



Liturgical Reflections

Ecumenical Service of Reflection and Reconciliation¹

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A moment of silent reflection

Lighting of the Candles *to dispel all darkness and shine into the future*

Poem: “All my friends are exiles” by Ghanaian poet Abena Busia,⁴ read by Miss

¹ This ecumenical service was collaboratively designed and compiled for the occasion with input from select TWP leaders/participants, St Nicholas Seminary students/staff, and clergy from Christ Church Anglican Cathedral, Cape Coast, Ghana. The prayers of intercession were co-written for the occasion by Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim. Should this liturgy be used or adapted in part or in whole, please include the following attribution: *Title:* “Ecumenical Service of Reflection and Reconciliation,” *Author:* TransAtlantic Writing Project (TWP), Cape Coast, Ghana, 2024. “Prayers of Intercession” by Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim.

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⁴ Previously published in “Poems from *Testimonies of Exile*,” in “FonTomFrom: Contemporary Ghanaian Literature, Theatre and Film,” ed. Kofi Anyidoho and James

Felicity Abbey (Head Girl, Quaake Girls' School, Cape Coast, Ghana).

All my friends are exiles

*All my friends are exiles,
born in one place, we live in another
and with true sophistication,
rendezvous
in most surprising places –
where you would never expect to find us.
Between us we people the world.
With aplomb and a command of languages,
we stride across continents
with the self-assurance of those who know
with absolute certainty
where they come from.
With the globe at our command,⁵
we have everywhere to go,
but home.*



Hymn: “Psalm 23: The Lord’s My Shepherd”⁶

1. The Lord’s my shepherd, I’ll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.
2. My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make

Gibbs, special issue, *Matatu: Journal for African Literary and Cultural Studies* 21–22 (2000): 261–262, <https://doi.org/10.1163/18757421-90000327>, 261. Used with permission. See also Abena P. A. Busia, *Testimonies of Exile* (Trenton, New Jersey, USA: Africa World Press, 1990), 11. This volume of poetry is still in print, and available from the publisher at <https://africaworldpressbooks.com/testimonies-of-exile-by-abena-p-a-busia/>

Abena Busia is a Ghanaian diplomat, poet, and professor of Literature and Women’s Studies. Her family fled Ghana for the Netherlands as a child in the late 1950s due to political instability and her father’s role as the leader of the opposition against Kwame Nkrumah. She has subsequently divided her time between the US and the UK.

⁵ The issue of *Matatu* introduced a typographical error, repeating the word “our” in this line, which we have corrected.

⁶ Source: “Hymns and Devotions for Daily Worship #150b,” Hymnary.org, n.d., <https://hymnary.org/hymn/HDDW2024/150b>; originally from *Psalms of David in Meeter* (1650), also known as the *Scottish Psalter*.

Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim
Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation

Within the paths of righteousness,
ev'n for his own name's sake.

3. Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.
4. My table thou hast furnishèd
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.
5. Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me,
And in God's house forever more
My dwelling place shall be.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:1–12 (NIV)

¹ Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

He said:

- ³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
- ⁵ Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
- ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
- ⁷ Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
- ⁸ Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
- ⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
- ¹⁰ Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim
Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation

¹¹ “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”

Poem: “We have come home,” by Lenrie Peters.⁷

Note:

Lenrie Peters (1932–2009) was born in Gambia to a Sierra Leonean Creole father of Caribbean or Black American origin and a Gambian Creole mother of Sierra Leonean Creole origins.

Hymn: “I Need Thee Every Hour”⁸

1 I need Thee ev’ry hour,
most gracious Lord;
no tender voice like Thine
can peace afford.

Refrain:

I need Thee, O I need Thee;
ev’ry hour I need Thee;
O bless me now, my Savior,
I come to Thee.

2 I need Thee ev’ry hour,
stay Thou nearby;
temptations lose their pow’r
when Thou art nigh.

[Refrain]

3 I need Thee ev’ry hour,
in joy or pain;
come quickly and abide,
or life is vain.

[Refrain]

⁷ Editorial note: we do not have permission to reprint this poem, but would encourage readers to take the opportunity to look it up and reflect upon Peters’s powerful words and how they resonate in this liturgy.

⁸ Refrain lyrics and music by Robert Lowry (1872); verse lyrics by Annie S. Hawks (1872).

Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim
Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation

4 I need Thee ev'ry hour,
teach me Thy will;
and Thy rich promises
in me fulfill.

[Refrain]

5 I need Thee ev'ry hour,
most Holy One;
O make me Thine indeed,
Thou blessed Son.

[Refrain]

Prayers of Intercession:⁹

Read by Sara Fretheim, Daniel Eshun, Anna Kasafi Perkins, Joshua Barron,
Janice McLean-Farrell, and Confidence Bansah (TWP Co-Leaders)

- 1) WE lay a stone of faith. God of **FAITH**,
nurture our faith in ways that enable us to reflect critically
on our own faith,
And respect one another's faith,
Moving forward together in harmony.

God of Faith,

Hear our prayers.

- 2) WE lay a stone of hope. God of **HOPE**,
as we can only see through a glass darkly,
may we never lose our hope
in your transformative and resurrecting power.
May all traumatized by conflict, war, poverty, generational
pain, and environmental disasters,
See beyond the present with transcendent hope.

God of Hope,

Hear our prayers.

⁹ Written for the occasion by Daniel Justice Eshun and Sara J. Fretheim.

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Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation

- 3) WE lay a stone of love. God of **LOVE**,
love is your essence, and You have created us in Your image
of love.
As we gaze on the face of the Other, may we see Your love
reflected there,
Even as we seek to reflect it in our own lives.
Where we have devalued Your image of Love in ourselves
and in others,
we humbly repent.

God of Love,

Hear our prayers.

- 4) WE lay a stone of justice. God of Love and Hope:
JUSTICE is Your love in action, seeking the dignity and welfare of all.
May we consistently strive to act justly ourselves,
And passionately pursue justice for all who are denied it.

And may Your Spirit always remind us
That Justice is love in public.

God of JUSTICE,

Hear our prayers.

- 5) WE lay a stone of mercy. God of Justice, You call us to act justly and
to love **MERCY**.

May we always remember the daily mercies we receive from
You,

Our Creator and Redeemer,

And seek to generously extend the same to all we encounter
in our daily lives.

Let the concepts of MERCY and JUSTICE never be reduced
to mere words, but actions;

and neither to law but to love.

Where there is need for law,

Open our eyes always to see the Spirit and Law together.

God of MERCY,

Hear our prayers.

- 6) WE lay a stone of reconciliation. Sovereign Lord of history, in You all things hold together. Through Your love and mercy, you **RECONCILE** all of creation to Yourself.

As inheritors of this gift,

May Your example lead and enable us to seek healing and reconciliation

For ourselves and for the Other,

Where brokenness, trauma, and division have been perpetuated.

Our world is like a mosaic:

Full of brokenness and beauty.

May we never stop to admire where there is beauty,

And never stop seeking reconciliation where there is brokenness.

Sovereign Lord of History,

God of Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Mercy, and Reconciliation:

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Short Silence, followed by **The Lord's Prayer**.

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

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Ecumenical Service of Reconciliation

Hymn: “O God Our Help in Ages Past”¹⁰

1. Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home:
2. Under the shadow of your throne
Your saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is your arm alone,
And our defense is sure.
3. Before the hills in order stood
Or Earth received her frame,
From everlasting you are God,
To endless years the same.
4. A thousand ages in your sight
Are like an evening gone,
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.
5. Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the op'ning day.
6. Like flow'ry fields the nations stand,
Pleased with the morning light;
The flow'rs beneath the mower's hand
Lie with'ring ere 'tis night.
7. Our God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Be thou our guard while troubles last
And our eternal home.

Closing Prayers and Benediction: Very Rev. Peter Amoako-Gyampah

¹⁰ Adopted from Psalm 90:1–5 by Isaac Watts (1674–1748) in 1719.