



Worship Resources for Sunday, Sept. 6, 2015
"Confession, Repentance and Commitment to End Racism Sunday"

Confession and Forgiveness

Gracious God, we thank you for making one human family of all the peoples of the earth and for creating all the wonderful diversity of cultures.

Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship and show us your presence in those who differ most from us.

From the bondage of racism that denies the humanity of every human being and the prejudices within us

that deny the dignity of those who are oppressed, Lord set us free:

Lord, have mercy.

From racism that blinds oppressors to the destruction caused by the spirit and practice of racial injustice, Christ set us free:

Christ, have mercy.

From the racism that will not recognize the work of your Spirit in other cultures: Lord set us free:

Lord, have mercy.

Forgive those of us who have been silent and apathetic in the face of racial intolerance and bigotry, both overt and subtle, public and private.

And take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts.

Break down the walls that separate us.

And help us to find that unity that is the fruit of righteousness and will enable us to become your beloved community.

Empower us to speak boldly for justice and truth and help us to deal with one another without hatred or bitterness, working together with mutual forbearance and respect.

And work through our struggles and confusion to accomplish your purposes.

O God of unconditional love,

you who show no partiality in respect to people or nations,
we have heard your good news of great joy for all the people.

We hear that good news, and in hearing, believe.

We know that your sanctuary is a house of worship for all people,
with no regard for the color of our skin.

As we worship you, knit us into a people,
a seamless garment of many colors.

May we celebrate our unity, made whole in our diversity.

Forgive us for our inability to let our "old selves" die to the world.

We acknowledge that we participate in structures that are inherently racist, and yet we so often do nothing to remedy it.
Show us we fail when we judge others according to the color of their flesh.

God, who is rich in mercy, loves us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of +Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

Adapted from the United Church of Christ's "Prayers for Racial Justice Sunday" (www.ucc.org/worship/ways) and from the United Church of Canada (www.united-church.ca/bfw/resources.shtm)

Or an alternate suggestion is:

A Litany For Those Who Aren't Ready For Healing

Let us not rush to the language of healing, before understanding the fullness of the injury and the depth of the wound.

Let us not rush to offer a band-aid, when the gaping wound requires surgery and complete reconstruction.

Let us not offer false equivalencies, thereby diminishing the particular pain being felt in a particular circumstance in a particular historical moment.

Let us not speak of reconciliation without speaking of reparations and restoration, or how we can repair the breach and how we can restore the loss.

Let us not rush past the loss of this mother's child, this father's child ... someone's beloved son.

Let us not value property over people; let us not protect material objects while human lives hang in the balance.

Let us not value a false peace over a righteous justice.

Let us not be afraid to sit with the ugliness, the messiness, and the pain that is life in community together.

Let us not offer clichés to the grieving, those whose hearts are being torn asunder.

Instead ...

Let us mourn black and brown men and women, those killed extrajudicially every 28 hours.

Let us lament the loss of a teenager, dead at the hands of a police officer who described him as a demon.

Let us weep at a criminal justice system, which is neither blind nor just.

Let us call for the mourning men and the wailing women, those willing to rend their garments of privilege and ease, and sit in the ashes of this nation's original sin.

Let us be silent when we don't know what to say.

Let us be humble and listen to the pain, rage and grief pouring from the lips of our neighbors and friends.

Let us decrease, so that our brothers and sisters who live on the underside of history may increase.
Let us pray with our eyes open and our feet firmly planted on the ground.

Let us listen to the shattering glass and let us smell the purifying fires, for it is the language of the unheard.

God, in your mercy ...

Show me my own complicity in injustice.

Convict me for my indifference.

Forgive me when I have remained silent.

Equip me with a zeal for righteousness.

ALL: Never let me grow accustomed or acclimated to unrighteousness.

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<http://yolandapierce.blogspot.com/2014/11/a-litany-for-those-who-arent-ready-for.html>

Additional Prayers of Intercession:

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unites us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth; so that, in your good time, every people and nation may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

Out of the darkness we cry to you, O God. Enable us to find in Christ the faith to trust your care even in the midst of pain. Assure us that we do not walk alone through the valley of the shadow, but that your light is leading us into life.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer.

O God, call us into a deeper relationship to be your church for the sake of the world. Help us to see with new eyes the injustices within church and society. Call us to have a loving heart that respects and

uplifts the humanity and dignity of every person; open our ears to listen to and learn from the experiences of people of color. Open our mouths to speak up and about injustices. Join us with others to work for racial equity and inclusion for all people.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**



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