



# Cherish All Children

Pray + Educate + Connect + Act

## Wednesday Prayer – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany

***Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint. Isaiah 40:31***

Persisting. Healing.

As I took a seat in the sanctuary, I didn't know what to expect. A friend's email invited me to "a Worship Service to Honor Survivors of Sexual Violence at Christ on Capitol Hill" in St. Paul. As a survivor, I was curious. I arrived early, and as I sat in the nearly empty church, I thought about just leaving. It's difficult, sometimes, to relive the experience of surviving a horrendous event. It's often easier just to pretend it never happened, especially after nearly five decades.

Soon the sanctuary began to fill up with women—and men! A wide variety of people took their seats until the pews were respectfully occupied. After a call to worship, we sang a hymn. Next came "Confession," typical of a Lutheran worship service. But this was no ordinary ritual. Instead of the "congregation" clearing their minds and hearts of wrongdoing before continuing, we watched as male and female clergy congregated at the front of the chapel "to practice corporate apology on behalf of the church." A list of confessions was read, beginning with "ways (the church has) promoted shame and embarrassment instead of power and beauty," ending with the church having "kept silent when oppressed people have asked the Body of Christ to say something with compassion and to do something with our power." Each acknowledgement was followed by the group of clergy stating together, "We are truly sorry and humbly repent."

Transfixed, I was deeply moved by the simple words repeated: "We are sorry." I recalled my own pain when some—not all—followers of Christ had turned away in horror as I shared the story of the assault I endured. Then, the clergy moved to "stations," inviting survivors to come to them for prayer. Although I say my healing has come full circle, my request was for prayer to be freed from the constant suspicion that the world is a dark and scary place that knows no healing. I was given a beautiful prayer shawl which I will treasure as a memory of a truly meaningful day in a safe and sacred place.

***Spirit of Healing, enter our bodies, minds, and spirit and restore us to wholeness. Amen.***

---

Written by Meg Blaine Corrigan, Christian author, speaker, trainer, and sexual assault survivor. Meg holds a Master's Degree in Counseling and has worked with survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and war veterans. This reflection is one of Meg's blogposts; see more at [www.MegCorrigan.com](http://www.MegCorrigan.com).