

## Lamenting Racism

*This lament was commissioned for **All Creation Sings**, a forthcoming liturgy and hymn supplement to Evangelical Lutheran Worship.*

*This lament and prayer may be used in preparation for the work of faithful listening in discussions around racism and racial reconciliation, and at other appropriate times. The naming of communities, situations, and experiences may be adapted for the context or occasion.*

*People of color may opt for silence during parts of this lament to contemplate the community's words.*

*A leader introduces a gathering lament in these or similar words.*

The sin of racism hurts communities of color, fractures human relationships, and denies God's good creation. Lament is a way for us to recognize the harm caused by racism.

Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:35-39). God's grace in Christ frees us for the difficult work of recognizing and lamenting racism.

We are all part of one body in Christ, called to act with equity, fairness, and justice. God's saving love creates grace-filled spaces within us and within our relationships. God's saving love calls and leads us toward rooting out the racism that continues to infect the body.

*A leader invites those gathered into lament and prayer in these or similar words.*

Within the whole human family, people of color have experienced both interpersonal aggression and structural oppression instead of abundant life. We recognize and lament the harm racism has caused to African Descent communities; American Indian and Alaska Native communities; Indigenous Peoples within Canada; Arab and Middle Eastern communities; Asian and Pacific Islander communities; and Latinx communities. We cry out to you, **hear our lament, O God.**

We have assigned the notion of race to human beings created in God's own divine image. We have judged God's beautiful diversity by our flawed and artificial standards. We cry out to you, **hear our lament, O God.**

We have used language and images in ways that equate black and dark with dirt and sin, and that fail to welcome the treasures of darkness in God's good creation. We cry out to you, **hear our lament, O God.**

We have accepted practices in our churches and in our society that privilege whiteness over diversity and equity. We have been complicit in how racism continues to exclude and harm people of color. We cry out to you, **hear our lament, O God.**

When one part of the body of Christ hurts, the whole body hurts. As we listen to people who are harmed by racism, we call to you, **open our hearts, O God.**

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As we reflect on our daily interactions with people and communities of color, we call to you, **open our hearts, O God.**

As we reconsider what we have been taught about race and racism, we call to you, **open our hearts, O God.**

As we contemplate what we have done and what we have left undone, we call to you, **open our hearts, O God.**

As we labor to create a loving and safe community for our siblings of color, we call to you, **open our hearts, O God.**

Holy and merciful God, as your people we recommit ourselves to loving one another as you have loved us. Prepare us for this time of listening and discovery. We pray in the name of the one who has made us one, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

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