**LITANY OF LAMENTATION**

We cry out, O God, asking why the sins of patriarchy and sexism continue to distort the world you created?

We lament the suffering of women and girls perpetrated under the oppressive system of patriarchy upheld by religion and culture.

In our gathering,

We remembered and mourned Tamar raped in the name of love.

We remembered and mourned Gomer, and the continued use of texts of terror, violent metaphors and patriarchal language as a means of expressing divine-human connection.

We remembered and mourned the widow who spoke truth to power and persisted in spite of overwhelming odds.

We remembered and mourned the loss of the stories of women such as Phoebe, Prisca and Junia who served as ministers, apostles, and disciples.

We remembered and mourned that such stories were sacrificed by centuries of theological and doctrinal pronouncements.

For them there was no justice.

What about today?

Where is there justice for women who continue to be barred from exercising their God given gifts in church leadership as ministers, bishops or moderators?

Where is there justice today for women who daily live in fear that they are at risk of being raped by those they trust?

Where is there justice today for widows who lose everything – their homes, their dignity - because of oppressive cultural values?

**But God has already shown us what such justice is,**

It happens when the church becomes what it is called to be.

It happens when male and female are honored equally as God honored them in the act of creating them in God’s image;

It happens when the church lives fully the example of the spirit that does not limit gifts according to gender.

It happens when the church repudiates and works to end all forms of violence against women and girls – civic, religious, economic, political, and cultural.

**Hear our cries, O God,**

**MAY JUSTICE REIGN ….AND SOON.**

**Inaugural Consultation of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Women's Initiative for Leadership and Learning (WE WILL), Geneva Switzerland, 17-19 May, 2022**