The Ministry of Healing

For the meeting of Rivertowns Episcopal Parishes Action on

Inclusion and Race (REPAIR), December 2, 2020

*The leader greets those present and says*

May God bless you.

Receive God’s healing grace

to comfort and support you. **Amen**.

*All join in saying:*

**Be with us, Holy One;**

**nothing can separate us from your love.**

**Be with us as of old,**

**fill us with your power,**

**direct all our thoughts to your goodness.**

**bring faith and healing and peace.**

*Silence.*

*Leader:* The Lord is here.

***All:* God’s Spirit is with us.**

God our healer,

keep us aware of your presence,

support us with your power,

comfort us with your protection,

give us strength

and establish us in your peace.

If we confess our sins,

God is just, and may be trusted to forgive our sins

and cleanse us from every kind of wrong.

In silence we call to mind our sins.

*Silence.*

*A person appointed leads the congregation in the following litany.*

**A Litany of Penitence in a Time of National Trouble**

O Lord, the nation we love is cruelly divided—race against race, creed against creed, male against female, the powerful against the powerless. Resentment and fear, bitterness and hatred have filled the public square, infected too many hearts, and poisoned too many minds. We pray you, loving Father, to deliver us from evil thoughts and impulses, forgive us for our connivance in hatred, strengthen our commitment to loving you and one another, and teach us to walk a new path.

In our brokenness, sorrow, and shame, Holy God, we are tempted to embrace comfortable answers that separate us from you and from one another. From such answers,

*All: Good Lord, deliver us.*

From the temptations of despair and surrender, withdrawal and complacency,

*All: Good Lord, deliver us.*

From blaming violence and hatred on those of a different culture, a different history, and a different politics, as if we bear no responsibility for our shared national guilt,

*All: Good Lord, deliver us.*

From responding to bigotry with contempt, to violence with retribution, and to hatred with hatred,

*All: Good Lord, deliver us.*

From the easy consolations of partisanship, self-satisfaction, and pride,

*All: Good Lord, deliver us.*

We confess our part in making possible the hatred, discord, and violence we deplore. For these our sinful actions and inactions,

*All: Have mercy on us, Lord.*

For our role in building, accepting, and benefiting from a nation in which millions are systematically excluded, persecuted, and exploited,

*All: Have mercy on us, Lord.*

For our indifference to the suffering of others in our communities and in our nation, and for our failure to respond as fellow children of God,

*All: Have mercy on us, Lord.*

For our neglect of our duty as parents, neighbors, and citizens to walk every day in the ways of mutual respect, understanding, and love, and to continually teach these ways to one another,

*All: Have mercy on us, Lord.*

For the narrowness of our sympathies, the persistence of our prejudices, and the self-centeredness of our daily choices,

*All: Have mercy on us, Lord.*

Help us to repent these our sins, O God, and teach us to walk in your way of forgiveness, generosity, and love.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Teach our hearts and minds to recognize our own unconscious biases, and open our eyes to see your image in every human being.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Give us courage to speak out clearly against bigotry, fear, and hatred whenever we encounter them.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Give us strength to stand with those who are excluded, exploited, marginalized, and attacked, and to accept the risks involved in loving and defending them.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Grant us wisdom to understand how we are called to remake our nation’s laws, institutions, and customs to honor the dignity and freedom of every human being, and to work wisely and tirelessly in that effort.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

Grant that we never forget this time of our brokenness, sorrow, and shame, and strengthen us in our determination to make it also a time of new beginnings for ourselves and for our nation.

*All: Lord, hear our prayer.*

**The Offering**

*A person appointed invites the congregation to offer its burdens to God, saying*

Know this, then:

God has searched you and known you.

God knows when you sit and when you rise.

God discerns your inmost thoughts from far away, and is acquainted with all your ways.

My sisters and brothers, I invite you now to bring to God

your concerns and your fears, your wounds and your anger, your grief and your despair

*Silence.*

***The Absolution*** *is declared by the leader, saying*

The God of mercy forgives, will uphold you in times of trouble, and will stand with you against the darkness.

Almighty God,

who pardons all who truly repent,

forgive us our sins, strengthen us,

and keep us in eternal union with the divine. **Amen**.

*The All Join in saying:*

**Lord, make us instruments of your peace.**

**Where there is hatred, let us sow love;**

**where there is injury, pardon;**

**where there is discord, union;**

**where there is doubt, faith;**

**where there is despair, hope;**

**where there is darkness, light;**

**where there is sadness, joy.**

**Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;**

**to be understood as to understand;**

**to be loved as to love.**

**For it is in giving that we receive;**

**it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;**

**and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.**

*The Leader pronounces the blessing.*

**The Blessing**

God be your comfort, your strength;

God be your hope and support;

God be your light and your way;

and the blessing of God,

Creator, Redeemer and Giver of life,

remain with you now and forever. **Amen**.