

**Liturgy for the Day Against Homobitranphobia**  
**May 17 2024**

***“Be strong and bold; have no fear or dread of them, because it is the Lord your God who goes with you; he will not fail you or forsake you”.***

Deuteronomy 31:6

*Edited by the Faith Gender Sexuality Commission  
of the Baptist, Methodist and Waldensian churches and the REFO*

### **Greeting**

The time has come  
To put our lives back into the hands of the Word.  
The time has come  
to give space  
to our prayer.  
The time has come  
to welcome the Presence  
Who blesses us abundantly.

***God blesses us for who we are,  
for our endurance,  
for the way we love,  
for our physical appearance,  
for our paths of transition and life.***

May the peace of God,  
Mother and Father,

Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with each and every one of us on this day!  
May God lead us to the joy  
which is above all joy!

**Amen**

### **Invocation**

God is with us through the Spirit and comes to speak to us through the Word to fill us with blessings and to renew God's grace. May our souls glorify the Eternal One, and may our hearts exult in God, our Savior. Amen

### **Hymn**

#### **Reading from the Psalms**

*I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.  
He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.  
The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.*

**(Psalm 121:1-3.5.8)**

*Blessed be the Lord,  
for he has heard the sound of my pleadings.  
The Lord is my strength and my shield;  
in him my heart trusts; so I am helped,*

*and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.*  
**(Psalm 28:6-7)**

### **Prayer of invocation**

God of love, you who protects us and hears our voice when we call upon you, we are here today to celebrate your name and invoke your presence. We, who are called to be holy, unite our voices in a song of praise, in the name of your son Jesus. Amen

### **Hymn**

#### **Confession of sin**

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice,  
and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?*

**Micah 6:8**

#### **Moment of silence**

#### **Testimonies**

#### **Let us pray**

God of our lives, merciful God, forgive our silence when we should have spoken. Forgive our empty words, when we should have acted. Forgive us for confusing your gospel with our wisdom. Forgive us for hurting instead of welcoming. Forgive us for limiting our service to those who were more like us. Forgive us our mediocrity, our lack

of love and generosity. Forgive our offenses as we forgive those who have offended us. Teach us to forgive, help us build networks of solidarity and support. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen

### **HYMN**

#### **Assurance of pardon**

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

**(Romans 8:1)**

We receive forgiveness in Christ and his deliverance. He calls us to serve Him and to walk in the way of sanctification by building right relationships. Together with Him, our steps are sure because they are guided by the Holy Spirit and our faith is steadfast because the light of Christ shines in the darkness. Amen

### **Hymn**

#### **Confession of Faith 1**

We believe that God created and continues to create all that is living;  
that God came in Jesus, the Word made flesh,  
to reconcile and renew God's work,  
through the Holy Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to celebrate God's presence,  
to love and serve every person we encounter,  
to seek justice and resist evil,  
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,  
Who gives us victory over death  
and the certainty of our resurrection.

We trust in God.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,  
God is with us and God's Kingdom is our common hope.  
Thanks be to God.

### **We trust in God. Amen**

*(Adapted from the CF of the CEC Assembly, Vancouver 1983)*

### **Prayer for illumination**

Our God, open our hearts and minds to Your word. Open  
our ears and loosen our tongues to proclaim Your message  
of deliverance. Amen

### **Bible reading and preaching**

### **Hymn**

### **Intercessory prayer**

As we are gathered by the Holy Spirit as one, today we  
pray for people who suffer because of their identity. We  
pray for people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual,  
transgender, nonbinary, asexual, intersexual, or embodied

in every other possible identity that was born - in each  
case - out of your creation. Bless each of these people and  
may they discover their vocation on this earth and be  
loved as you love them.

### **All: Hear our prayer**

God of justice, bless us and make us witnesses of peace.  
Open our eyes that we may see things as You see them.  
Protect us from all forms of violence, pain and revenge.  
We pray especially for those who are victims of reparative  
therapies: people taken hostage, deprived of their ability  
to choose, exposed to fanaticism, often religious. They are  
dehumanized and treated as if they were the waste stone,  
while like every human being they form a precious part of  
your body on this earth. As we place their despair in your  
hands, help us be the voice of the voiceless and use our  
gifts and talents to aid these sisters and brothers.

### **Hear our prayer**

God of all refugees, who as a child was forced to flee  
Bethlehem to avoid a massacre, you know the plight of the  
displaced. Stay with those who have had to leave their  
countries because of their sexual orientation. Guide and  
protect their steps on the land in which they disembark  
and save them from harm. Lead them to a safe place. Open  
the hearts of those who take them in and let them find soul  
families where they will feel safe.

### **Hear our prayer**

God our rock, You have taught us to build our lives on You. We pray for those who are homeless. We pray especially for those families who fail to take in their daughters and sons. Let their fears and shame be replaced by the mutual love You ask us to make visible in the world.

### **Hear our prayer.**

God of peace, we pray that all Christian churches take courage and no longer reduce their LGBTQ+ acceptance to a whisper, but boldly affirm it, with the same energy with which we proclaim the Gospel of grace.

### **Hear our prayer.**

Loving God, we know that all our blessings come from You. Do not keep us far from You. Grant us grace and fill our hearts with joy.

### **Personal prayers**

We address these prayers of our hearts to You, trusting that You will hear and answer them. In the name of God, Creator, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

### **Allow us to say to you daily:**

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,*

*your will be done,*

*on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*

*Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,*

*now and forever. Amen.*

*(from the Liturgy of the Reformed Church in America)*

### **Hymn**

### **Blessing**

“May the road rise to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sunshine always warm your face, the rain fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again may God hold you in the palm of his hand.”

*May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**(I Thessalonians 5,23, Philippians 4,7)**

## Alternative Confession of Faith (2)

I believe, and I want to believe,

the God who by speaking, wanted to give form to the whole out of nothing. The God who does not cancel out opposites, but teaches them to coexist, learning to yield space to each other.

The God who is not Father, nor Mother, but who is parenthood, who experiences sorrow and fear before the fall of one of the sons and daughters, and who learns afresh every day what it means to be a parent, to feel responsible for and attached to something other than Godself. As God did with the Fathers and Mothers of antiquity, reopening barren wombs to let the power of life flow, quenching the thirst of the murmuring people in the desert, watching over the stubborn monarchy, inhabiting the time of the exile announced with a pain that turns into a promise of redemption.

The God who refuses to define and label the world in order to understand it, but who calls all to live it, in mutual thirst for full life, according to their respective diversities, rediscovering in each of them fragments of God's image.

I believe, and I dare to believe,

In the love that became body, voice, action, emotion in Jesus of Nazareth: man in whom God emptied himself, to make our lives whole: an itinerant carpenter, who helped

smooth God's image and give new shape to existence with his words. A male, who rejected male chauvinism, who shattered every human barrier by unmasking the isolation it creates. He redefined family ties by placing at the center one's existence those who felt at the margins. His hands, rich in calluses and tears, tell multiple stories: hands that healed, that touched the untouchable, hands that lifted, that broke, multiplied, hands that were pierced to sanction the victory of human power. Son of a love that trespasses beyond limits, that loves opposites: that empties to fill, loses to win, that abandons and wins, speaks, and causes action.

I believe, and I have the strength to believe,

the Spirit, the *ruah* of God, the force that, while being silent, is able to transform the world. A draft that slips through the smallest cracks, fire of passion that burns but does not destroy, a presence that knows no time or place, but puts the stories, voices, sounds and words of human times together. I believe the Spirit who blows love in a time of hatred, who does not allow herself to be controlled, but asks to be trusted, and to recognize in her freshness the ways in which the God who loves life makes Godself present.

I believe, and I wish to believe,

a church that is not an institution nor a structure, not power nor a transmission of roles. But a church that is life,

a rainbow of coexisting differences, making each other flamboyant. Which is familiarity, a home with a place kept empty to welcome the unexpected. The church as choral singing, a table set with foods of diverse backgrounds. The church as stories, paths, dreams, and sorrows, sharing and listening. The church as a weaving space, where joined to the sound of God's voice, we learn to mend the rips that have separated, judged, and condemned what was abnormal for centuries.

I believe, I want, I dare, I have the strength and I desire to believe, because faith allows me to seize a glimpse of hope in a closed and suffocating reality. Faith sets my life, my identity free. To me, a male, to me, a woman, to me, not feeling I am one or the other; faith grants me, as I freely glide between these two poles of identity, to see myself embraced in the gaze God has for me - God, who created me in a wonderful way (Psalm 139), and who reminds me that I am not the norm, I am not the judge, I am not the canon: there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female (Galatians 3,28). There is you, there is me, there is the God of every creature, who loves life and calls us to see the fullness of it in the emptiness of that tomb on Easter Sunday - there, where those faithful women to the end told the unbelieving men the good and beautiful news of yesterday, today and tomorrow. So be it.

*(past. Gabriele Bertin)*