

## A SERVICE OF LAMENT

### Notes

As lockdown eases, for many it will be right to give voice together to the loss and sadness we have shared.

This Service of Lament allows the congregation to cry out together to God, to lament what cannot be regained, to hear again God's promise, and to give thanks for God's steadfast love. Leaders should be sensitive to local situations in the use of this service: it is not intended to replace individual memorials nor is it only a memorial for those who have died.

Though we grieve with sadness for things which cannot be restored, we look to the future with hope in Christ in whom all things are made new.

The use of hymns and/or music should be adapted to local circumstance and where singing is not possible or allowed, recorded or instrumental music can be considered. Hymns that may be appropriate include:

1 All people that on earth do dwell  
51 Great is thy faithfulness  
455 All my hope on God is founded  
456 And are we yet alive  
459 Captain of Israel's Host, and Guide  
465 Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah  
466 Have faith in God my heart  
475 O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
610 Best of all is God is with us  
624 Calm me Lord, as you calm the storm  
733 God, hold us, enfold us, through desolate loss  
736 In heavenly love abiding

Where possible, for this Service of Lament, those people who can should be physically gathered and others should also be enabled to participate through different media, with attention to access and mutual participation for all. However, the service may also be held entirely online, using an appropriate platform.

Gathering Prayers and Closing responses are adapted, with thanks, from the [Church of England Prayers of Lament, Thanksgiving and Restoration.](#)

### PREPARATION

- 1 The people gather in silence. A candle may be lit, or a bell rung to begin the service.
- 2 One or more of the following sentences may be said:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord hear my voice!

Psalm 130.1

How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! She weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks; she has no one to comfort her.

Lamentations 1.1a, 2a

For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears; for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my courage.

Lamentations 1.16a

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?

Jeremiah 8.22

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8.35

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’

Matthew 11.28

### 3 Hymn or music

### 4 The leader welcomes the congregation and explains the purpose of the service, referring to the ‘Notes’ above.

## GATHERING

### 5 We meet in the presence of God **who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.**

One or more of the following prayers is offered.

Lord God, the maker and redeemer of all,  
as we come before you in grief and praise this day,  
comfort us with your presence,  
make us attentive to your voice,  
and sustain us with the hope of your kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Free us, Holy Spirit,

from all that keeps us from you;  
relieve the misery of the anxious and the bereaved,  
and fill us with the hope of peace;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

O Christ, Son of the living God,  
help us when we are too cast down to pray,  
and grant that we may trust you all our days,  
for you are with us in our living and our dying,  
Jesus, Lord and God.  
**Amen.**

In the darkness of unknowing,  
when your love seems absent,  
draw near to us, O God,  
in Christ forsaken,  
in Christ risen,  
our Redeemer and our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## THE LAMENT

- 6 The leader introduces the litany: local adaptation may be made. Pictures may accompany the litany if used in a platform that allows, or may follow the litany with music overlaid. The litany should proceed slowly, with a pause between biddings.

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?  
How long will you hide your face from me?  
How long must I bear pain in my soul,  
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?

Psalm 13.1-2a

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?  
**How long will you hide your face from us?**

For chances missed, for work that is lost,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For shelters closed, for churches locked,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For songs not sung, for bread not broken,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?  
**How long will you hide your face from us?**

For family not seen, for children not held,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For lovers apart, for love not found,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For learning lost, for schooling delayed,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?  
**How long will you hide your face from us?**

For those weary in want, for those weary in care,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For unequal life, for unequal death,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For empty cupboards, for foodbank queues,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?  
**How long will you hide your face from us?**

For lost rest and lost play,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For lost peace of mind, for restless anxiety,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For workers on site, and workers at home,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?  
**How long will you hide your face from us?**

For doctors worn down, for nurses fatigued,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For debts running up, for work running out,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

For those who have died, for all who grieve,  
**we cry to you, O God.**

How long, O Lord? Will you forget us forever?

## How long will you hide your face from us?

For...  
we cry to you, O God.

Other losses may be named, by message and/or group chat in a digital platform.

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in God's word I hope;  
**my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for morning,  
more than those who watch for morning.**

O Israel, hope in the Lord!

For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with God there is great power to redeem.  
**It is God who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.**

Psalm 130.5-8

### THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

#### 7 Hymn or Music

8 One of more of these or other passages are read by members of the congregation. A short period of silence follows each.

Genesis 9.8-17	The covenant and the rainbow sign
Psalm 23	The Lord is my shepherd
Psalm 126	Those who sow in weeping will reap with joy
Joel 2.18, 21-29	The promise of the early and the later rain, '...Then afterwards I will pour out my spirit on all flesh'
Luke 8.22-25	Jesus stills the storm
John 14.1-8	Do not let your hearts be troubled
Romans 8.31-39	Nothing can separate us from God

9 A short reflection may be offered, music played, or a hymn sung after the readings.

### THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

10 Let us pray:

We thank you God for the turning of the seasons  
and for the pattern of the days:  
God protect the earth.

We thank you God for the voice of conscience,  
for the faithfulness of friends,  
for every way that you have worked good from bad in these months:  
God bring justice.

We thank you God for the art of medicine,  
for the wisdom of science and the work of care:  
God heal the sick.

We thank you God for the life of your Church,  
for those who are new to faith,  
for all that builds your kingdom:  
God renew us.

We thank you God for those who have died,  
for those who are mourned by many,  
for those whose life is forgotten:  
God comfort all who grieve.

We thank you God for unknown blessings,  
for preventing us from greater harm  
for carrying us in life this day.  
God teach us what to pray.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen.**

## 11 The Lord's Prayer

### Either

We say together the prayer that  
Jesus gave us:

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily  
bread.**

**Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who  
sin against us.  
Save us from the time of  
trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the  
power and the glory  
are yours,  
now and for ever. Amen.**

### OR

As our Saviour taught his disciples,  
we pray:

**Our Father, who art in  
heaven,  
hallowed be thy Name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our**

**daily bread.  
And forgive us our  
trespasses,  
as we forgive those who  
trespass against us.  
And lead us not into  
temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory, for ever and  
ever. Amen.**

## 12 Hymn or music

## 13 Closing Responses

God is our stronghold;  
God will help at the break of day:  
**God will help at the break of day.**

God is our refuge and strength,  
ready to help whenever we are in trouble:  
**God will help at the break of day.**

We will not fear, even if the earth shakes,  
and the mountains topple into the sea:  
**God will help at the break of day.**

Come now and look at the works of the Lord,  
the awesome things he has done on earth:  
**God will help at the break of day.**

Be still and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth:  
**God will help at the break of day.**

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.  
**The Lord is with us, God is our stronghold; God will help at the break of day.**

cf Psalm 46

## 14 Blessing

The blessing of God,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be among *you/us* and remain with *you/us* always. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Music may be played as the people disperse.