

“Lamentation is a different way of praying. It is found in almost one-third of the Psalms, and yet apart from the Black spirituals and older Gospel music, it has been largely ignored by mainline Christianity as a prayer form.

We want to use it tonight because it places our entire conference in a different setting than mere anger, judgment, or any kind of righteous superiority or spirituality.

Lamentation is a way of prayer that seeks solidarity over immediate solutions. It chooses to admit complicity rather than move toward condemnation. It chooses to weep rather than blame, to stand in sadness rather than anger. Lamentation is a form of prayer that could be most helpful to people working for social justice and peace, because it keeps religious people from their perennial temptation—righteousness, superiority, or moral purity in any form. It chooses to stand inside of the pain, with both the oppressed and the oppressors.”

God, we are also a part of the problem, because of our fear, our complicity in injustice, and our codependency on the very systems that we criticize.

Answer: Sing a KYRIE ELEISON

God, we are sad at how we have treated your creation.

God, we weep over how human beings treat one another.

God, we grieve over humanity’s love of war and violence.

God, we are saddened by how many of your people are homeless and poor.

God, we weep over the little people who are abused and oppressed in so many ways.

God, we grieve over the superficial nature of our religion.

God, we are sad that our politics is so deceitful and self serving.

God, we weep over our racism, our sexism, our imperialism.

God, we are saddened that we are often a mirror image of the very things we hate.