

And we pray that the legacy of the Nelson Mandelas of our world
will inspire, challenge, guide and equip us,
to participate in the work of justice and peacemaking,
of reconciliation and healing,
of inclusion and sharing,
that our world so desperately needs.

***This is our prayer,
In Jesus' name,
Amen.***

*As an act of response, thanksgiving and commitment, the people may be invited
to bring flowers (especially the national flower of South Africa – the King
Protea) to lay at the front of the sanctuary.*

*They may also be invited to receive a small piece of chain, representing the
chains of oppression and inhumanity, of war and disparity, that Nelson
Mandela worked to overcome, and which we are called to address in our turn.*

*The chains can be kept as a symbol of our commitment and a reminder to
embrace daily the acts of love and justice that characterise God's Reign.*

We Go Out

In this moment we have remembered and borne witness
to the life of one of your faithful servants, O God;

We have celebrated Nelson Mandela,
and his legacy of justice, reconciliation and freedom;

And we have opened our lives to the influence of your Reign,
which was reflected in Madiba's life
and in those of so many other courageous leaders.

***Now we go to follow their example,
even as they followed yours;
to participate in their dream of a different world,
even as they caught the vision from you;
and to serve all people with with humility and sacrifice,
even as they served us.***

May Christ's limitless grace,
God's infinite love and compassion,
and the Holy Spirit's community-building companionship,
be with us always.

Amen.

A Liturgy of Remembrance for Nelson Mandela

Note: This liturgy is based on the usual shape of worship of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. It is, however, designed in a modular way so that the various parts of the liturgy may be re-arranged to suit other traditions or practices.

We Gather

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of
faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so
easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us.
(Hebrews 12:1 – NLT)*

Eternal God,
In your infinite love for women and men,
***you incarnated yourself in Christ,
and revealed your nature and your purpose to us;***
In your infinite love for poor and wealthy,
***you laid aside your glory
and walked among us as one of us;***
In your infinite love for every race and tribe and nation,
***you brought a new world into being
and taught us to live as citizens of God's Reign;***

But, you have not stopped incarnating yourself,
you still reveal yourself and your Reign of love and justice
to all who will see,
and to all who open their hearts and lives to you.

***We praise and thank you, O God,
for the people through whom you reveal yourself still;
for those who give themselves to build a world
based on the values of your reign
of love, justice, peace and reconciliation.***

Today especially we celebrate the "little incarnation" that was Nelson Mandela,
who gave his life for the sake of justice and freedom,
who lived the world-healing practices
of forgiveness, inclusivity, compassion and integrity.

***We praise and thank you, O God, for Nelson Mandela
for his faithfulness to your call,
his example of justice, peace and reconciliation,
and his courage to endure suffering, rejection and persecution
for the sake of others.***

*A moment of silent thanksgiving may be observed, in which people may be invited
to share their own experiences and impressions of Nelson Mandela.*

We Confess

Gracious and Reconciling God,
Even as we celebrate your grace and love
which has come to us in Christ,
Even as we remember those who, like Madiba,
have revealed your compassion and freedom to us;
We are forced to acknowledge
that we have not always listened, we have not always seen,
and we have all too often failed to act on the call to justice
which you have spoken through them.

***Forgive us when, in our anger and self-interest
we have imprisoned and oppressed others;***

***Forgive us when, in our apathy and laziness
we have ignored the cries of the poor and marginalised;***

***Forgive us when, in our arrogance and self-protection
we have lost sight of the humanity of others,
and have brought division, injustice and war into our world.***

A time of silence may be observed for personal confession.

When we pretend that we are sinless and whole,
we only drive our darkness deeper within us,
and bring destruction on ourselves and our world;
But, when we acknowledge our need for change and healing,
God is gracious and merciful,
freeing us from every chain and forgiving us
so that we are able to start again.

Amen! Thanks be to God!

The Lord's Prayer may be said together.

We Share The Peace

When justice blossoms on earth,
peace is its fruit.

We celebrate the God whose reign is both justice and peace,
***and we celebrate the servants of God who give their lives
to bring these two gifts into our world.***

And so as God's people, committed to God's reign
we share God's peace with one another,
and we commit to God's justice.

The peace of God be with you.

And also with you.

The people are invited to share the peace with one another.

We Listen

*Luke 4:16-21 or some other appropriate reading from Scripture may be shared.
Before the reading is done the following prayer may be offered:*

Jesus, our Teacher, you have made yourself known to us
as the Word of God;
you have revealed yourself through the ages
through various men and women
who, like Nelson Mandela, have answered your call;

***Reveal yourself again to us now, we pray,
through the words which we read,
and through the meditations which we hold in our hearts.***

Amen.

A short homily may be offered.

We Respond

We thank you, God of Love and Justice,
that you are forever working within us and among us,
in our hearts and in our world,
to create wholeness and freedom,
compassion and connection,
equity and reconciliation;

***And so we pray for your love and justice to fill our world,
as the waters cover the sea.***

We pray for bold prophets to speak your truth
wherever our fears and certainties
drown out your wisdom;

Amen.

We pray for courageous leaders to show the way
whenever the complexities and confrontations of our world
leave us confused and overwhelmed;

Amen.

We pray for wise teachers to open our eyes, minds and hearts
whenever new challenges and opportunities
require us to find new solutions and resources;

Amen.

We pray for humble servants to demonstrate grace and sacrifice
wherever self-interest and expediency
bring destruction and suffering on our world;

Amen.