

PRAYER OF CONFESSION by Avril Hannah-Jones, minister in the Uniting Church in Australia and adapted for worship at the Community Reformed Church of Colonie, New York on June 19, 2016.

*Loving God, you have created an astounding world, a world of majestic natural beauty that overwhelms us, world populated by your rainbow people, people of every gender and sexuality and color and culture and language and age and ability.*

*In Jesus you came and lived among us to show us what it means to love and be loved, to be our peace, to break down the walls that divide us from each other and from you.*

*Your Spirit guides us each day, reassuring us that we are your beloved children, helping us to care for your good creation, leading us further on the journey towards the day when your kingdom will come and your will be done.*

*Loving God, forgive us when we do not live as your beloved children. We confess that while you break walls down, we build them up. We confess that even those of us who have been clothed with Christ have been guilty of rejecting our sisters and brothers.*

*As we pray for all those affected by the massacre in Orlando, – the dead and injured, their friends and families, the emergency service workers who responded, LGBTIQ people in the USA and around the world – we acknowledge with sorrow and remorse that the church has not been a safe place for LGBTIQ people.*

*As we lament the horror that hate can lead to, we recognize that the language of faith has been used to justify that hatred, and that biblical ‘texts of terror’ have been quoted to excuse murder.*

*We acknowledge the part Christianity has played and continues to play in dehumanizing LGBTIQ people.*

*We confess that even within the Reformed Church in America, there are places where LGBTIQ Christians are unwelcome, where LGBTIQ ministers cannot serve, where the relationships of same-sex couples are not celebrated.*

*Loving God, forgive us. Help us to repent, turn away from evil, and turn towards you. Remind us that every single person in the world, whatever their gender or sexuality or color or culture or language or age or ability is your beloved child; and that without every single one of us your rainbow shines less bright.*

*Give us strength and courage to work together to overcome hatred and violence and to show the love for each other that you show us.*

*Creator, Christ, Holy Spirit, be with us, with the people of Orlando, with the victims of violence throughout the world, with LGBTIQ people everywhere, and with all those in any sort of need, today and always, Amen.*