

JOIN THE MOVEMENT



RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 2023

Building Intergenerational Movements

Antiracism Worship and Spiritual Practices for Every Age

“Our movements have to be intergenerational. We have to fight...with the energy and ideas of the young people and the wisdom and experience of our elders. The only way that we can heal this is by working on it together.” – Jamie Margolin

In movements for racial justice, when organizers reference Fannie Lou Hamer’s famous quote, “Nobody’s free until everybody’s free,” it is often to point out the need for our justice work to be intersectional – that is, aware of and addressing the overlapping harms of injustice and the interconnections of our visions of freedom. At Join the Movement, we recognize that one of the intersections we often forget in our racial justice work is across generational lines. From the labor movement to the civil rights movement to climate justice organizing, history teaches us that the most impactful justice work happens across generations. From children to elders, people of every age can join the movement toward racial justice. And we need people of every age to imagine and build a world of justice and flourishing for all.

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As we celebrate Racial Justice Sunday this year in the UCC, we invite you to make use of these worship and spiritual practice resources that are intentionally intergenerational – creating entry points and spaces of reflection, prayer and praise for people of every age. We hope you will use them to engage children, youth, adults and elders in joining the movement toward racial justice, this Sunday and every Sunday of the year.

RACIAL JUSTICE SCRIPTURES AND THEOLOGICAL THEMES

Psalm 139:13-16

- God made each of us and we are wonderful.

Genesis 1:26-31

- We are all made in the image of God.

Matthew 22:36-40

- The heart of our faith is loving God fully and loving our neighbors fully.

Acts 2:1-18

- The Spirit of God moves in and through all of us uniquely; each of us has a part in the movement of the Spirit among us.

I Corinthians 12:4-11 or 12:12-26

- God loves difference; we each have a unique role to play in the Body of Christ.

I John 4:18-21

- Loving God means loving each other; these loves are inseparable.

WORSHIP ELEMENTS

Call to Worship/Gathering Words

This call to worship is intended to be said in the style of protest/movement chant, like this video https://youtu.be/RXgUw5t47_Y. It will be most effective if led as call and response, without anything printed in a worship guide. You can teach people how the chant goes first and then proceed with energy!

Leader: Show me what community looks like.

Many: This is what community looks like.

Leader: Show me what God looks like.

Many: This is what God looks like.

Leader: Show me what the kingdom looks like.

Many: This is what the kingdom looks like.

Leader: Show me what justice looks like.

Many: **This is what justice looks like.**
Leader: Show me what worship looks like.
Many: **This is what worship looks like.**
Leader: Show me what the movement looks like.
Many: **This is what the movement looks like.**

Leader: Beloved community, building the kingdom of justice,
 moving with the Spirit of Love, let us worship God!

Prayer of Invocation/Centering Practice

Introduction

Leader: On Racial Justice Sunday in the UCC, we honor and celebrate how
God made us different so that we can grow in love, justice and understanding.
As we begin worship together, I invite us to join together in saying thank you to
God for making each of us unique, amazing, and wonderful. We are going to
pray with our movements and our words. You can stay seated or stand for this
prayer; whatever your body and spirit needs.

Prayer/Practice

Leader: Let us pray by holding our hands in front of us, facing upward.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my skin color
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's skin color.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Now continue in prayer by touching our own hair.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my hair
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's hair.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Touch your mouth with your hands.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my language
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's language.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Now continue in prayer by touching your belly.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my foods
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's foods.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Place your hands on your heart.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my music
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's music.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Open your arms outward and give them a shake.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my dance
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's dance.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: Now bring your hands together in front of your chest in prayer.
Repeat after me: I give thanks for my prayer
[pause to let congregation repeat]
and I give thanks for my neighbor's prayer/worship.
[pause to let congregation repeat]

Leader: In gratitude and praise, let the whole church say, Amen.

Time for Transformation and New Life/Time of Confession

Call to Confession

Leader: Jesus tells us that the most important things we can do to be his followers are to love God and to love each other. An important part of loving God and loving each other is admitting when we've done something hurtful and apologizing. So we take time in our worship to name the ways we are not our best selves, not because we are bad, but because we want to be and do better. Let us tell God and each other what we are sorry for in prayer.

Prayer for Transformation/Prayer of Confession

Leader: Sometimes our words and actions cause others to hurt.

Assembly: God, it makes us sad when people hurt.

Leader: Sometimes we don't like to share what we have
and cause others to miss out.

Assembly: God, it makes us sad when people don't have enough.

Leader: Sometimes we think only about ourselves
and don't let others take a turn.

Assembly: God, it makes us sad when people don't get a turn.

Leader: Sometimes we talk so much that others don't get the chance
to speak.

Assembly: God, it makes us sad when people don't get to speak.

Leader: Sometimes we listen so little that others don't feel heard.

Assembly: God, it makes us sad when people don't feel heard.

Words of Assurance

Leader: Believing always in the grace of a loving God,
we seek assurance for the times when we are not our best selves.
People of God, hear the good news:
God loves you even when you are not your best self.

Many: God loves me even when I am not my best self.

Leader: We all have times when our words have hurt,
when we don't share or let others take a turn,
when we don't make space for others to speak,
or when we don't listen.

Many: I trust in God's grace, and know I can be better and do better.

Leader: God can help us be more kind, be more loving,
be more concerned about others.

**Many: I am able to be more kind, more loving,
and show more concern for others.**

Leader: No matter what, be assured of God's love for you!

Many: I know that God loves me!

Words of Commitment

Leader: Having confessed when we have not been our best
and trusting always in God's love and Grace, we will do our best:

Many: to love ourselves, our bodies, our hearts.
 to honor our bodies, and the bodies of others
 –even if they are different from ours.
 to love others like God loves others.
 to be kind, to speak up, to listen,
 and to be God’s love to the world.
 We will try our best to be and do better. Amen.

Invitation to Generosity/Call to the Offering – Mine, Yours, Ours

In this time of prayer, the leader will invite the congregation to notice what their bodies feel as they say each word aloud slowly and repetitively (“mine,” “yours,” and “ours”).

Leader:

As we prepare to give our offering today, I invite us now to a time of prayer where you will hear me say the words “mine,” “yours,” and “ours” spoken aloud and repeated. You are welcome to say the word aloud with me if that feels right to you. I invite you to pay close attention to your body, and notice what your body feels as you hear us say each word.

Let us begin. I invite you to first find a comfortable position in your seat and find a comfortable gaze downward and notice what your body feels as you hear and say each word.

Mine, mine, mine, mine, mine... [say the word slowly, 5 - 10 times, then pause]

Take a minute to notice what your body feels.

Now, let us pray our next word.

Yours, yours, yours, yours... [say the word slowly 5 - 10 times, then pause]

Take a minute to notice what your body feels.

Now, let us pray the final word.

Ours, ours, ours, ours... [say the word slowly 5 - 10 times, then pause]

Take a minute to notice what your body feels.

What would it feel like to live more generously with one another?
What would it feel like to honor and love everyone?
What would it feel like to share Earth's resources justly and equitably?

With these feelings in our bodies, minds and spirits, let us give our offering.

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Dedication

Invite the community to join in the prayer of dedication and thanksgiving by saying "thank you" every time they hear the prompt, "Holy One, we say..." Practice it once or twice before you pray.

Leader: For what is mine, Holy One, we say:

Assembly: thank you.

Leader: Through our giving, show us how to hold what we have loosely and to be ready to offer it generously.

Leader: For what is yours, Holy One, we say:

Assembly: thank you.

Leader: In our offering, teach us to acknowledge what has been stolen, extracted, taken by force, and to make reparations.

Leader: For what is ours, Holy One, we say:

Assembly: thank you.

Leader: By our contributions, empower us to create new relationships of justice and equity and build a new kindom of flourishing for all, in God's economy of love. Amen.

Benediction

Leader: As you go from this place, hear God's voice calling you: beloved.
Turn to your neighbor and tell them they are beloved.
Blessed by this belovedness,
remember that wherever you go,
whichever way you turn,
whoever you encounter,
there is the face of God. Amen.

MUSIC

- Imago Dei (Image of God) by Jill Kirsten Warner, *Sing! Prayer and Praise* #118
You could easily teach everyone the refrain to this song by having folks repeat each two measure phrase each time. A soloist or choir could sing the verses and the whole community could join together on the chorus each time.
- Lead with Love by Melanie DeMore, [Justice Choir Songbook](#) #22
You can find resources and suggestions for how to teach the song at [Music that Makes Community](#). Here's [a video of Melanie sharing the song](#) as well.
- Hide Not Your Light by Trish Bruxvoort Colligan
Find out more about this song [at Music that Makes Community](#). And check out this [wonderful recording of it being sung and taught live](#) without accompaniment.
- Whichever Way You Turn by John Philip Newell
Here's [a video of this simple song](#) that can be taught easily and sung without accompaniment.
- In God's Hands by Tracy Howe
Access music and recordings through the [Convergence Music Project](#). Includes lyric sheets in Spanish as well.

SERMON/TIME WITH CHILDREN/PROCLAMATION

Time with Children: Differently Beloved

The Time with Children can be a beautiful space to hold a special time and share simple wisdom with children—as well as hearing wisdom from them. Instead of a tradition sermon, consider an extended Time with Children this week.

Prepare: Put some M&M's in a bowl. Have a small plate and a blunt knife with you.

Share:

After calling our young friends forward, invite them to wonder if M&M's, which come in many different colors, are the same color inside. Play it up a bit and then invite them to a little experiment with you*, whereby one by one you cut open each M&M to see if it's the same—playing it up each time...to their utter delight.

Read: [Skin, Again](#), by bell hooks:

[you can see the book illustrations and hear the text in this video:

<https://youtu.be/ywUpAG3n7Z4>]

Excerpt:

The skin I'm in //
is just a covering. If you want to know //
you have got to come inside //
and open your heart way wide.

For we are all inside //
made up of real history, real dreams //
and the stuff of all we hope for //
when we can be all real //
together on the inside.

Wonder: So these M&M's—brightly and differently colors on the outside teach us a lesson. I wonder...what can we learn?

[Bodies come in different shapes and sizes and hues and abilities.]
[We may be different on the outside—we may look different or speak a different language or have different hair...but God made us all! And God made us all on the inside.]
[etc.]

Pray: Offer a prayer, inviting everyone to repeat the short sentences:

Beautiful God,
Thank you for this beautiful day.
Thank you for making us so beautiful, so amazing, so different.
Thank you for our hearts and our minds
for our bodies and our souls,
Each one of us unique,
and all loved the same by You.
Help us to love each other
like you love us.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Time with Children: Books to Share

Here are some other books you could read with children and some wondering questions to engage with them.

- [I Am God's Dream](#) by Matthew Paul Turner, illustrated by Estrella Bascuñan
I wonder...
What does God dream of?
Does God dream of you?
What makes God smile?
Does God dream of all God's children?
- [When God Made You](#) by Matthew Paul Turner, illustrated by David Catrow
I wonder...
What does God love about children?
What does God think is awesome about you?
What makes God laugh and smile?
- [I Love You Because I Love You](#) by Muon Thi Van, illustrated by Jessica Love
I wonder...
Who are the people you love?
What are things you love about them?
What are things God loves about you

Prayer Stations

For your proclamation time this week, consider setting up prayer stations around your sanctuary that are accessible to all ages. These opportunities for spiritual practice and multisensory engagement can help make the scripture come alive in new and diverse ways. Make sure to have people at the stations to help non-readers engage or to address any other accessibility needs that might arise. Sample table instructions are included below (simply print and fold in half to make table tents).

- Lament Station
 - Supplies: freestanding chalkboard, paint brushes, cups of water
 - Description: When we are deeply engaged in the work of racial justice, there will be much that breaks our hearts. There is so much injustice to lament. This is a station where we can be sad or upset along with God. Participants are invited to imagine the water as the tears and use it and a brush to paint a prayer in pictures, words, or patterns and to sit back and

watch their prayer soak into the board, being mindful of how God soaks up our prayers, picks up every tear, and every sadness absorbing our tears and being sad with us.

- Beloved Station

- Supplies: full length mirror, dry erase markers
- Description: Racism teaches us to see ourselves and others through the eyes of fear and shame, superiority and scarcity – all elements of white supremacy. At this station, participants are invited to see themselves through God’s eyes. The station should be set with the mirror where people of all heights can reach it and see themselves in it. Using a dry erase marker, write “beloved” or “image of God” or “fearfully and wonderfully made” or draw a smiley face across the mirror. Participants are invited to draw or write on the mirror other messages that God wants us to remember when we look at ourselves and to take time looking at themselves through God’s eyes.

- Many Gifts, One Spirit Station

- Supplies: large piece of fabric with horizontal cuts made to create a warp, ribbons of a variety of textures and colors cut to size to be weft
- Description: This station offers the opportunity to embody the ways in which racial justice relies on our embrace of each person’s and each culture’s unique gifts and lineages, and our interconnection and interdependence on one another. Participants are invited to choose a ribbon that represents the unique gifts they have to offer and unique lineages they bring and weave it into the fabric as they ask God to help them discover ways to use their gifts and honor the different gifts of others.



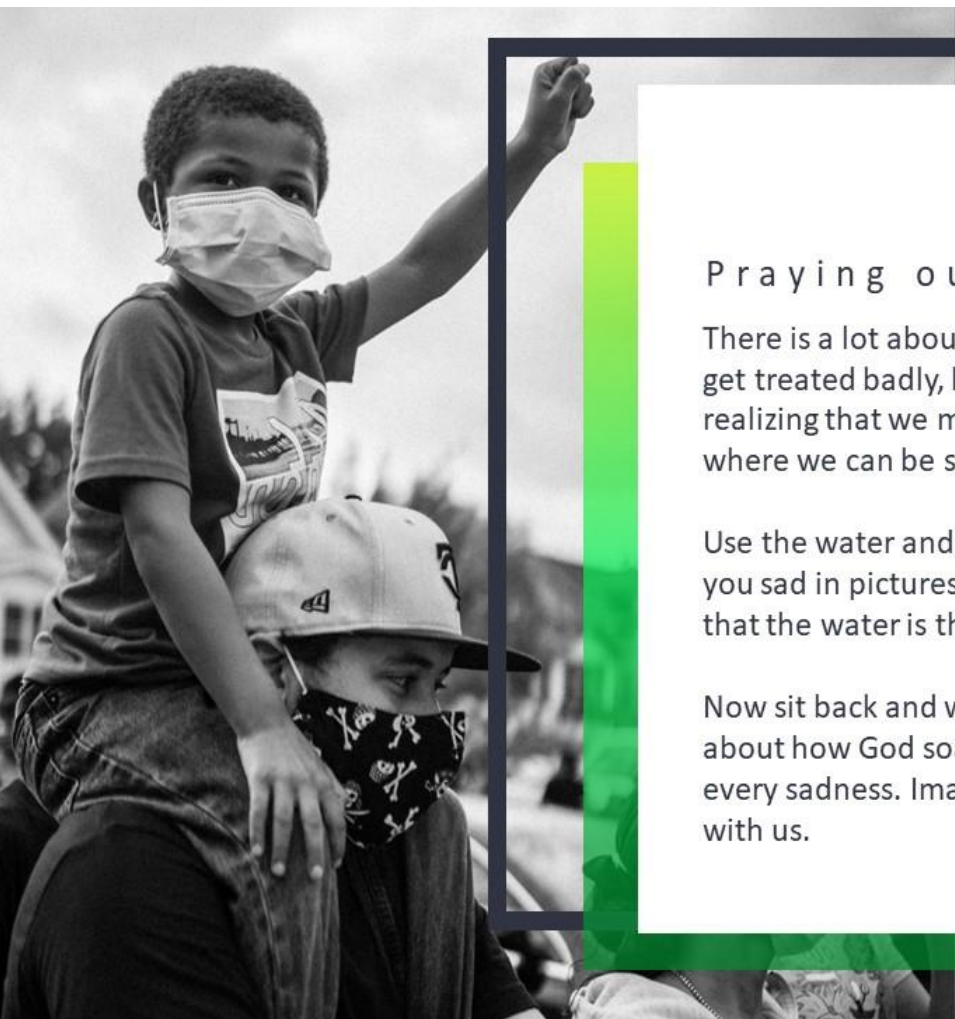
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LAMENT

Praying our Sadness with God

There is a lot about racism that can make us sad: seeing people get treated badly, knowing that things aren't fair for all of us, realizing that we make mistakes and hurt others. This is a station where we can be sad or upset along with God.

Use the water and brush to paint a prayer about what is making you sad in pictures, words, or patterns. You could even imagine that the water is the tears you cry when you are upset.

Now sit back and watch your prayer soak into the board. Think about how God soaks up our prayers, picks up every tear, and every sadness. Imagine God absorbing our tears and being sad with us.

BELOVED

Seeing through God's Eyes

Racism teaches us to see ourselves and others through the eyes of fear and shame, to be scared of each other and believe that we are better (or worse) than others. How might our image of ourselves change if we saw ourselves through God's eyes?

Use a marker to draw or write on the mirror other messages that God wants us to remember when we look at ourselves.

Take some time to look at yourself in the mirror and see how much God loves you.





CELEBRATE

Many Gifts, One Spirit

Creating equality and building racial justice means that we honor each person's and each culture's unique gifts, AND celebrate all the ways we are connected to one and join with one another.

Choose a ribbon that represents the unique gifts you have to offer and weave it into the fabric.

As you weave, ask God to help you discover ways to use your gifts and to honor and celebrate the different gifts of others.