

13th February 2022

# RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY TOOLKIT FOR CORNISH CHURCHES

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# INTRODUCTION

Racial Justice Sunday is observed by churches in Britain and Ireland on the second Sunday of February. It has been celebrated ecumenically since 1995. This coming Racial Justice Sunday on the 13th February 2022 is an excellent opportunity for Christians of all denominations to join together in affirming the equality of all people and to make a commitment to becoming actively anti-racist.

The sad reality is that the institutionalisation of racism is alive and well and thrives in our workplaces and communities. The killing of George Floyd on the 25th May 2020 once again brought racism to a global stage and sparked an unprecedented wave of protests against the deadly effects of racial prejudice. The COVID-19 crisis has also highlighted the sustained inequalities of our healthcare system, which is playing out in the disproportionate deaths of black and ethnic minority people from coronavirus.

Perhaps we don't think of ourselves or our churches as complicit in racism. But as Shane Claiborne puts it, 'if we define racism as a system of advantage based on the colour of your skin, many of us are benefactors of racism even if we don't realise it. We inherit it. We internalise it.'

As Churches and faith groups, we have a tremendous opportunity to evidence God's Kingdom on earth by taking deliberate action to fight against racism in all its forms. As Peter tells us in Acts 10:34-35, 'God does not show favouritism, but accepts from every nation the one that fears him and does what is right.'

Contained in this toolkit are a number of prayers, reflections, and sermon ideas to help Churches and faith groups in Cornwall observe Racial Justice Sunday and consequently take action in their communities. However, these resources can be used at any time of the year.

This toolkit was put together as a collaboration between Churches Together in Cornwall, All Saints Highertown, and Transformation Cornwall with contributions from Marcus Allyene from Black Voices Cornwall and Rev. Patrick Gilbert, BAME Champion for Truro Diocese. We hope that these resources are of blessing to you and your congregations.

# WHY RACIAL JUSTICE IN CORNWALL?

As someone who grew up in Cornwall and experienced racism from a young age, I am well aware of some of the racial inequities that still exist in our County today. As Christians we have an opportunity to help foster better understanding, reconciliation, and justice, as there is still so much healing that needs to take place in our communities. I recently spoke to Marcus Allyene from Black Voices Cornwall asking him why there should be racial justice in Cornwall and here's what he had to say:

*"As part of my role within Black Voices Cornwall, I am fortunate enough to sit on a number of Local Reference Groups but also act as an Independent Advisor to Devon and Cornwall Police. What I am learning to understand is that there is noticeable and measurable disparity being shown across the board, specifically when considering race and other protected characteristics. There is a significant amount of work being done towards understanding the disparity and disproportionality within the force, but there is still a way to go before we can even consider having equity and fair treatment. It is a well-known and documented fact that people of colour receive higher and more frequent fines, longer sentences, are exposed to a greater use of force and are more likely to be arrested than their white counterparts. Until we understand why racial bias and injustice continues, we cannot expect a fair and equitable system. We must first change mindsets, retrain, and decolonise."*

I believe the Church has a responsibility to oppose racism of every kind, embracing a Christ-centred radical love for our neighbour. It is time to unite as one Church across denominations demonstrating the love of Jesus to all people in the hope that we can change the wrongs of the past moving forward in a shared vision for a more welcoming and loving Cornwall.

**Rev. Patrick Gilbert, BAME (Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic) Champion for Truro Diocese**

# SERMON IDEAS

As part of observing Racial Justice Sunday, you might like to spend some time in your service reflecting on the Biblical call to anti-racism and God's special concern for those who are oppressed. Below are four suggestions for reflections.

## **Genesis 1:27 - Made in the Image of God**

In your Sunday service, you might like to reflect on the Genesis creation stories and the concept of humanity as made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 tells us that men, women, and all of humanity, are made in God's image. God determines this by stating that He created humans according to his divine image and likeness. Recognition of humanity's creation in God's image is so important that every offense against a human is an offense against God himself (Genesis 9:5-6). If we affirm that all people are in God's image, then we declare that each life finds its full humanity in its shared participation in that of God. The door is firmly shut to discriminating people on the basis of their race.

## **Galatians 3:28 - We Are All One in Christ Jesus**

You might also like to reflect on Galatians and the unequivocal declaration that all human beings have equal value in the eyes of God. Here Paul articulates the ethical and cultural consequences of having faith in Jesus. Galatians 3:28 reads: 'there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.' This declaration is not subjective, but a simple fact of being: if you are in Christ then you are against the systems of oppression that divide people into higher and lower statuses. This principle of equality in Christ cuts through the social structures of racism and provides us a model for social relations today. The equality of all races is a necessary condition of the new life brought to us through God's Kingdom.



## **Luke 4:18 - Setting the Oppressed Free**

Phrases like 'Black Lives Matter' are sometimes seen as controversial because they focus on the particular struggles of one group. As part of your Sunday service, you might like to reflect on the idea of God's special concern for those that are in suffering and oppressed. The narrative of Luke 4:18 tells us that a fundamental principle of Jesus' ministry and mission is to set the oppressed free. In the New Testament, Jesus' message is clearly for all, but he does not shy away from placing a particular emphasis on the struggles of those that are oppressed. The meaning of this today is that we have to be specific about where injustice is occurring so that we can join in the fight against it. It is necessary to celebrate and defend the lives of ethnic minority people precisely because racism is real and needs to be called out by name.



Mary DuCharme, Pixels.com

## **Psalm 102 – The Prayer of the Oppressed**

The book of Psalms has always been used as the prayer book of the people of God, being used as a place to give a voice to the voiceless, and a song to those who can no longer hear the joy of music. The reggae band Boney M famously used Psalm 137 to speak of living under unjust regimes. Today as a congregation use Psalm 102 to step into the shoes of anyone experiencing racism, to join them in their cry to be heard and seen for who God made them to be.

# CHILDREN'S WORK

Thinking about issues of racial-justice isn't only for the adults in the Church, and you might also like to invite your young people to discuss these ideas. Below is one activity plan which you might like to follow.

**Time: 30 minutes**

**Requirements: Coloured Paper and Chairs or Breakout Room Facilities**

**Bible Verse: Acts 10:9-16**

**Theme: Inclusion and Respect of All**

EXERCISE: If you are meeting virtually, assign each child a colour randomly, making sure there is an even spread amongst them. Once you have done this, separate them into breakout rooms based on their colours. If you are meeting in your church, have different coloured pieces of paper underneath each seat and get the children to group together with others who have the same coloured piece of paper.

In both cases, give them five minutes to chat and once you return to the main session make sure that no one is allowed to talk to someone that was not in their group. After five more minutes, ask them these questions:

- How did it feel to be excluded from the other groups?
- Did you try to become part of any other group? If yes, what did you do, if no, why not?
- Can you talk about a time when you have felt different to others?
- What could have others done to make you feel included?

READ: After completing the exercise you might like to read Acts 10:9-16. These verses explore the idea that everything God has made has value, and that we shouldn't deliberately separate things into exclusive boxes.

EXERCISE: Make a list of things we can do to make each other feel included.

# TRADITIONAL HYMNS

## **Brother, sister, let me serve you**

Brother, sister, let me serve you  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I may have the grace to  
Let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on a journey  
We are brothers on the road  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you  
In the night-time of your fear  
I will hold my hand out to you  
Speak the peace you long to hear

I will weep when you are weeping  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God in heaven  
We shall find such harmony  
Born of all we've known together

Of Christ's love and agony  
Brother, sister, let me serve you  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I may have the grace to  
Let you be my servant too.

## **We Turn to You, O God of Every Nation (412 in Hymns and Psalms)**

We turn to you, O God of every nation  
giver of good and origin of life;  
your love is at the heart of all creation,  
your hurt is people's pain in war and death.

We turn to you that we may be forgiven  
for crucifying Christ on earth again.  
We know that we have never wholly striven  
to share with all the promise of your reign.

Free every heart from haughty self-reliance,  
our ways of thought inspire with simple  
grace;  
break down among us barriers of defiance,  
speak to the soul of all the human race.

On all who rise on earth for right relations,  
we pray the light of love from hour to hour.  
Grant wisdom to the leaders of the nations,  
the gift of carefulness to those in power.

Teach us, good Lord, to serve the need of  
others,  
help us to give and not to count the cost.  
Unite us all to live as sisters, brother,  
defeat our Babel with your Pentecost!



# CONTEMPORARY HYMMS

## God of Justice – Tim Hughes

Fill us up, send us out  
Fill us up, send us out  
Fill us up, send us out  
Fill us up, send us out

God of Justice, Saviour to all  
Came to rescue the weak and the poor  
Came to serve and not be served

And Jesus, You have called us  
Freely we've received now freely we will  
give

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Stepping forward keep us from just  
singing  
Move us into action, we must go

Fill us up, send us out

To act justly everyday  
Loving mercy in every way  
Walking humbly before You God

You have shown us what You require  
Freely we've received now freely we will  
give

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Stepping forward keep us from just singing  
Move us into action, we must go

Fill us up, send us out  
Fill us up, send us out  
Fill us up, send us out Lord

To act justly, loving mercy  
We must go, we must go  
To the broken and the hurting  
We must go, we must go

We must go, live to feed the hungry  
Stand beside the broken, we must go  
Stepping forward keep us from just singing  
Move us into action, we must go

Fill us up, send us out

# CONTEMPORARY HYMMS

## Way Maker - Originally by Sinach

You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, moving in our midst  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, working in this place  
I worship You  
I worship You

### Chorus (1)

You are  
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper  
Light in the darkness,  
my God That is who You are  
You are  
Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper  
Light in the darkness,  
my God That is who You are

You are here, touching every heart  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, healing every heart  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, turning lives around  
I worship You  
I worship You  
You are here, mending every heart  
I worship You  
I worship You

### Chorus (2)

#### Bridge (1)

That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are  
That is who You are

### Chorus (3)

Even when I don't see it, You're working  
Even when I don't feel it, You're working  
You never stop, You never stop working  
You never stop, You never stop working

### X 4

### Chorus (4)

#### Bridge (2)

### Chorus (5)

# PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND INTERCESSION

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## Prayer of Intercession

God of love

We come before you knowing that each person is made in your image, but recognising that this truth is not what we see in your world.

We thank you for the people that have come before us to open our eyes to the injustices that we have created towards one another, but today we take notice of how far we still have to come with racial justice.

We pray for anyone in our world that is experiencing racial abuse today, help us follow your Son in how we comfort the downtrodden.

We pray against the rise in anti-Semitism, white nationalism and all other forms of racism, that they will be stamped out so we may love one another as your Son has loved us.

We pray that you may open our eyes to the systems that have been used to reinforce racism in our world, and help us harness the voice of the prophets to not just see, but speak out where no one else feels able.

We pray for the church, that it may be a place where all are welcome to worship, but also the ability to lead is not based on the colour of your skin or the community that you come from.

God our Father, we ask you to transform us into your image and help us to become the people you have called us to be.

In the name of your Son Jesus Christ.

Amen

## Prayer of Confession

O God,  
On this Racial Justice Sunday we confess that the sin of racial hatred and prejudice distorts your divine plan for our human lives:

You created us in divine likeness, diverse and beautiful:

In every person, every race is your image.  
*But too often we fail to recognise your image in all:  
Forgive us.*

You created us in divine freedom, to be free:  
In every decision, every choice is your possibility of justice.  
*But too often we fail to choose to advocate for your justice for all:  
Forgive us.*

You created us for divine abundance, to tend and share:  
In every garden, every social structure is your seed of community.  
*But too often we fail to create that community which includes all,  
and gives to all equal access to your abundant life:  
Forgive us.*

Forgive us:  
Open our eyes to distinguish good from evil  
Open our hearts to desire good over evil  
Strengthen our wills to choose good over evil,  
So that we may create among us your beloved community.

[https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/worship\\_worship-ways\\_year-c\\_le\\_lent-prayer-of-confession/](https://www.ucc.org/worship-way/worship_worship-ways_year-c_le_lent-prayer-of-confession/)

# BLACK VOICES CORNWALL RACE CHARTER

Black Voices Cornwall exists to enable Cornwall to become an actively anti-racist County.

As part of your work on tackling racism, you might like to sign up to their Race Charter and invite members of your congregation to do likewise.



By signing up to the Black Voices Cornwall Race Charter for Cornwall you are adding your voice to the ever-growing network of allies who are working to make Cornwall an actively anti-racist County. The charter reads as follows:

- I will recognise and seek to understand the systemic advantages at play in society.
- I will seek out, listen to and learn from the lived experiences of those effected by racism.
- I will challenge any of my own values that I have been brought up to believe in around the generalisation of race.
- I will value people as individuals and not make assumptions based on race.
- I will understand what privilege means and how it can affect my life experiences and other peoples.

You can find the charter here:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=45AUnAGv4kaOuiRgKLUmDRIGs6Rr6BtDntbw1Yk8GsdURVE3NFZMNVJQ51hVTUxZTVQ3MVZPTIA1RSQIQCN0PWcu>

You can find out more about Black Voices Cornwall at their website here:

<https://www.blackvoicescornwall.org/>

# FURTHER RESOURCES

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There is a wealth of resources out there to help churches observe Racial Justice Sunday. Most can be used on Racial Justice Sunday or any time throughout the year.

## **Churches Together in Britain and Ireland 2022 Resource Book**

<https://ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday-13-february-2022>

## **Church of England Liturgical Resources**

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/liturgical-resources-racial-justice-sunday>

## **The Catholic Church in England and Wales 2022 RJS Resources**

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/rjs22/>

## **Christian Aid Racial Justice Sunday 2022 Resources**

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/racial-justice-sunday-2022>

## **Diocese of Exeter Racial Justice Sunday Resources**

<https://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Feature-Racial-Justice-Sunday-1.pdf>

## **Diocese of Coventry RJS 2022 Resources**

<https://www.coventry.anglican.org/info-for-parishes/race-equality/racial-justice-sunday-2021.php>

## **Baptist Union of Great Britain Black History Month Resources**

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/531274/Black\\_History\\_Month.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/531274/Black_History_Month.aspx)

## **United Reformed Church 2021 Racial Justice Sunday Toolkit**

[https://urc.org.uk/images/Global and Intercultural/Docs/Racial Justice Sunday/\\_Racial Justice Sunday.pdf](https://urc.org.uk/images/Global_and_Intercultural/Docs/Racial_Justice_Sunday/_Racial_Justice_Sunday.pdf)

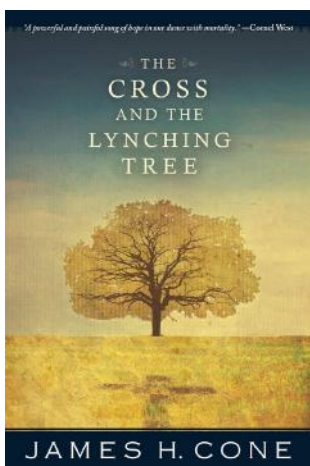
## **Catholic Association for Racial Justice Racial Justice Sunday Resources**

<https://www.csan.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Racial-Justice-Sunday-resources-booklet-2017-1.pdf>



While marking Racial Justice Sunday is an important first step in the process to becoming anti-racist, there is much to be done once the service has ended and we return to our daily lives. Following on from the day, you might invite your congregations, friends, and families to continue learning more about racism in our contemporary world.

The reading list below is a starting place to find resources that speak to issues of racial justice, systemic racism, and black theology. You might like to use these as the basis for starting a book club.

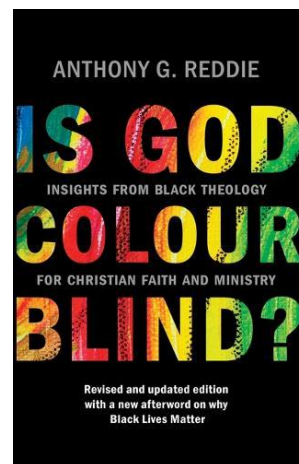


### **The Cross and the Lynching Tree by James Cone**

Cone's book is a memoir on the painful experience of being both a Christian and a black man in America. By drawing parallels between the cross and the lynching tree, Cone highlights the hope that Christ has offered the African-American community. Overall, Cone demonstrates how God's loving solidarity can transform ugliness into liberating presence.

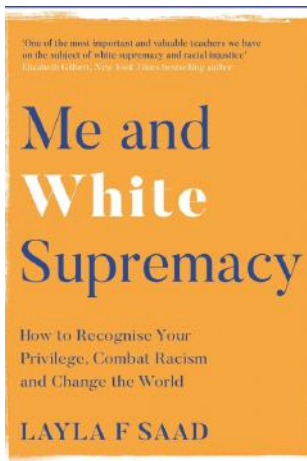
### **Is God Colour-Blind? by Anthony G. Reddie**

This insightful book shows how Black theology makes a difference to Christian thought and practice, with a particular focus on ministry and the pastoral setting. Reddie offers a series of short stories, followed by theological reflection and analysis, which suggest new ways of understanding of ourselves and others.



### **Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race by Reni Eddo-Lodge**

The provocative title is hard to ignore, but so is the content of the book. Eddo-Lodge provides a comprehensive view of the enduring obstacles that reproduce inequalities for black people in contemporary British society. She encourages readers to recognise the existence of systemic racism and consequently join in the fight to dismantle it.

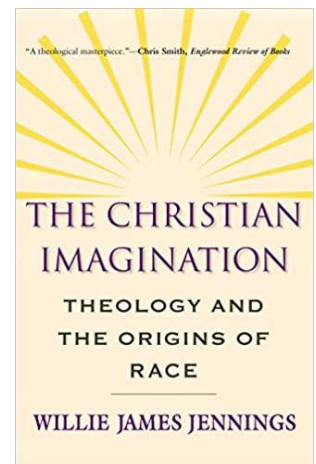


## **Me and White Supremacy by Layla F. Saad**

Me and White Supremacy shows readers how to dismantle the privilege within themselves so that they can stop (often unconsciously) inflicting damage on people of colour. This book examines cultural contexts, shares moving stories and anecdotes, provides expanded definitions and examples, and signposts to further resources.

## **The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race by Willie James Jennings**

In this book, Jennings argues that Christianity suffers from a racist social imagination that stills operates within it today. By examining the ways Christianity came to be so closely identified with racism, Jennings challenges us to return to a Christianity based on love.

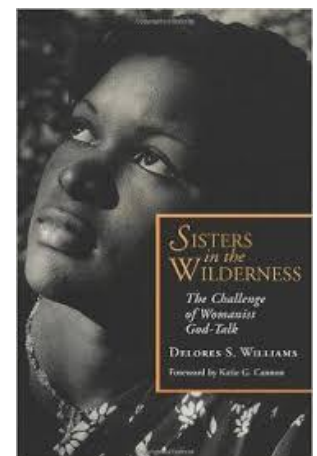


## **Ghost Ship by A.D.A France-Williams**

Through conversation with clergy, lay people and campaigners in the Church of England, AD France-Williams issues a stark warning to the church, demonstrating how black ministers are left to drown in a sea of complacency. While sticking plaster remedies abound, AD France-Williams argues that what is needed is a wholesale change in structure and mindset.

## **Sisters in the Wilderness by Dolores Williams**

In this book, Williams focuses on the biblical figure of Hagar, mother of Ishmael. Exploring the themes implicit in Hagar's story, such as poverty, slavery, ethnicity and sexual exploitation, Williams traces parallels in the history of African-American women from slavery to the present day. What emerges from this is a 'womanist' theology that promotes liberation.



# Thank You

This toolkit was put together as a collaboration between Churches Together in Cornwall, All Saints Highertown, and Transformation Cornwall, with contributions from Marcus Allyene from Black Voices Cornwall and Rev. Patrick Gilbert, BAME Champion for Truro Diocese.

<https://www.ctcinfohub.org/>

<https://www.asht.org.uk/>

<http://transformation-cornwall.org.uk/>

For more ideas of how you can tackle racism in Cornwall please visit the Black Voices Cornwall website:

<https://www.blackvoicescornwall.org/>

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