

A Litany for Minnesota's Sins of Racism

Oh God, in whose image the whole human family was created, we pray for all whose lives have been forever altered by racial violence.

In particular, today we remember George Floyd, beloved child of God.

Swaddle him in your boundless love.

Cradle him in your peace.

We remember George Floyd's family and friends, beloved children of God each one.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the residents of south Minneapolis, beloved children of God, who have seen their community disrupted by horrific violence.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the protestors, beloved children of God. The 20,000 who marched the day after George Floyd's death, and those still gathering across the city, the state, and the country to demand justice and change.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the residents of East Lake Street and the surrounding neighborhood, beloved children of God, who have seen their neighborhood host terrifying violence and astonishing destruction. We remember those who have watched their livelihoods and places of work go up in flames.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the man killed during the riots of this past week, a beloved child of God, as yet unnamed and his story unknown.

Swaddle him in your boundless love.

Cradle him in your peace.

We remember the Black community of Minneapolis, beloved children of God, who have for decades cried out against injustice and brutality at the hands of the Minneapolis police, and

who have not been heard by those with the power to make change. We remember our Black brothers and sisters, groaning under the weight of redlining, segregation, underfunded schools, unequal economic opportunity, indignity, and ever-present fear.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the residents of the Rondo neighborhood of St. Paul, beloved children of God, a flourishing Black community bulldozed to make room for a highway.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember the residents of North Minneapolis, throughout the city's history a home to marginalized communities, beloved children of God, all. We remember the destruction and the segregation that were caused by the construction of two highways that cut North Minneapolis off from the rest of the city.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember our public officials, beloved children of God, managing a global pandemic and a city-wide *cri de coeur* at once.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember our police officers, beloved children of God, whom we ask, often without appropriate training, to respond to human beings in their worst and most vulnerable moments. We remember the police officers who feel their loyalties divided or their cause unclear, who feel afraid for themselves, their brethren, their families, and their fellow citizens.

Swaddle them in your boundless love.

Cradle them in your peace.

We remember every citizen of Minneapolis, and of Minnesota, beloved children of God. We have been traumatized, grief-stricken, enraged, and heart-sickened by the video of one neighbor slowly snuffing the life out of another, by riots and looting, by the sounds of flash-bang grenades, the sting of tear gas, the scent of smoke, and by our own helplessness.

Swaddle us in your boundless love.

Cradle us in your peace.

We remember those who have pledged their lives to racist ideologies, beloved children of God. We acknowledge the pain they have caused to victims of violence, to their communities, to their families, and to their own souls. We acknowledge that each of us carries racist ideology within us, and we beg your mercy to free all your people from it.

Swaddle us in your boundless love.
Cradle us in your peace.

We know that the sickness of racism is in this nation's very bedrock. Today we acknowledge and repent of the twin original sins of this nation: the genocide of the indigenous people of this land and the institution of chattel slavery. We know that the shockwaves from these sins still reverberate today, that the trauma from these sins live in our bodies, and that the pain we suffer now has its origin in those first treacheries.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

We repent of laws that codify or allow unequal treatment based on race, ethnicity, religion, or skin tone. We repent of promises broken again and again. We repent of foreign policy that sees more value in some human lives than in others.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

We repent of the role of the church, historically and presently, in supporting and emboldening these policies. We repent of the ways that we have made your church a home to oppression, exclusion, or indignity for any child of God.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

We acknowledge and repent of the fact that Minnesota has never shared its abundance equally. Our state is home to some of the worst racial disparities in the nation: in scholastic achievement, employment, household wealth, homeownership.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

We repent of the ill-use of your bounty: we hoard land and wealth, manipulate plants and animals, abuse your creation, and your most vulnerable people suffer the consequences.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

We who benefit from white supremacy acknowledge that we have been given unearned privilege at the expense of our Indigenous, Black, Asian, Latine, brown-skinned, immigrant, and non-Christian siblings. We repent of the ways in which we have allowed our own fear, complacency, and incuriosity to blind us to the belovedness of your children, each, like us, fearfully and wonderfully made.

Help us turn away from the sin of division
And toward your all-encompassing love.

Oh God of infinite affection, you looked at all that you had made and called it good. By your grace, help us to look upon your creation and to see, with your mothering eyes of love, how good, how good, how good it is.

Lord, in your mercy.
Christ, in your mercy.
Lord, in your mercy.

Amen.