

Nationwide call to prayer for Sunday, June 7, 2020

Regional churches of Mennonite Church Canada to join Mennonite Church USA in prayer of lament over injustice

The regional churches of Mennonite Church Canada are asking all their congregations to set aside a specific time of prayer on Sunday, June 7, to join our sister churches in Mennonite Church USA as they lament the injustice and violence suffered by people of colour in the U.S.

This nationwide call to prayer is a call for the church to boldly stand against racism that rips apart the social fabric of both of our countries. As a church, we speak for a God who made all persons in the image of the Creator's likeness. We are called to raise our voices and prayers and denounce the evil that racism inflicts upon our fellow human beings.

In our regional churches across Mennonite Church Canada, many of our congregations are made up of people of colour. We stand in solidarity with them during this troubling time and choose to confront the ugly underbelly of racism among us. We recognize that many of us within the church are not fully aware of our complicity in systemic racism. We ask that those in the dominant culture acknowledge white privilege and what are feeble efforts to support brothers and sisters of colour in the church and in larger society. As we confess our sin, may God grant us courage, wisdom and boldness to speak truth both to ourselves and to those in power.

We share the words of Glen Guyton, executive director of Mennonite Church USA, "I am calling on all MC USA congregations to have a time of prayer on Sunday, June 7, to lament the violence, pain and injustice that is plaguing our country. I ask that you pray for compassionate and wise leadership for our country during this time. ... The violence and unrest that is happening now is not an accident; it is what the system is designed to do, and it jeopardizes all of us, not just people of color. Stand with the marginalized in your communities. If you have the power of privilege, use it as a shield to protect people of color who don't have it. Use your voice and your power to prompt action from local government officials. Create spaces for reconciliation, healing and hope."

As people of God's peace, please join in prayer this Sunday, June 7. Pray for God's peace and justice in our communities, for an end to discrimination and violence, the championing of human rights, just political leadership, the humility to confess our individual and social sins and a willingness to repent and to boldly embrace the peace of Jesus Christ. Pray that the Holy Spirit might heal and renew our personal lives, the church, and the social fabric of our two countries. Please use the worship and prayer resources below and share your own with your congregation.

God of mercy, grant us peace.

From Executive Staff Group of Mennonite Church Canada

Resources

Sermons by Rev Dr Otis Moss III

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6985UG0Z3k>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_dNzYifsow

A personal lament ...

There are really big sad things happening in our world, as my heart breaks I am keenly aware that I want to listen and truly hear you, you the people that are living with the effects of racism every single day because of your skin colour.

In the midst I want to take a moment to use my voice to say this to you,

My brothers and My sisters...

I value you,

I see you,

I hear you,

I seek to understand you better,

I want to walk with you,

I want to help ease your burden,

You have infinite worth,

You are enough,

You most definitely matter,

You are deserving of respect,

You are deserving of unconditional love,

You are deserving of good, here and now,

You deserve to feel safe,

You deserve to be protected,

I'm sorry for being silent,

I'm sorry for not listening,

I'm sorry for the fear you have daily,

I'm sorry when I've been a part of the problem!

Please hear me when I say I commit to working on me and learning about you, so that I can be a better ally for you!!!

I stand with you today!!

Louise Hoepfner (Louise is a follower of Jesus who lives in Niverville, Man.)

A Psalm for George Floyd

God the Almighty longs for justice
and confronts the sin of white supremacy.
God gathers the souls of the murdered,
their blood cries out from the ground.
God hears the cries of the oppressed,
and comes to their aid.
Jesus kneels with the protestors,
he stands in solidarity with the downtrodden,
he cradles the broken bodies of the persecuted.
The Holy Spirit broods over the bent world,
blowing the winds of change,
propelling the rushing winds of hope.

The Lord of hosts is with the abused,
the God of angel armies is their refuge and strength,
a very present help in times of trouble.
Come behold the works of the Lord:
God makes racism cease to the ends of the earth.
Those held back by discrimination,
those held down by racial profiling,
those held in jail by systemic forces,
they are freed from the chains that bind them.
God removes the knee from the throat
of those who cannot breathe.
The voice of the Lord cries out,
“Let my people go.”

Carol Penner (Carol is a pastor and Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.)

Repenting and Lamenting in Times Like These

You are the God who hears:
hear our prayer today for all who lament or repent.
For those among us who face discrimination every day
because of their skin colour,
we lament.
For those among us with white skin who benefit
from racist systems sometimes even without realizing it,
we repent.
For those among us who have struggled and waited so long
for the Promised Land of freedom and equality,

we lament.

For those among us who have acted in racist ways
and have hurt people of colour,
we repent.

For those protesting injustice who face police brutality
and a justice system rigged against them,
we lament.

For those who think racism is someone else's problem,
and not a problem for humanity,
we repent.

God of hope, show us how to work for justice together,
standing up for what is right,
stepping in when something's wrong,
shouldering each other's burdens,
holding each other accountable,
righting the wrongs we've done,
speaking truth to power.

We pray for change, lasting change,
for protection for protesters,
for a de-escalation of violence
and for government leaders who listen.
Deliver us from evil, within and without,
in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

*Carol Penner (Carol is a pastor and Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at
Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo, Ont.)*