

INTERFAITH PRAYERS OF HOPE AND COMMUNITY
SUPPORTING SURVIVORS OF ABUSE
Pitt Street Uniting Church
October 31, 2015 – 10.30am

Supportive communities help survivors recover.

Preparation:

Place the “cloth of tears” flowing from the Altar Table with lengths of knotted blue ribbon alongside it and a bowl and jug of water. Put seven candles towards the back of the Table with matches and tapers for lighting and a bowl of cut flowers near to the bowl of water.

Margaret Mayman

Welcome to everyone, outline of service, stories and prayers (including explanation of “G-d”). Acknowledge service may raise difficult emotions but will finish on positive note with hope and affirmation that “supportive communities help survivors recover”. Mention the availability of counsellor/s at the back of the church.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that we are on the land of the traditional owners of this country – the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

As we bring our respect to their Elders, past and present, we also acknowledge that many of their children and young people have been abused by those who pretended to care for them.

Indigenous music – Tim Gray and possibly friend.

Lighting of candle (Tim).

GATHERING

We are gathered here,
followers of various faiths and none.

We gather as those who mourn the terrible betrayals
of the past and present.

We know that some of those betrayals
were by people with the name of their G-d on their lips.

Our hearts are heavy with anger, grief and pain
for those who have suffered.

**We will join them in their tears
and hold them in our love
as we face the future days together.**

Be with us, the One who is at the centre of our faith,
the One who is close
to the abused and oppressed
and who grieves with all who struggle

for healing and life.

**We join together, sharing tears
and holding each other in love
as we face the future days together.
Amen.**

HYMN 683

G-d! When human bonds are broken
and we lack the love or skill
to restore the hope of healing,
give us grace and make us still.

You, in us, are bruised and broken:
hear us as we seek release
from the pain of earlier living;
set us free and grant us peace.
(Words by Frederick Herman Kaan)

LIGHTING OF CANDLES

Introduced by Margaret.

Survivor representative:

Cathy Kezelman

On behalf of all those
who come to us
for support and counselling,
we light this second candle,
in the hope that we will hear more clearly
the truth about those who have been abused.
The candle is lit.

Christian representative:

Fr Peter Maher

On behalf of the Christian Church,
I light this third candle,
the red candle
which represents the anger in our hearts,
as we remember the betrayals
of the vulnerable
by those whom they trusted.
The candle is lit.

Jewish representative:

Kati Haworth

I light the fourth candle,
pleading for new insights
into how we should respond
with wisdom and love.
The candle is lit.

Buddhist representative:

Thubten Chokyi

I light the fifth candle,
longing for new light
guiding us to creating a world
where all are nurtured and safe.
The candle is lit.

Hindu representative:

Pundit Nanda Maharajah Das

I light the sixth candle
holding those who suffer
within the silence of eternal peace,
and praying that they will be healed.
The candle is lit.

Other Faiths representative:

Nicholas Ng

I light the seventh candle
as a sign of openness
to respectful relationship,
where the sacred in every heart
is honoured.
The candle is lit.

Andrew Collis

THE LAMENT

Now let us dare to listen to the voices
of people who have been abused.
These stories are extracts from a play written by Alana Valentine,
and, even though the persons are not identified,
they are the stories of real people.

Often their stories are untold,
or have not been believed.
Here they will be told in a safe place,
to be heard and believed
and to support recovery.

We will also reflect in silence
as we hear the sound of music.

[Three copies of the stories to be printed.]

PERSON 1: Read by Cathy Kezelman
'The Straight Line'
Silence and music.

PERSON 2: Read by Miriam Pepper
'The Swan'
Silence and music.

Copyright Alana Valentine (2012).

Annette Coleman

O Divine presence, there are no words
which would do justice to the pain
which lies in our hearts
in response to the voices of those
who have been abused.

Our tears are joined with theirs this day.

(Water is poured into the bowl on the Altar table by Annette Coleman.)

Sung by Meredith Knight

FOR ALL WHOSE SONG IS SILENT
We sing for all whose song is silent,
whose hidden hurt no tune could bear –
children whose innocence of loving
has been disrupted and tainted with fear.
G-d who conceived and gave us birth,
listen for all who doubt their worth.

We sing for all whose lives were mangled
when friendship turned to vile abuse,
as those they trusted traded kindness
for cruelty beyond excuse.
G-d in whose image all were made
feel for the ones who've been betrayed.

We sing for all who bear within them
scars in the body, mind and soul,
fears from the past and, for tomorrow,

yearnings that they might yet be whole
G-d whose life was touched by pain,
make your hurt children whole again.

We pray for all who know temptation
worse than our earnest words can tell,
who covet power, who lie in waiting
with evil lusts designed in hell.
G-d through whom the world is saved
conquer the sin, heal the depraved.

We sing that through believing people
lives may be hallowed and renewed,
and ask that G-d in every victim
shall see faith, hope and love renewed.
This is our prayer, this our song
to G-d, to whom we all belong.
John L. Bell (Music Heather Robinson).

[20 copies of this song on separate sheet, with readings on flipside of sheet.]

Annette Coleman

Take away the power of those whose cruelty
has so often destroyed the lives of the abused, O Divine Presence.
**Show us ways to be agents of love, peace and healing
and hold those who suffer in your loving arms.
This we pray in faith. Amen.**

Andrew Collis

THE ASSURANCE

As we face the pain and the truth: **Show us your compassion, O Holy One.**
As we name the suffering: **Show us your compassion, O Divine Presence.**
In the depths of our darkness: **Show us your compassion, Spirit of Love.**

In faith, we receive your grace.
Thanks be to the source of all grace. Amen.

FOUR READINGS

From various faiths

Niall Reid (Christian reading):

“The Most High will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more, for the old order has fallen.” *Revelation 21:4.*

Kati Haworth (Jewish Prayer):

When we feel tainted God, remind us we are holy
When we feel weak, teach us that we are strong
When we are shattered, assure us that we can heal
When we are weary, renew our spirits
When we are lost, show us that you are near
Bring us strength and courage to face each day with hope and blessing
By *Rabbi Naomi Levy*.

Thubten Chokyi (Buddhist Reading):

May all beings everywhere
Plagued by sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.
May no living creature suffer,
Commit evil, or ever fall ill.
May no one be afraid or belittled,
With a mind weighed down by depression.
May the blind see forms
And the deaf hear sounds.
May those whose bodies are worn with toil
Be restored on finding repose.
May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food:
May the thirsty find water
And delicious drinks.

May the poor find wealth,
Those weak with sorrow find joy,
May the forlorn find hope,
Constant happiness, and prosperity.
May there be timely rains
And bountiful harvests.
May all medicines be effective
And wholesome prayers bear fruit.
May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their ailments.
Whatever diseases there are in the world,
May they never occur again.
May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be freed:
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of benefiting each other.

For as long as space remains,
For as long as sentient beings remain,
Until then may I too remain
To dispel the miseries of the world.
Dedication from Shantideva's Bodhisattva's Way of Life.

Pundit Nanda Maharajah Das (Hindu Reading):

O Lord, you are the giver of life, remover of pains and sorrows, bestower of happiness.
May we receive the supreme sin-destroying light of the Creator of the universe. May you
guide our intellect in the right direction. *The Gayatri Mantra.*

Andrew Collis

HYMN

647

*Comfort, comfort all my people
with the comfort of my Word.
Speak it tender to my people:
all your pain is taken away.*

Though your tears be rivers running,
though your tears be an ocean full,
though you cry with the hurt of living:
comfort, comfort.

Every valley shall be lifted,
every mountain shall be low,
every rough place will be smoother:
comfort, comfort.

Refrain

Though your eyes see only darkness,
though your eyes can see no light,
though your eyes see pain and sorrow:
comfort, comfort.

Every night will have its morning,
every pain will have an end,
every burden will be lightened:
comfort, comfort.

Refrain

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Pamela Briggs

Flowers to be placed alternatively by Liz Cruickshank and Grant Gerrish.

O Divine One, we pray that the water of our tears

will bring to life new blossomings of hope.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

We pray, especially for all who have suffered abuse,
in childhood or in youth.

May they know that we care for them
and stand with them as they face the pain of abuse.

All sing quietly:

Divine One,
lover of all,
trail wide your garment of hope.
Bring healing, bring peace.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

We also pray for those who are both abused
and abusers of others.

Heal and transform their woundedness
and bring them to a new way of being.

All sing quietly:

Divine One,
lover of all,
trail wide your garment of hope.
Bring healing, bring peace.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

We pray that all people of faith and community
will deal with known abusers
in ways which mean they will never
destroy lives again.

All sing quietly:

Divine One,
lover of all,
trail wide your garment of hope.
Bring healing, bring peace.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

O Divine One, give us ears to hear
those who cry out

and eyes to see those
who can't even find a voice
to share their pain.

All sing quietly:

Divine One,
lover of all
trail wide your garment of hope.
Bring healing, bring peace.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

May we truly be your people,
acting in faith and truth
and be present in love
for all who need us.

All sing quietly:

Divine One,
lover of all
trail wide your garment of hope.
Bring healing, bring peace.

A flower is placed in the bowl of tears.

Margaret Mayman

SINGING A NEW SONG

There comes a time - to break the silence.
There comes a time - to move beyond the fear
There comes a time - to speak one's truth,
even if it will not be welcome.
There comes a time - to call into question
what has gone before;
to resist the weight of the past.
There comes a time - for the singing of a new song,
for a different way of being,
for the claiming of power.
There comes a time - when somehow courage finds us
and we dare to know who we are and what we love.
There comes a time - when friends are there,
holding us gently in their love.
There comes a time - when the truth, at last,
makes us free
and, in that moment, is the salvation of the world.

Kendyl Gibbons.

[Margaret to welcome Karen.]

RECOVERY STORY

Karen Synnott

Andrew Collis

HYMN

Tune 156

Sacred the body One has created,
temple of Spirit that dwells deep inside.
Cherish each person; nurture relation.
Treat flesh as holy, that love may abide.

Bodies are varied, made in all sizes,
pale, full of colour, both fragile and strong.
Holy the difference, gift of the Maker,
so let us honour each story and song.

Love respects persons, bodies and boundaries.
Love does not batter, neglect or abuse.
Love touches gently, never coercing.
Love leaves the other with power to choose.

Holy of holies, One ever loving,
make us your temples; indwell all we do.
May we be careful, tender and caring,
so may our bodies give honour to you.

Margaret Mayman

INVITATION

You are all invited to morning tea, served over in the corner of the church.

ASCA (Adults Surviving Child Abuse) will also be selling bookmarks, with prayers for survivors of childhood trauma, friendship bracelets and Blue-knot pins over near the morning tea and at the entry to the church.

We invite you to make a contribution to the costs associated with this service in the box near the end of the centre aisle.

Thank you all for coming and let us carry a message of hope into the world.

A knotted ribbon is passed to Cr Linda Scott for untying and then placing on the Table. The remaining knotted ribbons are passed to people in some pews for untying – then they too are placed near the Table as a sign of hope.

Andrew Collis

SENDING OUT AND BLESSING

May the One who is your Holy Life
be found beside you in each moment,
guarding and guiding you through each day,
cherishing you and healing the wounding
of body, mind and soul.

May the source of love and light
hold you in the hollow
of a protecting hand and give you rest.
Go in peace. **Amen.**

HYMN

779

May the feet of G-d walk with you
and G-d's hand hold you tight.
May the eye of G-d rest on you,
and G-d's ear hear you cry.
May the smile of G-d be for you
and G-d's breath give you life.
May the Child of G-d grow in you
and G-d's love bring you home.

Sung twice.

(Aubrey Podlich)

Andrew, Margaret, Taz and Linda

lead the people out during the second singing of the hymn.