



Confessional Prayer (Using the Beatitudes)

Mujeres ^{de la} ELCA 

Women ^{of the} ELCA 

by the Rev. Staci Stought

Holy Creator,

We stand before you to confess. We carry sorrow in our hearts for the things we have done and for the things we have left undone. We have not sought to do Your will with our whole hearts.

We have not loved ourselves as You love us. We have not lived with gratitude, nor loved others as Christ has loved us. Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.
(silent reflection)

Pastor: You offered us Your blessings when You announced "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

People: But we are rich in greed, and chase possessions instead of finding contentment in You. We confess that our materialism blinds us to the suffering behind what we buy.

Pastor: You bless those who mourn.

People: But we fail to see the suffering of those exploited by forced labor, long hours, and unlawful wages. Forgive us for our indifference.

Pastor: You bless the meek.

People: But we are a stiff-necked people. We seek to boast of our accomplishments instead of walking humbly in Your ways

Pastor: You bless those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.

People: But we fill ourselves with lesser things. We lack for justice where oppression thrives.

Pastor: You bless the merciful.

People: But we are quick to judge. Make us instruments of mercy and healing.

Pastor: You bless the pure in heart.

People: But our hearts seek selfish gains and pleasures. Cleanse us from the desire for comfort that costs our neighbor their freedom.

Pastor: You bless the peacemakers.

People: But we have avoided reconciliation where we have caused harm. Give us courage to make peace and repair what we have broken.

Pastor: You bless those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake

People: But our lives do not challenge the world. We prefer acceptance to truth.

Pastor: You bless those who are insulted or spoken against because they follow You.

People: *But we have been slow to show how we belong to You.*

Pastor: Open our eyes to see the ways we support systems of oppression. Where we over-consume, teach us contentment. Where we dismiss the cost of convenience, reveal its toll on our vulnerable neighbors. Free us from a past we cannot change, and open to us a future filled with Your transforming Grace.

People: *Amen. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy.*

Pastor: Hear this good news. Blessed are those who confess and turn to God, for they shall be comforted.

God, who is rich in mercy, makes us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. May Almighty God strengthen you with the power of the Holy Spirit, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

People: *Amen.*

Staci is the founder of Unnamed No More, a non-profit ministry that helps churches to address gender-based violence through dialogue and actionable steps. She is a retired Sexual Assault Police Officer with specialized forensic expertise in Child Abuse. She currently serves as the Pastoral Care Minister at Messiah Lutheran Church in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, while pursuing her Master of Divinity at Luther Seminary. Staci has been endorsed for Word and Sacrament Ordination for the ELCA. www.safechurchinitiative.com

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