



LWF Sunday

Service of Repentance

The altar space will be marked by the liturgical color purple (repentance), during the liturgy, the liturgical color white (Christ) will be brought in and placed over it.

*Responses of the congregation are in **bold** type.*

Instrumental Prelude

Greeting

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

And also with you.

Today we come to look together at our
painful past, which has divided us. We

remember how Anabaptist Christians
knew suffering and persecution, and we
remember how some of our most honored
Reformation leaders defended this per-
secution in the name of faithfulness. We
come with a deep sense of regret and pain.
We turn our hearts to God and to one
another to confess the wrongdoing. We
hunger and thirst for a new beginning.

Hymn *Come Holy Spirit* (Agape No. 13)

Opening Responses

Hunger and thirst for righteousness!
Hunger and thirst for peace!
Meek and merciful ones

Blessed are you.

Hunger und Durst nach Gerechtigkeit!
Faim et soif de la paix!
Los humildes y misericordiosos

Selig seid ihr.

Hambre y sed de justicia !
Hunger und Durst nach Frieden !
Les doux et miséricordieux

Bienaventurados son

**Gracious God,
Nourish us with your word,
and fill us with your Spirit,
Renew our hearts and minds,
transform our communities,
and heal your world
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Part I

Remember the past together: Listen to experiences of persecution and suffering

Anabaptist Martyr Ballad *Als Christus mit sein wahren Lehr*

[The earliest accounts of the Anabaptist martyrs circulated as hymns, often shaped by Psalms or the suffering of Christ. Sung as expressions of worship and commemoration, these martyr ballads continue today to be favorites in Mennonite worship around the world. They remind us that following Christ is likely to exact a cost; but they also testify to the conviction that love is more powerful than fear, and that life in Christ is victorious over the forces of violence and death.]

This hymn goes back to Michael Sattler, a leader of the first generation of Anabaptists and probable drafter of the “Schleitheim Confession,” an important statement of Anabaptist beliefs; who was put to death in 1527.]

Testimonies: The Cost of Persecution and Its Legacies

Barbara Unger was a young mother of four children. With others, she chose to be baptized in 1529. That was her YES to following Jesus and her YES to living with brothers and sisters in visible community. They wanted to be a community incarnating the Body of Christ – where daily life demonstrated the practical effects of justice, non-violence and love of their neighbor.

She and the others who were baptized were prepared for what might come.

“Anyone who wants to be a proper Christian must leave behind all they possess and suffer persecution until death,” they were warned.

No, martyrdom was neither sought nor glorified at the time.

It was only lived and accepted as the unavoidable consequence of their witness. That was rooted in the confidence: “Who will separate us from the love of Christ?” (Rom 8:35)

Barbara Unger was executed, with others, in Reinhardsbrunn, Thuringia, on 18 January 1530, barely 18 months after her baptism.

There is plenty of documentation that those persecuted had already forgiven their tormentors. They did so in the spirit of the Lord’s Prayer and that Jesus had prayed, “Forgive them, for they know not what they are doing.”

And yet the blood witnesses in those times also remind us of Jesus’ words: “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves.” (Mt 10:16)

Today we see ourselves seriously confronted with the awkward question:

“What would I be ready to die for?”

What are we willing to give up—for heaven’s sake? What do we live and work for to the last?

The witness of Anabaptist and other martyrs challenges us today—in our post-Christian or non-Christian societies—to live as the Body of Christ. They point us to Jesus.

He exhorts and encourages us to live in the community of God’s shalom, to speak prophetically in this world, to be non-violent in our actions, to serve others and to bring about reconciliation.

And not least to invite others to join us and accompany them as we follow Jesus together.

Frieder Boller, Chairperson, Association of Mennonite Assemblies in Germany

What have we done?

IV

Part II Act now: Ask for forgiveness

Prayer of confession

God of grace,
you have reconciled us to yourself through
Jesus Christ and given us the ministry of
reconciliation.
Today we confess that we in the Lutheran
tradition have betrayed this ministry
and sinned against you and our
Anabaptist sisters and brothers in Christ.

God of truth,
we confess that we have not been true to
your Word.
When our teachers like Martin Luther
used theological reasoning to justify state
violence against religious dissidents, we
have not repudiated this abuse of teaching
authority.
We have continued to teach ungenerously
and unworthily about others who seek to
follow your gospel.

Our minds have been clouded by sin; and
so persecution and murder have been done
in your name.

**Take away our tortured readings of your
Word;
turn us and renew our minds.**

God of love,
We confess that we have betrayed your love.
We have not seen in the Anabaptist wit-
nesses your beloved children, whose
lives challenge us with another vision of
Christian discipleship.
We have looked away from our painful
complicity in the history of persecution.
We have not seen how power seeks to
defend itself, and we have forgotten the
cost to those who suffered.
In our disdain for the discipleship of
Anabaptist Christians, we have scorned
your Spirit.

**Take away our arrogance and hardness of heart;
turn us and renew our hearts.**

God of peace,
We confess that we have not followed your call to be peacemakers.
We have too easily accepted violence for the sake of order.
We have trampled on the radical witness of Anabaptist men, women and children when we could better have found our own ways to walk with them in seeking the ways of peace.

**Take away our trust in violence,
turn us, guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Silence

Hymn *Our Father, we have wandered* (ELW No. 606) [ELCA hymn book]

Reading: Ezekiel 36:26-36

Reading: The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12)

[During this reading, a white cloth and olive

branches are brought to the altar.]

Hymn *Friedensstifter wollen wir sein*
(*Mennonitisches Gesangbuch No. 488*)

Receiving the sign of the cross

The sign of the cross makes present to us the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It touches the wounds of sin, heals our brokenness and restores our lives.

We receive a new heart and a new spirit.

This process of healing, enabled through God's grace, finds its tangible expression through the oil of healing and peace.

[Olive oil from the Holy Land is passed through the congregation, with each person receiving from a neighbor the sign of the cross on the hand and then marking a cross with oil into the hand of the next person.]

As you make the sign of the cross say:

God gives you a new heart and a new spirit.

Response: **Thanks be to God.**

VI

Hymns

During this action hymns are sung. These may include:

Wahrer christlicher Glaube

[This hymn goes back to Menno Simons.]

El cielo canta alegría (*Thuma Mina Nr. 54*)

Like the murmur of the dove's song (*ELW No. 403*) [*ELCA hymn book*]

What wounds would heal?

[This hymn is written especially for this service by Terry MacArthur.]

Part III Envision the future together: Let your feet be guided into the way of peace

Testimonies: Seeds of reconciliation and peace

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

During the LWF Pre-Assembly for the Latin American and Caribbean region, we met with the Mennonite church brothers and sisters in Colombia, and while we expressed our wish to ask them for forgiveness for the religious intolerance of Lutherans in the past, I realized the meaning of this act of reconciliation between churches in the context and situation we are living in our country.

Colombians have long suffered violence, largely due to the inability of many to tolerate ideological, political or religious differences.

The act of reconciliation of two churches which recognize the importance of healing wounds of the past in order to be able to live in peace in the present gives a message of vital importance to our society. In order to advance firmly in the construction of a sustainable peace, we need to reconcile ourselves departing from the recognition of the errors we have made as society in the past and in the present.

Bishop Eduardo Martinez, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia

What have we done?

What wounds would heal?

adapting The Church's One Foundation

Terry MacArthur

1. What wounds would heal the long-held hurt, the broken heart? What pain can
 2. What sor-row reach-es from dis-tress to ap-pre-hend the trou-bling
 4. With time the riv-er smoothes all edg-es but too late, for man-y

1. What wounds
 sor - row
 time the

mend to- geth- er that which pulled a- part? Can bend- ed knee and sor-ried lips re
 dis- a- gree- ments ar- gued with- out end? What word would still the shrill of scorn, the
 souls keep down- ing from the weight of hate? More wounds can't heal the long-held hurt but

1. Can bend - ed
 2. What word would
 4. More wounds can't

store the sev-ered dreams drowned in di- vi- sion's tear- filled streams?
 cy- cle of a- buse, to halt the an- ger fears un- loose? 3. The
 curse the steps to claim a new be- gin- ning, a new aim. 5. So

verse 1 | verses 2 and 4

2. What

Wound- ed One still bleeds and seeks for hu- man- kind the cour- age of for-
 Je- sus puts hurt hands up- on his nail- scarred feet where peace from wound- ed

give- ness, with jus- tice en- twined. He speaks to ven- geance deaf- ened ears to love the en- e-
 mer- cy re- peats a new beat. He touch- es ev- ery sor- rowed nerve so love can find its

my and rise up blessed as God's own child with heal- ing's lib- er- ty.
 chance to bridge the stream of bur- ied dreams with res- sur- rec- tion's dance.

D.S.

4. With

Intercessions

With the whole people of God,
let us pray for the church and all of God's
creation.

We pray for the church universal, that
through God's living presence it is a place
of reconciliation where ruined places are
rebuilt. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for leaders and teachers of the
church, that as mutual honor is nourished
among Christian traditions, the under-
standing of God's grace and truth receive
new strength. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the healing of memories in
local communities, that in Christ conflicts
are transformed and renewed relationships
grow. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the whole creation, that jus-
tice and peace extend to all God's crea-
tures. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all those sowing seeds of
peace that their work bears abundant
fruits. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Lord's Prayer (*in our many languages*)

Hymn Bless and keep us Lord (*Agape No. 45*)

Blessing

The God of healing and reconciliation
grant you to live in peace with one anoth-
er in accordance with Jesus Christ.

The God of abundance meet your hunger
and thirst for righteousness so that you
may abound in hope by the power of the
Holy Spirit.

The God of all grace bless you now and
forever.

Amen.



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