

**South African Council of Churches**

**Liturgy of  
Reconciliation,  
Unity and  
Equality**





# **South African Council of Churches Liturgy of Reconciliation, Unity and Equality**

## **GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus, the Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you

**And also with you**

## **PURPOSE**

We meet together as the Body of Christ  
to worship God and affirm our faith.

God is the Creator of all that exists  
Jesus died to save all humanity from eternal condemnation  
The Holy Spirit directs us in all righteousness

We acclaim God as our Lord  
We confess our personal and communal sin and the things we have  
ignored and failed to do  
We seek God's forgiveness  
We hear God's word  
We restore our relationships in the name of Jesus our Lord.

## **PRAISE**

### **Psalm 100**

On your feet now – applaud God!  
Bring a gift of laughter,  
Sing yourselves into his presence

Know this: God is God, and God is good.  
He made us; we didn't make him.

We're his people, his well-tended sheep.

Enter with the password: "Thank – you!"  
Make yourselves at home, talking praise.  
Thank him. Worship him.

For God is sheer beauty,  
All-generous in love,  
Loyal always and ever.

## **Psalm 8**

I look up at your macro-skies, dark and enormous,  
your handmade sky-jewellery,  
moon and stars mounted in their settings.  
Then I looked at my micro-self and wonder,,  
Why do you bother with us?  
Why take a second look our way?

Yet we've so narrowly missed being gods,  
bright with Eden's dawn light.  
You put us in charge of your handcrafted world,  
repeat to us your Genesis-charge,  
made us lords of sheep and cattle,  
even animals out in the wild  
birds flying and fish swimming,  
whales singing in the ocean deeps.

God, brilliant Lord,  
your name echoes around the world.

(Psalms from *The Message*)

## **CONFESSION**

### **Litany**

Lord, remember not our offences, nor the offences of our forebears;  
spare us, good Lord, spare your people whom you have redeemed with  
your precious blood  
**Spare us, good Lord**

From all evil and wickedness; from sin; from the cunning assault of the devil; from your wrath, and from everlasting condemnation.

**Good Lord, deliver us**

From all spiritual blindness; from pride, vanity and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness.

**Good Lord, deliver us**

From disordered and sinful affections; from the deceits of the world and the snares of the devil

**Good Lord, deliver us**

From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism; from hardness of heart, and from contempt of your word and commandments

**Good Lord, deliver us**

From lightening, fire and tempest; from earthquake, drought and flood; from famine, plague and pestilence

**Good Lord, deliver us**

From all oppression, conspiracy and rebellion; from violence, battle and murder; and from dying suddenly and unprepared

**Good Lord, deliver us**

*(Anglican Prayer Book, 1989)*

*OR*

Jesus said, "Come to me all you who weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt 11:28 NIV)

Jesus said, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me." (Jh 14:1 CEV)

God almighty, we acknowledge that we stood by helplessly when the dwellings of our neighbours were cast down, (Jer 9:19) when land was joined to land, we ignored the cries of the innocent

Lord in your mercy

**Forgive us our sins**

We stood by innocently when families were forcefully removed from their homes for being different

Lord in your mercy  
**Forgive us our sins**

You asked about our brothers and sisters and we rudely answered, I do not know; am I my brother's or sister's keeper? (Gen 4: 9)

Lord in your mercy  
**Forgive us our sins**

You have commanded, "You shall not kill." (Ex 20: 13) Yet we took up arms to harm those we suspected of being a stranger in our land.

Lord in your mercy  
**Forgive us our sins**

We have hurt each other deeply, now we ask for forgiveness and restoration to you and our neighbour

*(Rite of Reconciliation)*

**It was your love, Lord Jesus,  
that caused you to be nailed to the tree.  
It was your love that held you there  
when you might have called for legions of angels.  
It was your love that pleaded for your murderers  
and prayed, "Father, forgive them."  
Help us, most gracious Lord,  
to grasp something more of your love,  
to receive your forgiveness,  
and to learn to forgive others  
even as we have been forgiven,  
for your love's sake.**

*(Frank Colquhoun: Contemporary Parish Prayers)*

## **THE WORD**

(Suggested Scripture Passages)

Exodus 22: 21-24; 23: 29

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 9-18

Galatians 3: 26-29

Matthew 25: 31-46  
5: 38-48

## **SERMON/TESTIMONIES**

### **PRAYERS**

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the way of peace.

Come into the brokenness of our lives and our land with your healing love. Help us to be willing to bow before you in true repentance and to bow to one another in real forgiveness.

By the fire of your Holy Spirit, melt our hard hearts and consume the pride and prejudice with separate us.

Fill us, O Lord, with your perfect love which casts out fear and bind us together in that unity which we share with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

## **RITE OF HEALING AND FORGIVENESS**

### **Fire**

(Each Congregant holds a lit candle. The presiding minister blesses the flames and the congregation offer the prayers together. Other gestures of healing and forgiveness can be included)

### **Blessing of the fire**

Loving God, we share the light of your glory through Jesus the light of the world. Sanctify this fire and inflame us with new hope through the same Jesus our Lord.

**The following prayer is said**

Gracious God

- With this fire cleanse the stains of our souls.  
**Christ hear us**
- With this fire burn down the walls of division among us.  
**Lord hear us**
- With this fire purify us so that your Word may find a clean abode in us.  
**Christ hear us**
- With this fire inspire us with courage to embrace the truth and drive out the fear from our hearts.  
**Lord hear us**
- With this fire test our feeble faith and do not find us wanting.  
**Christ hear us**
- With this fire let us feel each others warmth; drive out the ghosts of the past.  
**Lord hear us**
- With this fire light our path, rekindle our fervour, set our hearts aflame.  
**Christ hear us**
- Renew a zeal in us to build a new flame.  
**Lord hear us**
- We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The leader reads the following Psalm after which the congregation share the peace in the customary

“Behold how good and pleasant it is when people dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the forehead, running down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life for evermore.” (Psalm 133)

## **BLESSING**

*Prepared by Rev. Gary Thomson, May 2008*