twilight,
among the vigorous as though we were dead.

¹¹ We all growl like bears;
like doves we moan mournfully.

We wait for justice, but there is none;
for salvation, but it is far from us.

¹² For our transgressions before you are many,
and our sins testify against us.

Our transgressions indeed are with us,
and we know our iniquities:

¹³ transgressing, and denying the Lord,
and turning away from following our God,
talking oppression and revolt,
conceiving lying words and uttering them from the heart.

¹⁴ Justice is turned back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
for truth stumbles in the public square,
and uprightness cannot enter.

¹⁵ Truth is lacking,
and whoever turns from evil is despoiled.

The Lord saw it, and it displeased him
that there was no justice.

Luke 1:46-55

⁴⁶ And Mary said,

'My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,

⁴⁸ for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

Prayers

Bring into your healing presence all who have been damaged and diminished by abuse, or whose lives continue to be overshadowed by guilt or fear. May sorrows be shared and memories be healed. Jesus, Lord of the Church,

All in your mercy, hear us.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

Jesus Christ, Son of God,
who passed through the dark sleep of death,
remember those who cry to you
in shame and silence and defeat
and raise them to your risen life,
for you are alive and reign for ever.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

Support us, O Lord,
all the day long of this troublous life,
until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes,
the busy world is hushed,
the fever of life is over
and our work is done.

Then, Lord, in your mercy grant us a safe lodging,
a holy rest, and peace at the last;
through Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

(From *Common Worship*, adapted from the *1928 Prayer Book*)

God of hope,
we come before you in our brokenness and need of healing.
Through your mercy and grace,
we seek your forgiveness for what we have done or failed to do.
Give us the courage to learn from past events,
and through your Spirit give us the hope to look forward
to life with you and through you,
so that we may overcome the darkness and suffering surrounding us
and proclaim your love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

Renew your Church in the love of truth and in passion for justice. Take from us all
hypocrisy and deceit, and teach us to serve with humility and honesty those whose lives
are broken. Jesus, Lord of the Church,

All in your mercy, hear us.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

May those who have been damaged by abuse not simply survive, but flourish. May young
and old discover your life-giving love, and delight in your gift of life, so that fun, laughter
and joy overflow to your glory. Jesus, Lord of the Church,

All in your mercy, hear us.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

From all evil and mischief;
from pride, vanity and hypocrisy;
from envy, hatred and malice;
and from all evil intent,

All good Lord, deliver us.

From sloth, worldliness and love of money;
from hardness of heart
and contempt for your word and your laws,

All good Lord, deliver us.

From sins of body and mind;
from the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil,

All good Lord, deliver us.

From famine and disaster;

from violence, murder, and dying unprepared,

All good Lord, deliver us.

In all times of sorrow;

in all times of joy;

in the hour of death,

and at the day of judgement,

All good Lord, deliver us.

(From The Litany, *Common Worship*)

Collects

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

(From *The Book of Common Prayer* [contemporary], a Collect for Advent I)

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

(From *The Book of Common Prayer* [contemporary], a Collect for Ash Wednesday)

Final Prayer

The God of love,

passionate and strong,

faithful and tender,

watch over *you* and keep *you* safe

all the days of *your* life;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among *you* and remain with *you* always.

All Amen.

(From *Towards a Safer Church*)

Songs of Lament – Traditional and Contemporary

I. Be still, my soul: The Lord is on your side

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqgCltqifV8>

WORDS

Be still, my soul: The Lord is on your side;
bear patiently the weight of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
through every change he faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your gracious, heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future as he has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the winds and waves still know
the voice of Christ that ruled them here below.

Be still, my soul: the day is hastening on
when we shall be for ever with the Lord.
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
in his safe presence we shall meet at last.

Catharina A D Von Schlegel b.1697
Trans. Jane L Borthwick 1813-97
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2. Abide with me; fast falls the eventide

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=umVG7PI2QzY>

WORDS

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who, like Thyself, my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

Words: Henry F Lyte (1793-1847)
Tune: William H Monk (1823-1889)
Public Domain

3. Jesus, lover of my soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vONmOmn7gNs>

WORDS

Jesus, lover of my soul,
let me to your presence fly,
while the gathering waters roll,
while the tempest still is high.
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
till the storm of life is past;
safe into the haven, guide
and receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,
all my hope in you I see:
leave, O leave me, not alone;
still support and comfort me.
All my trust on you is stayed,
all my help from you I bring:
cover my defenceless head
with the shadow of your wing.

Plenteous grace with you is found,
grace to wash away my sin:
let the healing streams abound;
make and keep me clean within.
Living fountain, now impart
all your life and purity;
spring for ever in my heart,
rise to all eternity.

C. Wesley (1709-1788)
Tune: Aberystwyth
Public Domain

4. Show me how to stand for Justice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrMuTxZDGLI>

WORDS

Show me how to stand for justice:
how to work for what is right,
how to challenge false assumptions,
how to walk within the light.
May I learn to share more freely
in a world so full of greed,
showing your immense compassion
by the life I choose to lead.

Teach my heart to treasure mercy,
whether given or received -
for my need has not diminished
since the day I first believed:
let me seek no satisfaction
boasting in what I have done,
but rejoice that I am pardoned
and accepted in your Son.

Help me now embrace a lifestyle
modelled on your living word,
in humility submitting
to the truth which I have heard.
Make me conscious of your presence
every day, in all I do:
by your Spirit's gracious prompting
may I learn to walk with you.

Words: Martin E Leckebusch, Public Domain

Tune: Here is Love (Robert Lowry)

(CCLI Song No: 3484230)

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5. By Gracious Powers, so wonderfully sheltered

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZRslnKmCLc>

WORDS

By gracious powers so wonderfully sheltered
and confidently waiting, come what may,
we know that God is with us night and morning,
and never fails to meet us each new day.
Yet are our hearts by their old foe tormented;
still evil days bring burdens hard to bear;
O give our frightened souls the sure salvation
for which, O Lord, you taught us to prepare.
And when the cup you give is filled to brimming
with bitter suffering, hard to understand,
we take it gladly, trusting though with trembling,
out of so good and so beloved a hand.
If once again, in this mixed world, you give us
the joy we had, the brightness of your sun,
we shall recall what we have learned through sorrow,
and dedicate our lives to you alone.

6. O Lord our God, in every age

[https://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/o lord our god in every age](https://www.jubilate.co.uk/songs/o%20lord%20our%20god%20in%20every%20age)

WORDS

O Lord our God, in every age
our home upon the earth!
Before you built the mountain range
or brought this world to birth,
from countless eras seen by none
to futures vast, unknown,
you are the everlasting One
on your eternal throne.

'Turn back, O man!' At your decree
we all return to dust,
for, swifter than a day, you see
a thousand years race past;
you sweep us, everyone, away:
we vanish from the light,
as grass springs up and flowers by day,
yet droops and dies by night.

Your wrath consumes us: all our sins
are open to your eye,
the years slip by, our end begins,
we finish like a sigh;
though some may with their strength surmount
the threescore years and ten,
their span is but a brief account
of sorrow, toil and pain.

But which of us will pause to view
your wrath with solemn thought,
and meditate, in measure due,
your terror, as we ought?
So teach us, Lord, the heavenly art
of numbering our days,

that wisdom may incline the heart
to walk in all your ways.

Turn back, O Lord! In grace return
and crown us with your love:
as once your anger made us mourn,
now raise our hearts above;
so may your servants see your grace,
our children know its power,
your favour all our works embrace
both now and evermore.

Based on Psalm 90
David Preston © Jubilate Hymns

7. Faithful One, so unchanging

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PjSO5IhI0M>

WORDS

Faithful One, so unchanging;
ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all, I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again,
I call out to you again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble,
you lift me up when I fall down;
all through the storm
your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.

Brian Doerksen
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8. There is a hope that burns within my heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FVUfNEwRPno>

WORDS

There is a hope that burns within my heart,
That gives me strength for every passing day;
A glimpse of glory now revealed in meagre part,
Yet drives all doubt away:
I stand in Christ, with sins forgiven;
And Christ in me, the hope of heaven!
My highest calling and my deepest joy,
To make His will my home.

There is a hope that lifts my weary head,
A consolation strong against despair,
That when the world has plunged me in its deepest pit,
I find the Saviour there!
Through present sufferings, future's fear,
He whispers 'courage' in my ear.
For I am safe in everlasting arms,
And they will lead me home.

There is a hope that stands the test of time,
That lifts my eyes beyond the beckoning grave,
To see the matchless beauty of a day divine
When I behold His face!
When sufferings cease and sorrows die,
And every longing satisfied.
Then joy unspeakable will flood my soul,
For I am truly home.

9. O God of Mercy, Hear Our Plea

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nImxcK2wM4c>

<https://sovereigngracemusic.org/music/songs/o-god-mercy-hear-plea/>

WORDS

O God, we've seen Your faithfulness
You brought us from the wilderness
But now our faith is frail and weak
O God of mercy, hear our plea

When will You comfort our distress?
How long until the promised rest?
We cry to You from deepest need
O God of mercy, hear our plea

*Abba, Father, our Redeemer
In this barren land be our hope and strength
Until glory we will trust and sing
Abba, Father, hear our plea*

We join creation's longing groan
To take Your ransomed children home
For then the eyes of all will see
The God of mercy hears our plea

"O God of Mercy, Hear Our Plea" Music and Words by Brittany Kauffin and Matt Merker © 2017 Sovereign Grace Praise (BMI) Sovereign Grace Music, a division of Sovereign Grace Churches. All rights reserved. Administrated worldwide at www.CapitolCMGPublishing.com, excluding the UK which is adm. by Integrity Music, part of the David C Cook family. www.SovereignGraceMusic.org

10. Lord from Sorrows deep I call – Psalm 42

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nATJFITjJF0>

WORDS

Lord from sorrows deep I call
When my hope is shaken
Torn and ruined from the fall
Hear my desperation
For so long I've pled and prayed
"God, come to my rescue!"
Even so the thorn remains
Still my heart will praise you

Storms within my troubled soul
Questions without answers
On my faith these billows roll
God be now my shelter
Why are you cast down my soul?
Hope in him who saves you
When the fires have all grown cold
Cause this heart to praise you

Should my life be torn from me
Every worldly pleasure
When all I possess is grief
God be then my treasure
Be my vision in the night
Be my hope and refuge
Till my faith is turned to sight
Lord my heart will praise you

*O my soul
Put your hope in God
My help my rock
I will praise Him
Sing o sing
Through the raging storm
You're still my God*

My salvation

x2

His Mercy Is More: The Hymns of Matt Boswell And Matt Papa
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11. Psalm 13

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvPBFdZVasI>

WORDS

How long O Lord will you forget me?
How long O Lord, will you hide, hide your face from me?
How long must I wrestle with me?
And everyday have sorrow in my heart, sorrow in my heart?

I will wait on You, I will wait on You, wait on You x2

Look on me Lord and answer me
Give my eyes light or I will sleep in death, I will sleep in death
My enemies say, "I will overcome Him"
And my foes rejoice even when I fall, I don't want to fall

For I will trust in Your unfailing love
My heart rejoices in Your salvation, I will sing to the Lord

Words and Music: Shane & Shane
@shaneandshane.
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12. There's a Time for Tears – Sam Hargreaves

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL5YyjPIH9s>

WORDS

There's a time for tears, and a time for pain,
time to hurt while the grief remains.
There's a time when peace seems so far away,
yet still God holds us on that day.
There's a time to weep from the ache inside,
time to show what we've tried to hide,
There's a time to doubt and to wonder why,
and hold each other as we cry.

*God of comfort, God of the cross,
joining us here to weep,
stand beside us, grieving our loss,
and be for us the hope of peace.*

There is time to smile at the memories,
time for thanks as we meet to grieve.
It takes time to heal, so we pause today
to mourn, remember and to pray.

CCL# 7143575

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13. Broken one, take heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bGhlx80-lhQ>

WORDS

Broken one, take heart,
for your King has entered in
made your heart his home
when he washed away your sin.

In the darkest day,
know your shame is all gone;
when he looks at you,
God will see his Son.
At the throne of grace,
he says “sinner, come.”

Hurting one, take heart
for your King will walk beside;
with each rising sun
every grace he will provide.

In the hardest day,
he will never forsake,
for he knows your grief,
and he feels your pain.
When the world gives way,
Jesus will remain.

Waiting one, take heart
for your King will soon return,
ending every strife
he will reign upon the earth.

In the longest day,
know the vict'ry is won;
do not fear the world,
he has overcome.
You are safe in him
covered by his love.

14. Two sins have we committed

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ar6puldslc>

WORDS

Two sins have we committed,

two sins that we cannot deny,
we've turned from you,
the fount of living water
and have tried to drink from
cisterns cracked and dry.

Two sins have we committed,
two sins are plain before our eyes.

We've walked away
from the truth that brings us freedom
and have settled for those
sweet enslaving lies.

*What fools we are, how blind we are.
Have mercy Lord, mercy on us,
forgive us Lord and help us see.
Change our hearts, that we might live
for you, O Lord, for you, O Lord, always.*

Two sins have we committed,
two sins at which you stand appalled.

We've turned from you,
our glorious Creator,
and have worshipped things that
are no gods at all.

What fools we are...

15. There is no other name

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax9r00ovr5g>

WORDS

There is no other name
in earth or heaven found
through whom we are redeemed,
through whom your grace abounds,
no other name can save
but Jesus Christ, our Lord.

*My joy in sorrow's tears,
my strength to cast out fears.
No other name but Jesus, Jesus;
My hope in darkest night,
my broken soul's delight.
No other name but Jesus, Jesus.*

There is no victory
but Jesus crucified,
no other cure for sin
but that our Saviour died.
No other hope we have
but that he rose again.

My joy in sorrow's tears...

No other throne endures.
No other song remains
but 'Worthy is the Lamb
who was for sinners slain.'
When every knee shall bow
and tongues confess the Lord.

My joy in sorrow's tears...

16. For the joys and for the sorrows

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMOS6zb3ysg>

WORDS

For the joys and for the sorrows,
the best and worst of times,
for this moment for tomorrow,
for all that lies behind;
fears that crowd around me,
for the failure of my plans,
for the dreams of all I hope to be,
the truth of what I am:
For this, I have Jesus,
for this, I have Jesus,
for this, I have Jesus,
I have Jesus.

For the tears that flow in secret,
in the broken times,
for the moments of elation
or the troubled mind;
for all the disappointments,
or the sting of old regrets -
all my prayers and longings
that seem unanswered yet:
For this, I have Jesus...

For the weakness of my body,
the burdens of each day,
for the nights of doubt and worry
when sleep has fled away;
needing reassurance
and the will to start again -
a steely-eyed endurance,
the strength to fight and win:
For this, I have Jesus...

17. Daughters of Zion – The Porter’s Gate

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERnLGAnn3oQ>

WORDS

When will the truth come out?
When will Your justice roll down?
When will Your kingdom come
And evil be undone?

When will the wicked kneel
And the abused be healed?
When will our sisters speak
With no more shame or fear?

How long? How long?
When will the daughters of Zion rejoice
In the house of the Lord?

Out of the miry clay
We will rise up someday
Sorrow won’t always last
The dark will surely pass

Woe to the wicked ones
For what their hands have done
God is our righteous judge
And He will raise us up

So let Your justice roll down...
Let Your justice roll down
Let Your justice roll down