

Lord my heart is heavy, my emotions are raw. My faith, my hope, my strength are all from You. Yet even in my deep faith there is so much I cannot understand; hate and violence...why dear Lord? Have we failed our fellow man? Have we been silent too long? Where do we go from here? I pray for your guidance. Use me dear Lord, show me how I can be the change. Open my heart to the Holy Spirit, deepen my faith In You. Help me to share Your message of love and salvation that can heal any hurt. Amen.

Shared by Ruby Rosbach

Dear God,

Thank you for the strength, courage, and blessings you have given us in these trying times of the COVID - 19 pandemic. Now we, also, face problems of inequitable laws and racial tensions. We are reminded of our human frailties and our need for your divine love and intervention. We have longed for hope while this illness sweeps our state, nation, and world. We continue to need hope, as we tackle the illnesses of racial hatred and injustice. We have witnessed yet another senseless murder, perpetrated by individuals who ignore your laws. Methodist Pastor Adam Hamilton in his 2019 book THE WALK writes that “throughout scripture we find that God calls us to do good, to practice justice, kindness, and love. When we fail to do these things, our worship and other acts of devotion are worthless to God.”

Dear Lord, please give us the understanding and desire to fight racial prejudices and hatred. Help us remember your words:

Learn to do good.

Seek justice;

help the oppressed;

defend the orphan;

plead for the widow.

(Isaiah 1:17)

Encourage us to look inwardly, to learn how we might move forward to make bridges with communities to heal our area and country. The recent quarantine is the result of human illness but racial hatred and injustices are much older spiritual sicknesses. We ask for your forgiveness for our wrongdoings and for our lack of right doings. All lives matter — give us the tools we need to work for health care reform and justice for all. On earth, we are our brother's keeper.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Shared by Jan Lapp

A Lament for White America for People of Color

Loving God,

For the original sin of racism and colonialism brought forth by onto these shores by our white ancestors so long ago,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the terror of the middle passage,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the theft of indigenous lands,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the institution of slavery which flourished in this country for 245 years,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For post-Civil War reconstruction abandonment of promises of land and reparations,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the Trail of Tears,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the practices of share cropping, loitering laws, chain gangs and theft of labor,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For hundreds of years of lynching which were attended as entertainment events by our ancestors,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Wounded Knee,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Indian Schools and theft of children from their tribes,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For Jim Crow laws, voter suppression, segregation, and separate but equal court decisions,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For practices such as red lining, destruction of black wealth (Tulsa Race Riots) and other policies that have denied economic prosperity to people of color,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the racist trope of "The Welfare Queen",

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For harm done to black and brown bodies by forced medical experiments and blankets infected with smallpox,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the disproportionate drafting and deaths of people of color in the war against Vietnam while whites got deferments,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the horrors inflicted during the CRM: Bull Conner's fire hoses and attack dogs,

4 little girls in a Birmingham church basement, Mississippi Burning, and the assassination of so many CRM leaders,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the modern day sins of the crack epidemic introduced into communities of color, for then implementing policies such as “3 strikes and you’re out”, for the sin of mass incarceration and disproportionate death penalties awarded by juries,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For all the policies which have amounted to eco- terrorism in communities of color and against the lands of tribal peoples,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For the deaths/murders of Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Botham Jean, Sandra Bland, Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Kendra James, Alton Sterling, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd and countless others,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer

For all the ways we have failed to see our culpability in any of this, for ever uttering the excuse “I never owned any slaves” as a means of asserting our own righteousness, for our inability to understand generations of advantages that have given us privilege, for our unwillingness to speak out, for our willingness to excuse the racism of our elders and other family members as that’s “just they way they are”,

We lament, we repent. Lord hear our prayer .

Loving and Holy God- Breathe into us, your broken people, The Breath of Life, Your Holy Wind, The Fire of Pentecost that we might be forgiven; that we might become compassionate; that we might learn empathy; that we might defeat apathy. We know that without acknowledging and turning from these sins You cannot ever heal the brokenness in us or ultimately in this our home. Change our hearts, O God. Come Lord Jesus Come!

Amen

Shared by Melissa Auten

Heavenly Father,

Please forgive your children for thoughts and acts of division, distrust, violence, and hatred toward one another. Help our eyes to see that more of us share common ideals and goals than may be apparent to us in troubled times. Help our thoughts to guide us past prejudice, suspicion, mistrust, and fear. Help our actions to lead us to know each other’s hearts and minds, uniting us as a people worthy of your love and Grace, forgiving and loving one another as we love ourselves.

Amen

Shared by Kris Saracelli

For What It's Worth
Buffalo Springfield 1967

There's something happening here
What it is ain't exactly clear
There's a man with a gun over there
Telling me I've got to beware

I think it's time to stop, children, what's that sound
Everybody look what's going down

There's battle lines being drawn
Nobody's right if everybody's wrong
Young (all?) people speaking their minds
Getting so much resistance from behind

It's time to stop...

What a field day for the heat
A thousand people in the street
Singing songs and carrying signs
Mostly say hooray for our side

It's time to stop....

Paranoia strikes deep
Into your life it will creep
It starts when your always afraid

It's time to stop ...

My Prayer

Lord,
I remember this song from 1967 on social injustice and war ... after 53 years, why do we need to sing it again? Why do the words still apply to where we are today? Can we not learn? Can we not see/hear? Can we not change? Are we doomed to continue to repeat our mistakes?

Shared by Scott Striegel

Prayer from Your People,

Most Gracious and Loving Father,

We give You our thanks for our many blessings and for allowing us to have been able to stop for a while to enjoy your wonderful creation – the beautiful days of spring and the promise of the warmth of summer. We know that You are always with us, watching over us and leading us forward. We have sometimes faltered in our direction, in our adherence to your Word and in our true love for one another. Please continue to sustain us as we face uncertain times and fearful circumstances. Remind us always that You are our focus and our strength and calm our fears and frustrations when the way ahead is not clear. Sustain our congregation during this time of distancing and separation. We are your children, and, as such, we know that You are the rock to which we can cling in our times of doubt and fear. We ask for your Peace and your Presence with us always.

In the Name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, we humbly pray.

Amen

Shared by Sue Haney

Dear Heavenly Father,

I know your heart must be heavy and saddened by recent events that are currently playing out all over our country. The unrest and hatred being displayed on our streets and in our towns is hardly an example of “loving your neighbors as He loves you”. Lord, I ask that you help soften the hearts of those people that hold the ugliness of racism in their hearts. Let them see that all of us are created equal in your eyes. I pray that you can bring to light the everyday occurrences of racism in many degrees in the lives of our minority citizens. Help those of us that have turned a blind eye for too long to step up and be a part of the solution. Yes, many of us would never think to treat another human as inferior, but it is happening everywhere. Lord, again...I ask you to soften the angry hearts on both sides. Encourage us all to support and do our part to bring unjust behavior by any citizen to justice! Open our eyes, now! Be with our local and national leaders; help them discern a plan, a way to uphold law that can lead to a new future in our country. My God, you are all-knowing and have the power to help us change our law enforcement, our society and our way of life in this great nation. Bring us a future that will not make any of our brothers and sisters of any race, creed or color, live in fear for their life on our streets for any reason...especially not from law enforcement officials.

I pray this in your Holy Name,

In Christ...Amen

Shared by Jody Gross

Heavenly Father,

In utter despair we cry out to you now, for our beautiful world, gifted to us from you, is in turmoil and seems shattered beyond repair; yet, we know when we turn to you, believing in you, your help will sustain us, and all that is broken will be made whole again. We know this is not possible without you, dear Lord, and with your help, after these storms pass, all will be better. Let this despair teach us how precious life is, so that we appreciate it all the more. Two sorrowful forces are upon us...the insidious virus, a plague enveloping us, and racial prejudices, rampant among the ignorant and godless. In your infinite wisdom and love, show us the way to mend our hearts and spirits. Instead of bitterness and anger, let us show empathy and love. Instill compassion and a sincere love for all our people in us, so that we can eradicate inhumane treatment of others. Impart wisdom so that we can find the way to healing throughout the world. We know your grace will see us through the chaos, and we know, too, you are our only true path to deliverance from the prejudices that divide us, and the virus threatening our lives. We cannot overcome these travesties on our own; we need your loving help, dear God. Thank you for our daily blessings, and use our tribulations for your glorification.

Amen

Shared by Carole Stephens

Dear Lord – I pray you will move across our nation, across the world, across our hearts. Touch each of us to ease tempers, bring calm, and find peaceful solutions to the problems of racial injustice and police brutality. Be with our leaders – globally, nationally, and locally -- to make wise decisions in handling COVID-19, and related social and economic impacts. Help our leaders provide peaceful, calm outlets for the underlying issues of unrest. De-escalate the violence and bring peace and healing to impacted neighborhoods. Be with our first responders as they continue daily to battle COVID-19. Give them respite in mind and body. Keep safe our first responders who are additionally dealing with unrest; and help them make wise decisions. Bless our scientists and the medical community that they may soon find not only a treatment, but also a vaccine for COVID-19. I pray for those who are hungry, sick, or scared; for those who are grieving or who have suffered loss. Bring them into safety; and touch them with your love. Heal them in mind, body, and soul, so they may know joy again. I pray these things in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.

Amen.

Shared by Nancy Faltinowski

Father God,

I humbly come to Your Throne calling upon the name of Jesus. You are Healer of the broken-hearted. Mend the ache within. You are Redeemer who redeems the time. I ask for Your help. You are the Great I AM. Alpha and Omega. King of Kings & Lord of Lords. Great Physician, Bread of Life, & Living Water. You are the Light of the world. I fall upon my knees and cry Holy!

People are broken and need you Lord. Open eyes & ears to the Holy Spirit. Bring confession & repentance & revival across our land and into people's hearts. We live in sin and a fallen world. We fall short of the glory of God but you Jesus have overcome the world. Help us to see the enemy is not each other but Satans influences and lies. Help us to only listen to your truth. Remove anger, bitterness, resentment, and replace with kindness, self control, and love. Help us to think upon what is true, trustworthy & praiseworthy. Let there be a reaching out of forgiveness & help us to forgive as you have forgiven us. Help us to live in the fruit of the Spirit & follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to love our neighbor and to do good to them. To pray for each other & pray for our enemies. Forgive us for not praying as we ought. There is Spiritual warfare that we do not see. Open our eyes to see Your army surrounding us and bring your protection as you did for Elisha when he prayed to open his servants eyes and not fear. Bring unity, wisdom, and discernment. Turn hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. May there be unity of Revival across our land that brings Praise & Glory to your name. May people find hope of Salvation in Jesus, who is the way and the truth and the Life. You are the only One worthy oh Lord and we bow before you in our need. We are Sanctified by faith in You. Guard our hearts & mind in Christ Jesus. Set us free from hatreds and judgments. Only you Lord hold the righteous power to judge. I ask for mercy and grace across our land. I pray for comfort of those grieving. I pray for listening ears to know Truth. Remove fear for Thou art with those who trust & hope in Thee. "Jesus wept", grieving yet no one died in the presence of Jesus. You are the same today Lord. We have eternal life with You as our Lord and Savior. I lift up praise and worship of Your name, Jesus. I declare Your deeds among the people & sing with joy and anticipation, Come Lord Jesus Come. I thank You for hearing my prayer of intercession. I Thank You Jesus and Holy Spirit for interceding on our behalf. I pray these things in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. To Your glory.

Amen.

Shared by Diana McMillion

Dear Lord: I pray for open hearts and open minds, that we will not just listen, but will hear the voices that need to be heard. Help us to be open to learning about the inequalities and challenges of the black community. Guide us to a place where dialogue can bring us together to begin a healing process. I pray that my words, thoughts, and actions will reflect kindness and understanding. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Shared by Phyllis Matthews Ziller

My Prayer for the Nation

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be your name among all of us. May your will be done on earth in our nation as it is in Heaven. In the beginning, you, O God, created the heavens and the earth. There is no other god like you. You placed the stars in the heavens calling them by name and none are missing. You caused the light to shine in the darkness. You separated the sea from the dry land. You created us male and female and gave us dominion over the earth and all its creatures. You sustain us and our world moment by moment. You are infinite in love, holiness, justice, power, wisdom and faithfulness.

O, God, how great thou art!

But, we are all sinners. We all fall short of your glory. We like sheep have all gone astray. We do what is right in our own eyes. We have not loved you with our whole heart, soul, and mind. And, we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not done unto others as we would have them do unto us. We have treated each other unfairly with malice and prejudice. We are completely unfit for your kingdom. And, apart from the atoning sacrifice of your son Jesus Christ, we are bound for destruction.

Yet, you looked upon our helpless state and led us to the cross. There we found salvation by your grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone...not by our works so no one can boast. Christ who had no sin took on our sin so that we might be clothed in His righteousness. Our salvation is a gift from you, O gracious God.

All praise to you, O God, you do not deal with us according to our iniquities. Have mercy on us O God according to your steadfast love blot out our transgressions and cleanse us from our sin. O God, for the sake of your name as the God of all comfort, shower your comfort and blessings on the family of Mr. Floyd.

O God, for the sake of your name, by the Holy Spirit, work in the hearts of the police officers involved in this case that they might repent of their sin and believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ. O God, for the sake of your name, use this tragic event to teach us all the importance of loving our brothers and sisters and our enemies.

O God, for the sake of your name and by the power of your Holy Spirit may the people of this nation humble ourselves, pray, seek your face, and turn from our wicked ways that in your mercy you would hear our cry and forgive our sins and heal our land.

O God, for the sake of your name, grant your wisdom and courage to the leaders of our cities, states, and nation.

O God, for the sake of your name, grant a renewal of the heart and mind of all those involved in these protests that they might behold the beauty of peace and the folly of crime and destruction.

O God, for the sake of your name, grant us all your patience to allow for our criminal justice system to work in this case. May we affirm that all governmental authorities have been established by you for your purposes.

O God, you and you alone can deliver us from the darkness and despair of these current threats that face our nation including the virus, civil disobedience, political division, economic turbulence, injustice at all levels within our society, and external threats from evil regimes throughout the world. So, come Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, protect us, deliver us and keep us as one nation, under God with liberty and justice for all.

Amen

Shared by Harry Carter

Father, our hearts are broken as we see horrific images of senseless murder. We know that it is a result of divisions and hatred that fester in our society. Help us all to remember that each of us is created in Your image and is to have their life respected and protected. Bring healing to our country and peace where some strive to divide us with violent distractions.

Shared by Beverly Steele

Ephesians 4:2 New International Version (NIV)

2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Shared by Laurie Scott

First, a quote from an American whose life was also cut short:

“Whenever any American’s life is taken by another American unnecessarily - whether it is done in the name of the law or in defiance of the law, by one man or a gang, in cold blood or in passion, in an attack of violence or in response to violence - whenever we tear at the fabric of life which another man has painfully and clumsily woven for himself and his children, the whole nation is degraded.”

Robert Kennedy, former US Attorney General

Dear God,

May we remember that when even one life is taken from us unnecessarily early from violence, it is not only a blight on mankind, but also an affront to God. May we as a nation respond by hearing the cries of the oppressed and find redemption by saying,

“We are all responsible, Never Again! Forgive us for our tendency to rationalize violence. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Amen.

Shared by Tim Jordan

Dear Lord,

It is true that the KKK used [to] wield fear through force. Is white silence better?

Our Church is not ready to confront and condemn white violence and white silence in worship.
We could not pivot in days.

We struggle to pivot in decades.

Our Church sees the violence and destruction by people of all colors in cities across America.

I hear Us say:

"Not while they act like that!"

"Don't they know this is hurting their cause?"

"This is so awful and overwhelming. The true matters are being lost and lost lives are being ignored because of people that just want to destroy others lives and livelihoods. It's devastating."

How do I act?

What is my cause?

What are the true matters that are so much more valuable than black lives and black culture?

Over and over our economy has proven that it is best cultivated by diversity.

Over and over we remove voices of innovation to exploit color.

We continue to believe that we must give up and lose in order to make things equal.

We do not understand that giving leads to growth and growth leads to love.

Silence.

Caution.

Justification.

FAITH.

We are relentless in our oppression.

I am sad.

I am privileged.

I will not continue to stand aside for silence, caution, and irrational justification.

I will not use my faith to subjugate my neighbors.

I will be relentless in seeking justice.

I will not be perfect, but you do not require perfection, Lord.

Lord, I will show up.

Here I am.

Help me show up.

Grant me courage to challenge silence.

Grant me courage to challenge caution.

Grant me courage to turn justification into justice.

Grant me courage to challenge our broken systems of faith.

Amen.

Shared by Jennifer Lanier

Holy God of Love and Hope,

You taught us the right way to live through Jesus, Your Christ.
You gave us strength for righteous living through your Holy Spirit.

We confess that we continue to fail.

In this time when despair, confusion, and death, seem to cast hopelessness,
give us the gift of Your grace,
Grace to do justly, love mercy and be humble in Your love.

You know our needs before we even know how to ask for them.
But, Jesus told us to simply ask that You help us
"do Your will on earth as the angels do Your will in Heaven."

By Your Grace, Lord, let it be so.

For Thine is the Power and Presence Forever,
Amen.

Shared by: Prefers not to share name

Dear God, We need you now as we ALWAYS need you-- but our anger, fear, shame and sadness sometimes keep us from turning to you. With the death of George Floyd, and other innocent black citizens of our country, at the cruel hands of law enforcement officers who are supposed to serve and protect, and others, we have been confronted again with our poor, racist behavior, even unconscious behavior and slights as a white person to persons of color.

Please help us understand and soothe the pain of our brothers and sisters of all races, and please forgive us -- but more than that, please Lord, intervene, change our hearts, open our eyes and minds. help us behave kindly to every person of every race. Please Lord, also help those we reach out to, accept our actions as genuine good will. Please heal our brokenness dear Lord, we need You. In Jesus's name we pray, Amen

Shared by Helen Holshouser