



Out of the Depths

Introduction

“You who have made me see many troubles and calamities
will revive me again;
from the depths of the earth
you will bring me up again.”

Psalm 71:20

“Out of the Depths” is a resource from the Centre for Contemporary Christianity in Ireland reflecting on the consequences of violent conflict. The material offers an opportunity to consider the legacy of hurt, the need for healing and the challenge of forgiveness. Those who have lived through the “Troubles” in Ireland will be able to relate to many of the themes raised here. However, much of the content will also be of value when considering the long term effects of war and conflict, regardless of time and place. The resource provides a set of biblical reflections, helpful for the wider community and for those with a personal experience of hurt, which can be used for both private and shared reflection.

The material was originally prepared for the “Healing Through Remembering” Day of Private Reflection in June 2007. It is now offered, with some additional material for collective worship, for use in other contexts of personal and community remembering, including Remembrance Sunday, which is now established as part of the liturgy in many churches and in national life.

Early November has long been recognised in the life of the church as a season of remembering. The Christian festival of All Souls on 1st November, preceded by All Hallows’ Eve (Halloween) is traditionally the time in the Christian calendar for reflecting on the lives of all who have gone before us. Whatever other days become established in the community as a focus for collective remembering, it is appropriate to use this season to remember and reflect on the violence of our distant and immediate past and consider how the legacy of conflict affects the life of our community in the present.

In preparing this resource we have been keenly aware of the sensitivity of this theme for anyone with personal experience of emotional or physical hurt. For this reason we offer it tentatively, in the hope that it will be of benefit. If you find this resource meaningful in your situation we would love to hear how you have used it.

If you have any comments or questions, either about this material or ways in which we can further help you consider issues of dealing with the past, perhaps through our programme of “Difficult Conversations”, we would be glad to hear from you. You can contact the Centre for Contemporary Christianity by email at info@contemporarychristianity.org, by post at Third Floor, 21 Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, BT2 8HD or by phoning +44 (0)28 9032 5258.

Content

This resource provides short reflections on a difficult, even controversial, subject. They are offered with the recognition that they are neither complete in their scope nor the only legitimate perspective. However, we hope that these contributions provide some helpful insights for those struggling with a personal experience of hurt and will also benefit the general reader as, together, we wrestle with healing the mutually inflicted hurts which are the legacy of our violent conflict.

In this resource we invite you to think about:

- Why Remembering is Important
- Remembering and Revenge
- Remembering and Forgiveness
- The Wounded Healer
- Human Despair and Christian Hope

We also invite you to engage with five psalms and to 'read, reflect and respond' out of your own experience:

Psalm 74	Asking God to Remember
Psalm 94	Waiting for the God of Revenge
Psalm 130	Waiting for Forgiveness and Redemption
Psalm 51	Through Suffering to Salvation
Psalm 30	Thanksgiving and Deliverance from Despair

Praying the Psalms

The words of the Psalter are essentially not the voice of God addressing us – but rather the voice of our broken humanity crying out to God. In the Psalms we enter into the speech of a common humanity in all its love and hate, despair and hope, fear and joy.

The words given in the Psalms say things to God that are perhaps beyond what are perceived to be the “right” or “devotional” things to say – they give us language to express the hard, angry, questioning and despondent feelings that fill our hurting hearts. In this way the Psalms give shape and authority to our confusion and despair. In praying the words of the Psalms we allow ourselves, as God allows us, the space to voice the full range of raw human emotion. For, unlike much of contemporary liturgical material, the Psalms are not interested in the promotion of “successful living”. Rather, their spirituality is attentive to the disappointments and brokenness of life.

The Psalms therefore do not tend to provide easy answers to life's struggles. Their inherent awkwardness gives us something better than ready-made solutions – that is the energy to journey in and through the contradictions of human relationships and to heal and transform ourselves and others.

These ancient texts provide poetic speech for rage and lament and therefore create space in the human heart and in the heart of hurt societies for the discovery of hope. For without the expression of anger and the articulation of grief there can be no newness and without words of grief we are numbed into silence. The language of the Psalms encompasses the best and worst of human experience.

These pointers invite you to engage with the text in a way that works for you.

Frameworks for Corporate Worship and Reflection

The material in this resource can be used in both personal and collective settings. Adapting it for corporate acts of worship and reflection will require some creative and sensitive work, however, we hope that some will undertake that task and will create unique liturgical material for your own particular context.

We have also provided some simple frameworks as a way of structuring a congregational response for use in different situations where the themes of remembering and forgiveness are being considered. These consist of two simple frameworks:

- An Act of Collective Reflection - an exercise in looking at the past and an invitation to corporate prayer.
- Act of Remembrance - a short liturgy suitable for use on Remembrance Sunday.

We hope that you find these materials useful.

Excerpts from the biblical text are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised Version) of the Bible, unless stated otherwise.

1. Why Remembering is Important

Remembering past hurt and wrongdoing is essential to healing and justice, for only by remembering can we begin the difficult and courageous journey towards forgiveness and the possibility of reconciliation with our enemies.

The opposite of remembering is forgetfulness. We often hear people say, “forgive and forget”, as if forgetting was evidence of forgiving. Or, even worse, people glibly command the hurting to “get over it”. But, as William Thackeray reminds us, “You can’t order remembrance out of the mind; and a wrong that was a wrong yesterday must be a wrong tomorrow”. Those who live with the chronic hurt brought about through violence cannot – and indeed should not – easily forget. This is why at cenotaphs around the world people ritualistically recall the memory of atrocity “lest we forget”.

We remember because what was done matters. The legacy of hurt matters, the dead matter, broken hearts and bodies matter. And the deep instinct for justice, vengeance, recompense and accountability matters also.

We remember because denial and forgetfulness are illusions of an ending. Without a genuine experience of healing, hurt remains and goes elsewhere – seeping into the fabric of our lives and communities, poisoning our relationships. Unhealed hurt makes us angry, resentful, fearful and depressed.

We remember wrongdoing so that it won’t happen again. And here is the first step towards a transforming remembering – remembering so that we might make peace with our history of hurt. This is quite unlike the destructive remembering that rummages through the atrocities of the past in order to justify revenge in the present. We need to remember deeply and truly, that we might move on in our lives with integrity, hope and healing.

Stanley Hauerwas calls a remembering that seeks truth and justice for the hurt of wrongdoing “redemptive remembering”. This kind of remembering is paradoxical as it makes non-remembering possible. This is because the memory of the wrong done has been adequately addressed. As Miroslav Volf says:

It is a forgetting that assumes that the matters of “truth” and “justice” have been taken care of, that perpetrators have been named, judged and (hopefully) transformed, that victims are safe and their wounds healed.

So we remember because there can be no authentic reconciliation through a shallow forgetfulness or the fading of memory through time and denial. As Hauerwas believes:

Christians are required to confess and remember their sins, but they are also required to remember the sins of those who have sinned against us. Any reconciliation that does not require such remembering cannot be the reconciliation made possible by the cross of Christ.

Read, Reflect and Respond

Psalm 74: Asking God to Remember

1. Read Psalm 74 in the light of these comments on Remembering. Allow it to speak to you.
2. What does it say to you about Remembering?
 - What would you like to remind God about?
 - For you who are “the enemy”?
 - What are their emblems and ours?
 - Who are the downtrodden; them or us? Or someone else entirely?
3. Reflect on the feelings that these ideas stir up:
 - Is such remembering destructive or redemptive?
 - How can one become the other?
 - Who, or what, might be redeemed in that process and what is our role?
 - Do we want them to be redeemed?
4. Read the Psalm again, out loud, in an attitude of prayer. Allow it to speak for you.

2. Remembering and Revenge

To remember our hurt is to wrestle with the issue of revenge. There will be no healing through remembering if we minimise the impulse to make things morally even by inflicting punishment equal to the hurt we have experienced.

There is an attitude in our culture which implies that people who want revenge are morally and emotionally unworthy of a civilised society. However, revenge is a moral instinct that seeks to keep faith with those who have been wounded, victimised and killed. It is a desire to put things right.

Revenge is also an expression of the need to be heard. One of the terrible consequences of the trauma of violence is the sense of disempowerment and numbness that people feel. The energy of revenge gives voice to the rage in our hearts and is a way of expressing through words and emotion the “unspeakable” hurt and despair that would keep the hurt one dumb. When victims of violence are kept silent, revenge is more likely to take the form of destructive action rather than angry speech. But when our hurt finds a voice, even the voice that calls for vengeance, it is the beginning of hope and healing. For, as Walter Brueggemann says, the raging language of revenge “is analogous to grief”.

To speak of revenge as a moral response and an expression of grief is not to suggest that the perpetual cycle of hate and hurt is a good thing. Rather, it is to say that the power of revenge in the hurting heart and in society needs to be understood and tended to. The uneasy work and words of revenge mustn't be simply dismissed as vindictive bitterness and an unwillingness to let go of our hurt. It is a legitimate expression of anger at the injustice of unwarranted hurt.

Read, Reflect and Respond

Psalm 94: Waiting for the God of Vengeance

1. Read Psalm 94 in the light of these comments on Revenge. Allow it to speak to you.
2. What does it say to you about Revenge?
 - Is it right to call to God for vengeance?
 - Must justice include a component of revenge and retribution?
 - Can wicked/unjust rulers and groups ever be allied with God and his agenda?
 - Can we expect real justice in this world?
3. Reflect on the feelings that these ideas stir up:
 - For what do you long for revenge?
 - If nations can be the agents of God's vengeance, can other groups and/or institutions?
 - Who might be the subjects of God's vengeance for arrogance, oppression of the weak, the widows, the strangers/immigrants and children?
 - How does revenge and retribution relate to mercy and reconciliation?
4. Read the Psalm again, out loud, in an attitude of prayer. Allow it to speak for you.

3. Remembering and Forgiveness

“Forgiveness sounds like a good idea until you have to do it.”

C.S. Lewis

Remembering honestly the wrongs done to us and feeling the anger of our hurt are not hindrances to forgiveness; rather they are necessary experiences on the way to offering grace to our enemies. For, as already suggested, behind the human instinct for revenge is a passion for truth and justice. Our anger may distort this, but the depth of feeling is nonetheless motivated by a desire for justice, peace and closure. However, within the Christian tradition the pursuit of truth and justice cannot be separated from the offer of mercy and forgiveness. The holding together of these two realities is the crux of a Christian understanding of reconciliation.

The Christian motivation to offer forgiveness to those who have harmed us is rooted in the ultimate truth that we too are in need of forgiveness. As the Lord’s Prayer so disturbingly reminds us, we are to pray for the forgiveness of our sins in the same breath as we pray for those who have sinned against us (Mt. 6:12). The writer of Matthew’s Gospel believed this to be so significant that he added an underscoring commentary:

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 6:14-15

Matthew’s ethic of forgiveness is built on an affirmation of the indiscriminate love of God:

You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

Matthew 5:43-45

For victims of violence these are hard sayings, because they invite both the wronged as well as the wrongdoer to accept the deep ambiguity of life – that every person is an interpenetration of good and evil. Within the human self, destructive and creative tendencies are inseparably intertwined. The radical biblical definition that before God we are all “sinners” reframes our sin, and that of our enemies, in the context of God’s love and righteousness. This truth will either be deeply offensive to a hurt person or hold liberating possibilities in the struggle for forgiveness.

But the unapologetic biblical command to love our enemies and forgive those who harm us does not tell us how we are to forgive.

Two perspectives have long been identified as ways to forgiveness and the biblical text wrestles with both of them. They are: conditional forgiveness and unconditional forgiveness. The former is dependent on the achievement of justice; the latter is a consequence of love.

Conditional forgiveness involves a dialogue between the wrongdoer and the wronged person. It necessitates the wrongdoer identifying themselves with the wrong done and, through confession, ownership and remorse, offering the victim a repentant attitude and context in which forgiveness might be offered.

A poignant example of this was expressed by a victim of violence to the Chilean National Commission on Truth and Reconciliation:

I am ready to forgive, but I need to know who I have to forgive. If they would just speak up and acknowledge what they have done, they would be giving us the opportunity to forgive. It would be more noble if they were to do that. There will be reconciliation only if there is justice.

In this model, accountability, confession, truth-telling and repentance are preconditions to the offer of forgiveness.

In contrast to the negotiated and social dimensions of conditional forgiveness, the experience of unconditional forgiveness is an individual act independent of the attitude and actions of the wrongdoer. A well-known example of this in the context of Northern Ireland’s “Troubles” is the story of Gordon Wilson who forgave the killers of his daughter while she lay dying in his arms.

Although unconditional forgiveness may seek to understand the life experiences, attitudes and motivation of the wrongdoer, it is not dependant on these. Forgiveness is offered as a gift of grace in which mercy replaces justice and love replaces vengeance. Or, to put it biblically, in unconditional forgiveness, “love covers a multitude of sins” (1 Pet. 4:8).

The theological debate over which of these approaches to forgiveness is more Christian and biblical is a long and complex one. People struggling with the felt wounds of violence will, depending on their personality and belief systems, move back and forth between the two. What is certain is that any glib attitude towards forgiveness will betray the depth of pain that thousands of our people live with.

Desmond Tutu, head of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, understands this:

There are some people who have tried to be very facile and say, “let bygones be bygones”: they want us to have a national amnesia. And you have to keep saying to those people that to pretend that nothing happened, to not acknowledge that something horrendous did happen to them, is to victimise the victims yet again. But even more important, experience worldwide shows that if you do not deal with a dark past such as ours, effectively look the beast in the eye, that beast is not going to lie down quietly ... Forgiveness and reconciliation are not cheap ...

Read, Reflect and Respond

Psalm 130: Waiting for Forgiveness and Redemption

1. Read Psalm 130 in the light of these comments on Forgiveness. Allow it to speak to you.
2. What does it say to you about Forgiveness?
 - What right does any person have to be forgiven or to forgive?
 - Is God deaf to our appeals for forgiveness, or are we deaf to his words of forgiveness? Why?
 - In what particular words of God do we put most hope? Words of vengeance or of grace?
 - Should people have to wait for forgiveness? Are there preconditions?
3. Reflect on the feelings that these ideas stir up:
 - What do we need to be forgiven for?
 - What are we reluctant to forgive in others or ourselves?
 - Who is in the deepest depths... the person who needs forgiven or the person who needs to forgive?
 - Are we good at waiting? Are we good at making others wait?
4. Read the Psalm again, out loud, in an attitude of prayer. Allow it to speak for you.

4. The Wounded Healer

A person who has experienced significant emotional or physical suffering has a choice: either to be defined by the potential victimhood implicit in the destructive experience or to embrace the possibility that at the very heart of pain and disorientation a transforming gift is offered. That gift is an invitation to a hurt person to become a wounded healer, committed to the transformation of their own broken lives and the lives of others.

Traditionally the archetypal “wounded healer” is someone who undergoes a deep inner change as a result of their suffering and pain. The paradox of this is that the experience of woundedness is the very source of power and motivation for an inner journey that leads the victim to new levels of awareness and life. A person who has gone through suffering can transcend the “natural” instinct to remain alone and locked into a world of hurt. Rather, a broken heart can expand into a different perception of oneself and become a source of wisdom, compassion, healing and inspiration for others. The wounded healer, in suffering the wounds of life, becomes a redemptive presence in a world of suffering.

In his book *Bread For The Journey* Henri Nouwen reminds us that:

Jesus is God's wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed. Jesus' suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others.

Christian theology has a rich understanding of the relationship between the abandonment and isolation experienced by victims of violence and the transformative and redemptive power of suffering:

He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him of no account. Isaiah 53:3

... a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight...
1 Peter 2:4

... the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5 (NIV)

He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.
1 Peter 2:24

The invitation to transform our hurt into healing for ourselves and others is rooted in an understanding of the Incarnation. The wonder and mystery of the Word becoming flesh and walking among us (Jn. 1:14), is that God enters fully and vulnerably into our world and lives with all the threat of hurt and violence that plagues human history. God does not “play” at being human but, as the Apostle Paul states, God in Christ “empties himself” (Phil. 2:7) and enters truly into the human experience with all its risk of love and hate.

It is no abstract God, removed from the reality of the human condition who invites us to transform our suffering into a redemptive experience. God in Christ shares in our human suffering and – as the ultimate wounded healer – offers us a comfort and understanding that is so much deeper than sympathy. For the comfort of God is directly related to the sufferings of Christ and the comfort we in turn offer others is related to our own experiences of hurt.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

2 Corinthians 1:3-6 (NIV)

Read, Reflect and Respond

Psalm 51: Through Suffering to Salvation

1. Read Psalm 51 in the light of these comments on Suffering and Salvation. Allow it to speak to you.
2. What does it say to you about Suffering and Salvation?
 - How is suffering related to our personal and/or original sin?
 - Do we want God to hide his face from our sins or do we seek to hide our sins from God's face?
 - Do we need to be aware of our own sin before we can teach other transgressors God's ways?
 - What deals do we seek to offer God in exchange for our salvation? Sacrifices? Service? Songs of praise?
3. Reflect on the feelings that these ideas stir up:
 - Are our sins ever before us? What are they?
 - Do our bones feel crushed by God?
 - What do we need saved from? Our past, present or future?
 - What words are quickest out of our mouths? Praise? Complaint? Guilt? Condemnation?
4. Read the Psalm again, out loud, in an attitude of prayer. Allow it to speak for you.

5. Human Despair and Christian Hope

Despair and hope are not to be set against each other as if the heart can only be infused by either one or the other. For those who experience chronic hurt, hope and despair are often mutual and abiding realities. The pertinent questions are not “Why do I despair?” and “Why am I debilitated by hurt?” but rather “Can I give voice to hope despite the despair?” and “Can I affirm the dignity and worth of my life while struggling with the demoralisation of hurt?”

This is why remembering is vital and denial is deadly. Out of the memory of hurt and the terror of despair an authentic gift of hope emerges. Having the willingness and space to “feel” our hurt and despair and the help to find and put words of lament to our emotions is vital. And the Psalms are of particular importance in helping us articulate our anger and express the anguish of despair.

Giving expression to grief and despair liberates the heart and frees us from the hopelessness of the past, while unexpressed rage blocks the possibility of hope. Despair that has no voice is closed in to death and fear and the terrible repetition of the memory of our hurt but human speech and the opportunity to have our story heard make newness possible. Finding words to express our grief is therefore essential to opening up our lives to the gift of hope.

It is important however to distinguish between a Christian understanding of hope and a therapeutic perspective. Theologically, the gift of hope is not the same as a positive mental attitude or an optimistic frame of mind – it is an act of faith in the God of hope and healing. As Walter Brueggemann states:

The capacity to turn memory to hope in the midst of loss... is not a psychological trick. It is a massive theological act that is not about optimism or even about signs of newness. It is rather a statement about the fidelity of God, who is the key player in our past and in our future.

Therefore, the hope we wait for is intimately related to faith and love. We cling to faith in a God who will not abandon those who cry out to him and trust in a love that will never leave us or forsake us.

Read, Reflect and Respond

Psalm 30: Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Despair

1. Read Psalm 30 in the light of these comments on Christian Hope. Allow it to speak to you.
2. What does it say to you about Christian Hope?
 - What is our basis for hope in the midst of despair?
 - How does our past shape our future?
 - Is our hope based on experience of lifelong blessing or deliverance from adversity? Which is stronger?
 - Is it “always darkest before the dawn”?
3. Reflect on the feelings that these ideas stir up:
 - What can we say in the face of cynicism and pessimism?
 - Do we only “sing when we’re winning”?
 - Does God need us to thrive for his name to be glorified?
 - Are you dancing? Who are your dancing partners?
4. Read the Psalm again, out loud, in an attitude of prayer. Allow it to speak for you.

An Act of Collective Reflection

This framework for an Act of Collective Reflection is offered so that our corporate reflection might nurture personal reflection. Jim Wallis reminds us that “Our faith must be personal. . . but it is never private.” Therefore our personal experiences and reflections should affect how we relate in community, and our collective experiences help to shape our personal development.

Just as we affirm the interconnection of the personal and collective dimensions of faith, we also affirm the interconnectedness of past, present and potential future. So, whatever we remember, be they events 5, 10, 30, 100, 300 or 2000 years ago, our memories have a present resonance and, depending on what we do with our reflections on such events, potential future implications.

This Act of Collective Reflection is not aimed at coming to a predetermined set of conclusions, but to allow people the freedom to individually and collectively explore their memories and feelings with a view to approaching the future in a more reflective manner.

1. The Past – A History Lesson

Remember the days of old; consider the generations long past. Deut 32:7 (ANIV)

Place dates appropriate to the reasons for your reflection around the walls of whatever room you are using (e.g. within the context of an event concerning the Troubles, you could start with 1969, and put up key dates, or go further back into history. Within the context of Remembrance Sunday, you would put key dates associated with the two World Wars and other pertinent conflicts). Do not tell people the significance of those dates.

Invite people to write on different sticky-notes what those dates mean to them, or what they think they should mean to them.

Reflect:

“History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.”
Maya Angelou

2. The Present – A Gift of Prayer

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
Psalm 46:1

Pray For Others

- Those who live on a daily basis with obvious consequences of conflict: physical and psychological victims, the bereaved, the displaced.
- Those who provide support and care for those most adversely afflicted by conflict: medical and nursing staff, social services, voluntary care agencies.
- Those who are able to publicly influence attitudes and actions: politicians, media, teachers, religious and community leaders.
- Those who work to uphold and enhance everyone’s right to and quality of life: police, security forces; those involved in the administration and oversight of justice.

Pray For Ourselves

- For forgiveness for attitudes and activities in the past that have contributed to conflict.
- For forgiveness for attitudes and activities in the present that are preventing us from moving on.

Pray For One Another

- Healing and forgiveness for the past
- Grace and strength for the present
- Hope and faith for the future

3. For The Future – A Prayerful Commitment

- To reflect
- To pray
- To speak
- To act

Reflect:

“For evil to triumph it only requires good men to do nothing.”
Edmund Burke (Attr.)

Act of Remembrance

Remember An older person says: They shall not grow old, as we that are left shall grow old;
age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

A younger person replies: At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
we will remember them.

The congregation affirms: We will remember them.

The Last Post

A two-minute silence.

The Reveille

The older person then says: When you go home, tell them of us and say:
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.

Reflect Who do we remember? Who do we choose not to remember?
Who paid the price? Who reaps the benefits?
Who is responsible? What is our response?

Prayer Eternal God of all the Earth,
remember all those who we remember today,
and remind us of those whom we forget.

We remember:

those who have responded to the call of their country or community in time of conflict;
those who have given of their lives so that others would not have to.

We pray for those who continue to pay the price in body, mind and spirit.
Grant them your healing.

We remember:

those who are currently in a place of danger
and those who long for their safe return.

Grant them your peace.

We remember:

those who know that their loved ones will never return -
and yet who love them in death as in life.

Grant them your love.

We remember:

those who bear the burden and privilege of leadership
in politics, religion and within the community.

Grant them your wisdom.

Righteous God of truth and justice,
we pray not just for those who have defended us and ours,
but also for our enemies, and those who wish us harm,
that you may turn the hearts of all to kindness and friendship.

As we honour the past, may we put our faith in your future
for you are the source of life and hope, now and forever.

Amen

Respond **An Act of Commitment**

Leader: Will you strive for the things that make for peace?

Response: We will

Leader: Will you seek to heal the wounds of the past?

Response: We will

Leader: Will you work for a just future for all humanity?

Response: We will

Prayer Lord God, we pledge ourselves to serve you and all humanity in the cause of peace.
Guide us by your Spirit, give us wisdom, hope and keep us faithful.
May we live lives of justice, courage and mercy;
through Jesus Christ our risen Redeemer.

Amen