



Justice & Reconciliation
Learning to Lament

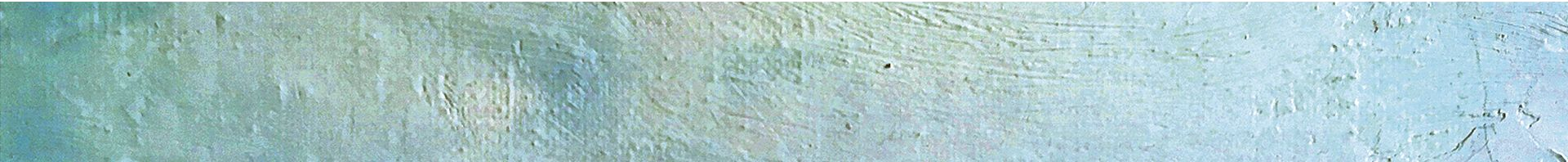
The background is an abstract composition of thick, textured brushstrokes. The color palette is primarily muted greens and blues, with some lighter, almost white, areas where the strokes overlap or are more sparse. The strokes vary in direction, with some being horizontal and others more diagonal or circular, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is that of a hand-painted or artistically rendered surface.

**MOVEMENT #1:
CORPORATE
IDENTIFICATION**

The background is an abstract composition of thick, textured brushstrokes. The color palette is dominated by various shades of green and blue, ranging from a muted, earthy green to a pale, almost white-blue. The strokes are layered and directional, creating a sense of movement and depth. The overall effect is reminiscent of a painterly or gestural style, with visible ridges and valleys in the paint.

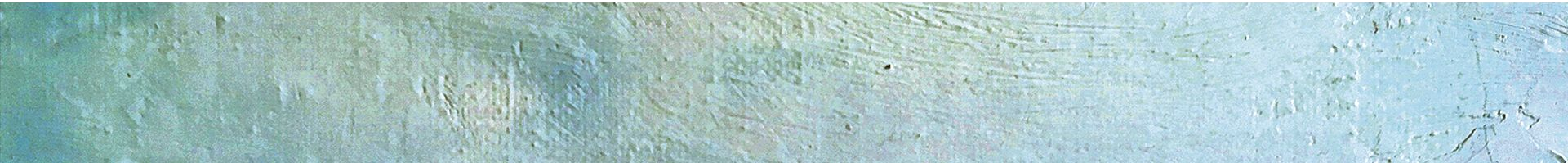
**MOVEMENT #2:
LAMENT**

Expressive Individualism

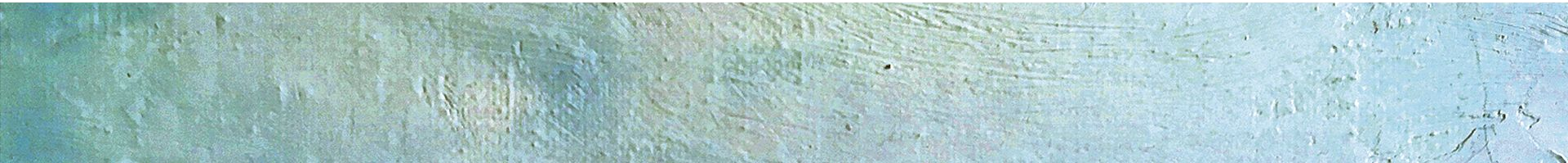


What was new is that the default basis for evaluating institutions, society, affiliations, memberships, and even personal relationships became dominated by considerations of individual choice based on the calculation of individual self-interest, and without broader consideration of the impact one's choices upon the community, one's obligations to the created order, and ultimately to God.

Patrick Deneen



Pervasive Presentism

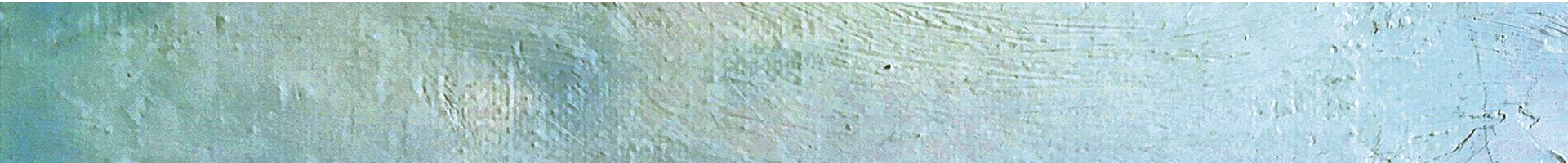


More than a system of government or legal and political order, liberalism is about redefining the human perception of time. It is an effort to transform the experience of time, in particular the relationship of past, present, and future...a kind of weaponized timelessness...grounded in a deep hostility toward the past, particularly tradition and custom...The fracturing of time is embraced as a form of freedom, a liberation especially of personal obligations we have to those with whom we share a past, a future, and even - ultimately - the present itself.

Patrick Deneen



Placelessness



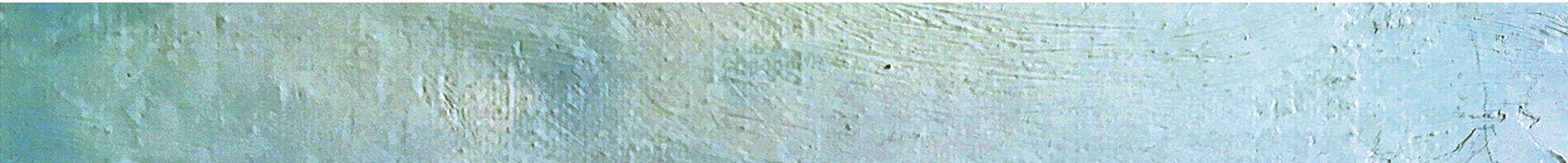
Liberalism valorizes placelessness. Its “state of nature” posits a view from nowhere: abstract individuals in equally abstract places. Not only does liberalism rest on the anthropological assumption that humans are from no one...but that we are from nowhere. The place where one happens to be born and raised is as arbitrary as one’s parents, one’s religion, or one’s customs. One should consider oneself primarily a free chooser, of place as of all relationships, institutions, and beliefs.

Patrick Deneen

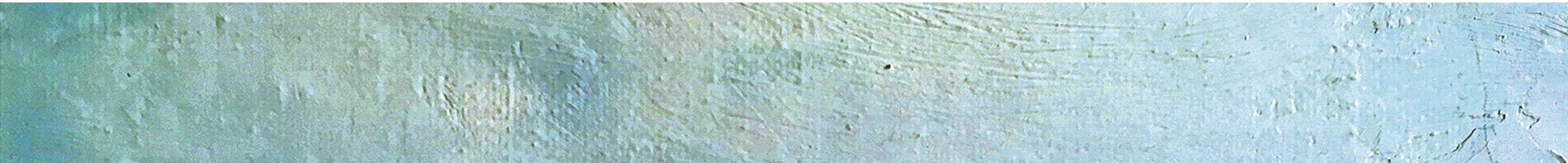


Corporate Identification:

God relates with humanity covenantally as both “me” and “we,” or individually and corporately. We are shaped by, connected to, responsible for, and even encouraged to confess the sins of our theological and biological families. While it is appropriate to repent of collective sins of the broader covenant family — both past and present — this does not mean that God holds individuals guilty for the sins of others in the same way.



Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, we have sinned and done wrong and acted wickedly and rebelled, turning aside from your commandments and rules.



We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. To us, O LORD, belongs open shame, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against you.

Daniel 9:3-6, 8

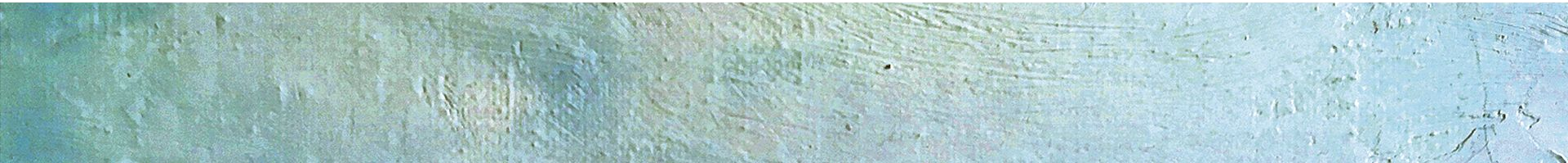


And at the evening sacrifice I rose from my fasting, with my garment and my cloak torn, and fell upon my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God, saying: “O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift my face to you, my God, for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens. From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today.

Ezra 9:5-7

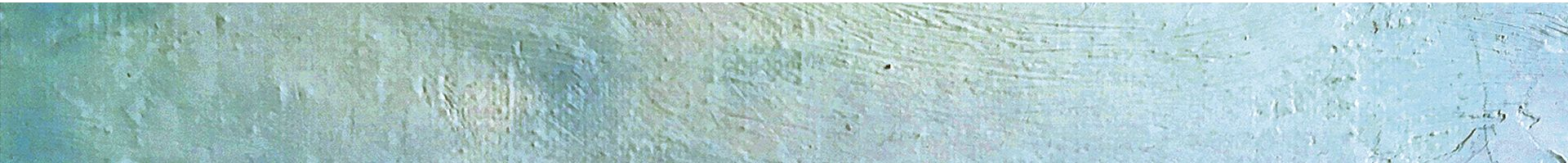


For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.



And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13, 16-20



Now the body is not made up of one culture but of many. If the blacks should say to the whites, 'Because I am not white, I do not belong to the body,' it would not make it true. The blacks would still be a part of the body whether they vote for the same candidates or not. And if the whites should say, 'Because I am not black, I do not belong to the body,' it would not make it true. The whites should still be part of the body whether they clapped their hands and shouted loudly in church or not. It doesn't mean that they are not filled with the Spirit. If the whole body was tightly structured, where would the sense of spontaneity be? If the whole body was spontaneous, where would the sense of order be?

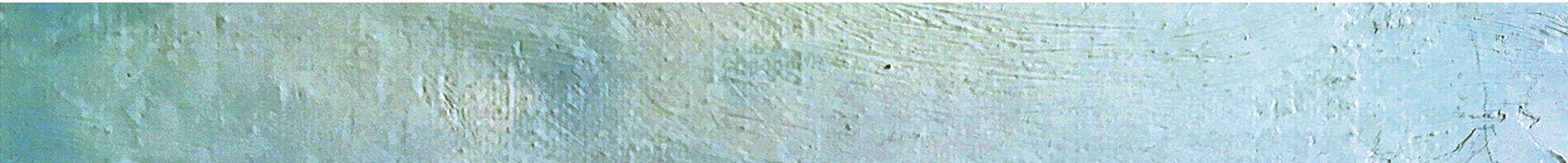


As it is, there are many parts and many cultures, but one body. The Cuban church cannot say to the Haitian church, 'I don't need you!' The Puerto Rican church cannot say to the Mexican church, 'I don't need you!' The Pakistanis cannot say to the Persians, 'I don't need you!' The Japanese cannot say to the Koreans, 'I don't need you!' The suburban church cannot say to the urban church, 'I don't need you!' The city church cannot say to the country church, 'I don't need you!' Jews cannot say to Arabs, 'I don't need you!' Palestinians cannot say to Jews, 'I don't need you!'



On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are not to be dismissed or discarded as if they don't matter. They are God's special instruments of honor to reveal an aspect of God that would otherwise not be seen or experienced. There really is no part of the Christian body that is to be dismissed as unimportant. They all matter! If Palestinian Christians suffer, we all suffer. If South African Christians are freed from apartheid, we all rejoice with them. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

David Anderson



Movement #2: Lament



Laments are prayers of petition arising out of need. But lament is not simply the presentation of a list of complaints, nor merely the expression of sadness over difficult circumstances. Lament in the Bible is a liturgical response to the reality of suffering and engages God in the context of pain and trouble.

Soong-Chan Rah



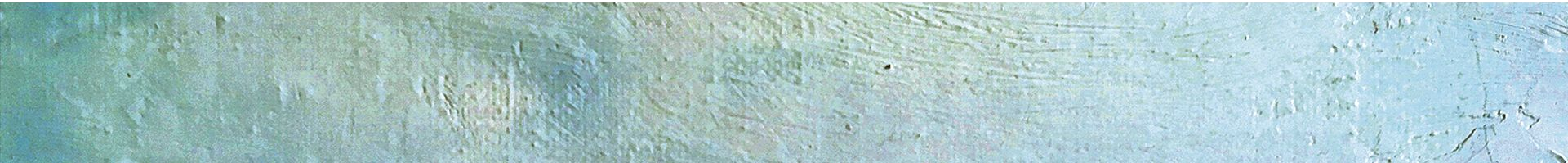
The American church avoids lament. The power of lament is minimized and the underlying narrative of suffering that requires lament is lost. But absence doesn't make the heart grow fonder. Absence makes the heart forget. The absence of lament in the liturgy of the American church results in the loss of memory. We forget the necessity of lamenting over suffering and pain. We forget the reality of suffering and pain.

Soong-Chan Rah



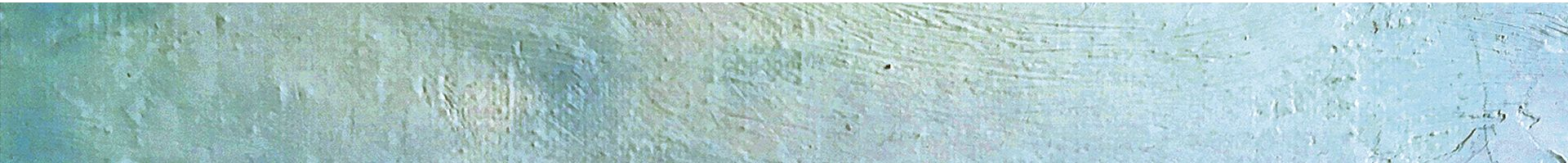
Any resurrection of the church as the body of Christ must begin with lament, which is an honest look at the brokenness of the church. Without lament, we move on too quickly to reconstruction.

Emmanuel Kantongole



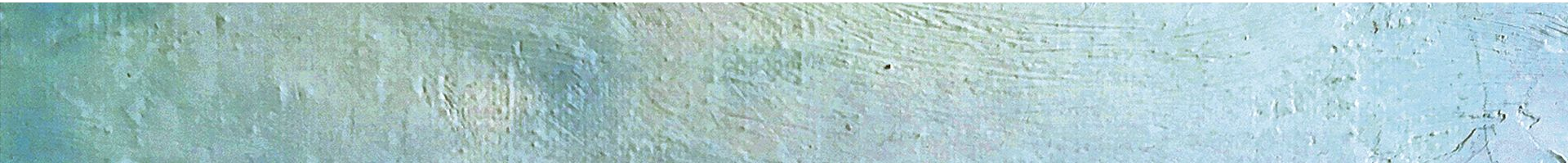
We pray for our country and church— that you would use this season to shape us into a nation and community that embraces more of the values of Your Kingdom.

Lord, have mercy.



For the leaders of the nation, our city and for all in authority, that they would be effective advocates for justice and reconciliation for all of our neighbors, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.



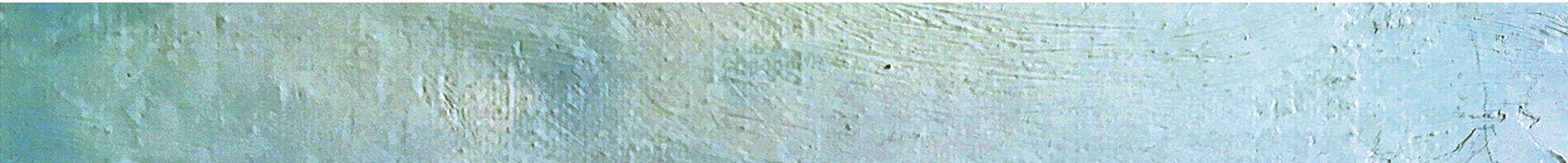
For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, for the refugee and immigrant, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.



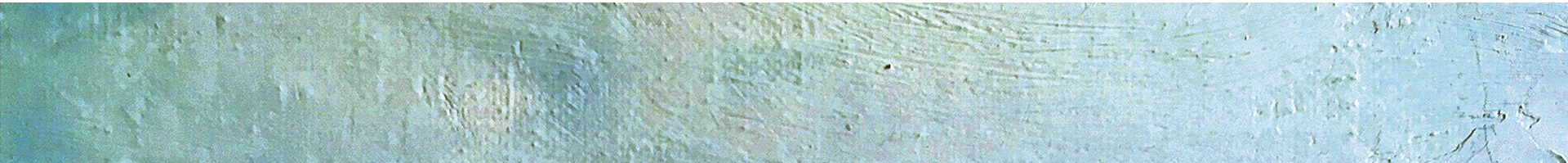
We sit in the tension of what it means to live in the United States - we thank You for the privilege and freedom that living in this country provides, and for the ways we do see the values of Your kingdom present in our society today and in our history as a country. But we also lament the ways that this country has, and continues to participate in and perpetuate systemic evil in the form of racial injustice and oppression.

Lord, have mercy.



We remember that this country was built on the defeat, subjugation, and deprivation of those Native to these lands, and we lament the ways that many in these communities still struggle to thrive because of the wrongs that were done to their ancestors by those who founded this nation, and by any policy still in place that creates an uphill battle for our Native brothers and sisters to thrive in this nation.

Lord, have mercy.



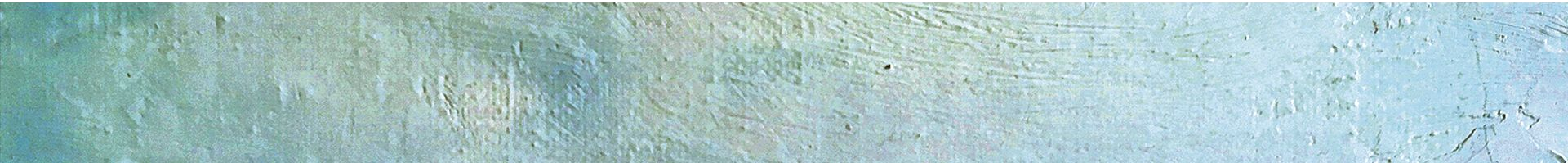
We remember that much of the wealth, power, and advantage of this republic was built on the backs of slaves and that many of us today have inherited lives of advantage and comfort - many of us in at least some part because of the ways that our ancestors profited from the domination, enslavement, and segregation of primarily black men and women in America.

Lord, have mercy.



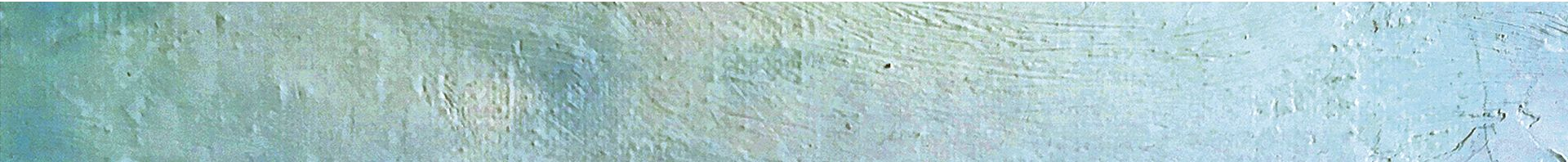
We lament the way that the scars of slavery live on today in the ways that our black and brown brothers and sisters are still statistically under-resourced and under-paid, disproportionately incarcerated, and otherwise often disenfranchised compared to their peers and neighbors.

Lord, have mercy.



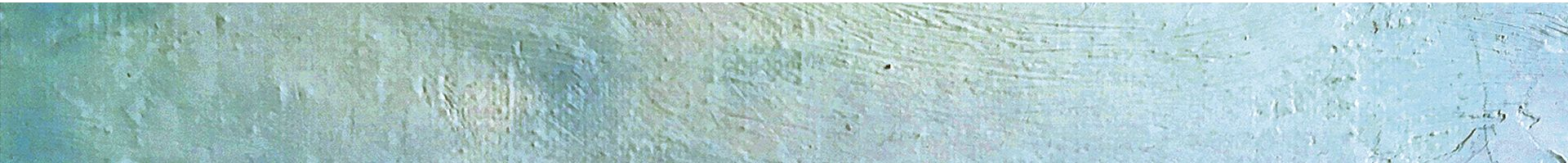
We lament the ways that people have been and still are treated wrongly because of the color of their skin and country of origin. Make us aware of our own conscious and implicit biases and empower us to use our advantages to create safety and flourishing for others who do not have some of the same opportunities we have. We repent of the ways we have been complicit.

Lord, have mercy.



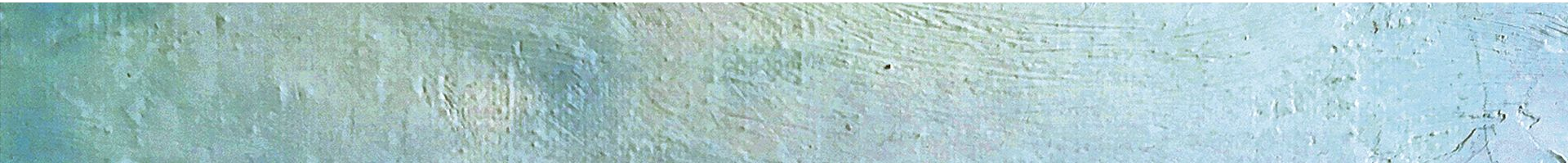
We lament the history of church segregation caused by the enslavement, discrimination, and exclusion of people of color from predominately white churches, institutions, and resources. We repent of the ongoing ways we are complicit in normalizing, prioritizing, and idolizing one race over another in our beliefs, values, attitudes, worship styles, hiring practices, church planting strategies, and resource allocations.

Lord, have mercy.



We recognize the ways that the American church has been active in, indifferent towards, or otherwise complicit in the degradation of your Imago Dei in our nation's minority cultures and people groups. We repent. Make us liberators, protectors, and champions of your Imago Dei in every God-ordained variety and set the American church on fire as a beacon of multicultural restoration for the sake of the world.

Lord, have mercy.



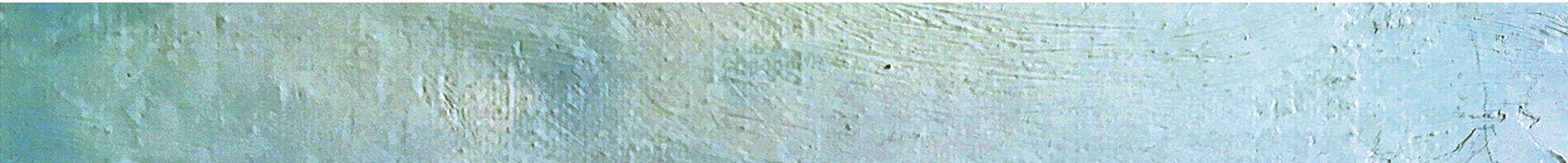
We ask you to tear down strongholds of racism in our policy, in our leadership, and in the spiritual realms of this neighborhood, city, and nation.

Lord, have mercy.



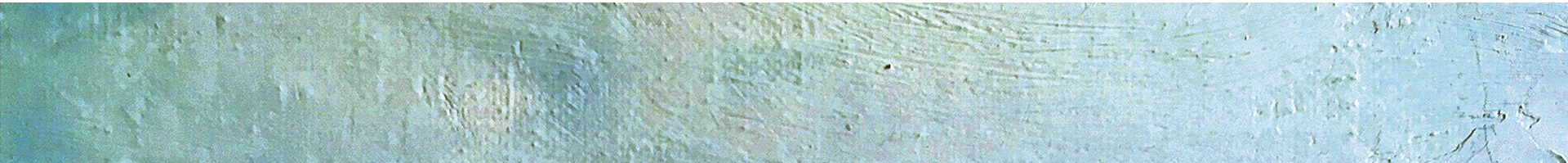
Tear down hidden racial strongholds in our own hearts, whether they be stereotypes, biases, hostility, suspicion, self-righteousness, shame, guilt, or fear - expand our compassion and sow grace in our hearts as we stumble towards Christlikeness in these conversations.

Lord, have mercy.



For our hurting world, and for the Unity of the Church as we respond in courage, strength, and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.



Remember, O LORD, what has befallen us; look, and see our disgrace! Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners. We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows...Our fathers sinned, and are no more; and we bear their iniquities...The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning. The crown has fallen from our head; woe to us, for we have sinned! For this our heart has become sick, for these things our eyes have grown dim...



But you, O LORD, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations. Why do you forget us forever, why do you forsake us for so many days? Restore us to yourself, O LORD, that we may be restored! Renew our days as of old— unless you have utterly rejected us, and you remain exceedingly angry with us.

Lord, hear our prayer.

Lamentations 5

