

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF IOWA

2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community



“Our goal is to create a beloved community and this will require a qualitative change in our souls as well as a quantitative change in our lives.”

- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Beloved Community Initiative

**Co-Founders: Rev. Meg Wagner and Rev. Susanne Watson Epting
Program Coordinator: Lisa Covington**

DIOCESAN ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Rev. Kim Turner-Baker

Ms. Ellen Bruckner

Ms. Donna Wong-Gibbons

Ms. Aileen Chang Matis

Ms. Donna Prime

The Rev. Ruth Ratliff

The Rev. Melody Rockwell

Dr. John Stewart

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Mr. Dawson Davenport

Ms. LaTasha DeLoach

Ms. RaQuishia Harrington

Ms. Amy Kraber

Ms. Karen Nichols

The Rev. Anthony Smith

Ms. Barb Stanerson

The Rev. Jane Stewart

Ms. Gabriella Tobias

“I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other.” (Jn. 13:34-35)

Welcome to 2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community—a year of resources to aid you on your journey to follow the path laid out by Jesus to love one another as God loves us.

This resource was developed by the staff and members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Beloved Community Initiative. Our purpose is two-fold. It is our hope that this will help individuals and groups to build on the diocesan Dismantling Racism training. We also hope that even if you have not attended the training, this program will be used as an adult and/or intergenerational education tool for you or your parish. You could choose to work your way through it as an individual, with a partner or two, or with a larger group.

From its inception as an idea from Ms. Donna Prime on a Zoom call with our Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Beloved Community Initiative, to the resource we see now, much love and prayer and gentle guidance of the Spirit have surrounded us in our work. The creation of *2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community* involved ongoing difficult dialogue among community members, church members and committee members. We heard from white people who want to learn more about race and racism. We heard from people of color who are tired of teaching and want white folks to move from learning about oppression to focus on actively acting against it. This document is our attempt at action centered on learning. We want people to understand learning is the beginning, not the end, of our commitment to racial justice.

Engaging with *2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community* is an invitation to address racism in our communities. We hope that you will help build our next steps in this journey through sharing your honest thoughts and opinions with us in our on-line community. Faithful people know this work is important, and the work is both joyous and hard. Staying grounded in our faith, in constant communication with the One whose vision we seek to hold and bring to reality, is what will bind us as we engage in this *2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community*.

Each month you will find materials that focus on a central theme introduced with a theological reflection, followed by suggestions in five areas: **Learn, Notice, Engage, Reflect, Pray!**

The **Learn** section will provide you with opportunities to read materials, listen to podcasts or speeches, and watch videos to continually build your understanding of difference in the United States. The **Notice** section will encourage you to take notice of your surroundings and everyday interactions and experiences. The **Engage** section will give you suggestions for taking what you are learning into a more public arena and/or to seek out others to connect with as you learn more. The **Reflect** section invites you to journal about what you are learning, feeling, and how you might invite others into what you are learning. The **Prayer** and a **Theological Reflection** ground all of the work as part of our ongoing spiritual formation.

Thank you and may God bless us all in working towards becoming beloved community,

Beloved Community Initiative





Year at a glance

January.....p. 6

Whose Land is it?

February.....p. 12

Black History Month

March.....p. 18

Black Women in History

April.....p. 23

Easter

May.....p. 28

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage

June.....p. 35

Intersectionality

July.....p. 40

Housing and the Wealth Gap

August.....p. 45

Back to School with School Equity

September.....p. 50

Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage

October.....p. 55

Indigenous Peoples

November.....p. 61

Moving from Ally to Accomplice

December.....p. 66

Ushering the Kin-dom of God

2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community

An excerpt from *Braiding Sweetgrass*

by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a mother, a scientist, and a decorated professor who is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potowatomi Nationⁱ

As we enter the first month of our 2020 Vision for Becoming Beloved Community, our reflection piece encourages us to consider our different cultural contexts when we think about story and spirituality. Here is a lovely, but challenging piece on thinking about Creation.

“In winter, when the green earth lies resting beneath a blanket of snow, this is the time for storytelling. The storytellers begin by calling upon those who came before who passed the stories down to us, for we are only messengers.

In the beginning there was the Skyworld.

She fell like a maple seed, pirouetting on an autumn breeze.ⁱⁱ A column of light streamed from a hole in the Skyworld, marking her path where only darkness had been before. It took her a long time to fall. In fear, or maybe hope, she clutched a bundle tightly in her hand.

Hurling downward, she saw only dark water below. But in that emptiness there were many eyes gazing up at the sudden shaft of light. They saw there a small object, a mere dust mote in the beam. As it grew closer, they could see that it was a woman, arms outstretched, long black hair billowing behind as she spiraled toward them.

The geese nodded at one another and rose together from the water in a wave of goose music. She felt the beat of their wings as they flew beneath to break her fall. Far from the only home she'd ever known, she caught her breath at the warm embrace of soft feathers as they gently carried her downward. And so it began.

The geese could not hold the woman above the water for much longer, so they called a council to decide what to do. Resting on their wings, she saw them all gather: loons, otters, swans, beavers, fish of all kinds. A great turtle floated in their midst and offered his back for her to rest upon. Gratefully, she stepped from the goose wings onto the dome of his shell. The others understood that she needed land for her home and discussed how they might serve her need. The deep divers among them had heard of mud at the bottom of the water and agreed to go find some.

Loon dove first, but the distance was too far and after a long while he surfaced with nothing to show for his efforts. One by one, the other animals offered to help – Otter, Beaver, Sturgeon – but the depth, the darkness, and the pressures were too great for even the strongest of swimmers. They returned gasping for air with their heads ringing. Some did not return at all. Soon only little Muskrat was left, the weakest diver of all. He volunteered to go while the others looked on doubtfully. His small legs flailed as he worked his way downward and he was gone a very long time.

They waited and waited for him to return, fearing the worst for their relative, and, before long, a stream of bubbles rose with the small limp body of the muskrat. He had given his life to aid this helpless human. But then the others noticed that his paw was tightly clenched and, when they opened it, there was a small handful of mud. Turtle said, “Here, put it on my back and I will hold it.”

Skywoman bent and spread the mud with her hands across the shell of the turtle. Moved by the extraordinary gifts of the animals, she sang in thanksgiving and then began to dance, her feet caressing the earth. The land grew and grew as she danced her thanks, from the dab of mud on Turtle's back until the whole earth was made. Not by Skywoman alone, but from the alchemy of all the animals' gifts coupled with her deep gratitude. Together they formed what we know today as Turtle Island, our home.

Like any good guest, Skywoman had not come empty-handed. The bundle was still clutched in her hand. When she toppled from the hole in the Skyworld she had reached out to grab onto the Tree of Life that grew there. In her grasp were branches – fruits and seeds of all kinds of plants. These she scattered onto the new ground and carefully tended each one until the world turned from brown to green. Sunlight streamed through the hole from the Skyworld, allowing the seeds to flourish. Wild grasses, flowers, trees, and medicines spread everywhere. And now that the animals, too, had plenty to eat, many came to live with her on Turtle Island.”

The author continues with a short reflection on sweetgrass, telling the reader that it was the first plant to grow on earth, its fragrance a memory of Skywoman's hand. “Breathe in its scent,” she writes, “and you start to remember things you didn't know you'd forgotten.” She reflects on the tenderness

in braiding the hair of someone you love and reminds us that sweetgrass can be woven into baskets. “We say it is the flowing hair of Mother Earth. When we braid sweetgrass, we are braiding the hair of Mother Earth, showing her our loving attention, our care for her beauty and well-being, in gratitude for all she has given us.” Finally she reflects on how children learn the story of Skywoman early in their lives, and thus they also know from birth, the responsibility that flows between humans and the earth.

Then Professor Kimmerer shares something of her life as an academic. She writes:

“On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 9:35 a.m., I am usually in a lecture hall at the university, expounding about botany and ecology – trying, in short, to explain to my students how Skywoman’s gardens, known by some as “global ecosystems,” function. One otherwise unremarkable morning I gave the students in my General Ecology class a survey. Among other things, they were asked to rate their understanding of the negative interactions between humans and the environment. Nearly every one of the two hundred students said confidently that humans and nature are bad mix. These were third-year students who had selected a career in environmental protection, so the response was, in a way, not very surprising. . . .

Later in the survey, they were asked to rate their knowledge of positive interactions between people and land. The median response was “none.”

I was stunned. How is it possible that in twenty years of education they cannot think of any beneficial relationships between people and the environment? Perhaps the negative examples they see every day – brown fields, factory farms, urban sprawl – truncated their ability to see some good between humans and the earth. . . . When we talked about this after class, I realized that they could not even imagine what beneficial relations between their species and others might look like. How can we begin to move toward ecological and cultural sustainability if we cannot even imagine what the path feels like? If we can’t imagine the generosity of geese? These students were not raised on the story of Skywoman.

On one side of the world were people whose relationship with the living world was shaped by Skywoman, who created a garden for the well-being of all. On the other side was another woman with a garden and a tree. But for tasting its fruit, she was banished from the garden and the gates clanged shut behind her. That mother of men was made to wander in the wilderness and eat her bread by the sweat of her brow, not by filling her mouth with the sweet juicy fruits that bend the branches low. In order to eat, she was instructed to subdue the wilderness into which she was cast.

Same species, same earth, different stories. Like Creation stories everywhere, cosmologies are a source of identity and orientation to the world. We are inevitably shaped by them no matter how distant they may be from our consciousness. One story leads to the generous embrace of the living world, the other to banishment. One woman is our ancestral gardener, a co-creator of the good green world that would be the home of her descendants. The other was an exile, just passing through an alien world on a rough road to her real home in heaven.

And then they met – the offspring of Skywoman and the children of Eve – and the land around us bears the scars of that meeting, the echoes of our stories.”ⁱⁱⁱ

What do you especially appreciate in reading the story of Skywoman?

i. © 2013 this excerpt is used under “fair use guidelines and should not be reproduced.”

ii. Adapted from oral tradition and Shenandoah and George, 1988.

iii Kimmerer, Robin Wall, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Milkweed Editions, 2013, pp. 5-7

LEARN Choose one or more



For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/january

READ

Book of the Month: *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* by Winona LaDuke

["Meet the Three Sisters Who Sustain Native America"](#) Short article about corn, beans, and squash as an important facet of Indigenous culture and nourishment.

WATCH

[The Episcopal Church Exposes the Doctrine of Discovery](#) (14 min.) This video is intended to inform people about the impact of the Doctrine of Discovery in an effort to respond to God's direction; that we, the Episcopal Church, "act with justice and...do what is right" (Psalm 106:3, Book of Common Prayer), and about the unjust way the Americas were settled, and the on-going consequences of those events.

Adam Ruins Everything: [Native American Population Misconceptions](#) (1 min)

[Indigenous Reflections on Christianity](#) (13:42 min) Onondaga Faithkeeper Oren Lyons, Native Hawaiian historian Davianna McGregor, Australian Aboriginal elder and former Catholic priest Patrick Dodson, and Anishinaabe author and activist Winona LaDuke offer their insights into the history of Christianity in relation to indigenous peoples and ecosystems around the world.

LISTEN

[Toasted Sister Podcast](#) was born from a passion for food and conversations about Natives and food. She speaks with Native chefs, foodies, and folks passionate about food sovereignty.

NOTICE Choose one or more



List the last five meals you had. Where did your food come from?

Whose Indigenous land do you live on/did you grow up on? What land does your church sit on? Visit becomingbelovedcommunity.org/january for a link to an interactive map.

Notice how land "ownership" influences decisions about the land in your city, county and state.

ENGAGE

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*



Visit a local library and ask about which children's books that focus on Indigenous peoples. How many books are there?

At your church, explore the books for children. What is the racial identity and gender characters?

Explore the Sacred Land Film Project website and become a member of their Sacred Land Defense Team to receive periodic email alerts to stay updated on sacred land news, what you can do to help protect cultural landscapes and promote respect for the religious freedom of Indigenous peoples.

Visit becomingbelovedcommunity.org/january and read about developing a “land acknowledgment” that could be used by you and/or any of your groups at the beginning of meetings and/or be on display at all times. To thoughtfully prepare an in-depth acknowledgment requires time and care and is best done in relationship and in dialogue with the Nations you are acknowledging.

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Creator, we give You thanks for all that You are and all that you bring to us within your creation. In Jesus, you placed the Gospel in the Center of the Sacred Circle through which all creation is related. You show us the way to live a generous and compassionate life. Give us your strength to live together with respect and commitment as we grow in your spirit, for you are God, now and forever. Amen.



Lift Every Voice and Sing

In 1988, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved a resolution asking that the Standing Committee on Church Music, in cooperation with the Office for Black Ministries, prepare a collection of Black hymns to augment the resources of the *Hymnal, 1982*. The volume was published in 1993 and edited by Dr. Horace Boyer. Dr. Boyer was a well-known professor at the University of Massachusetts. He has a long, long list of accomplishments in the world of music. While his awards were numerous, they include the Martin Luther King Heritage Award from the city of his birth in Winter Park, Florida and the Lifetime Achievement Award of the Society of American Music, and recognition by the Union of Black Episcopalians. His contributions to our church were many.

While "Lift Every Voice and Sing" had been included in the *Hymnal, 1982*, its further inclusion, in fact serving its part in the title of the new, supplemental hymnal, (*Lift Every Voice and Sing II*), placed it in its rightful context. "Lift Every Voice and Sing" is often called the Black National Anthem. While its author, James Weldon Johnson, would not have named it such as he penned it, these are his own words as he reflected on the deep meaning it came to have for so many.

"A group of young men in Jacksonville, Florida, arranged to celebrate Lincoln's birthday in 1900. My brother, J. Rosamond Johnson, and I decided to write a song to be sung at the exercise. I wrote the words and he wrote the music. Our New York publisher, Edward B. Marks, made mimeographed copies for us and the song was taught to and sung by a chorus of five hundred [African American] school children.

Shortly afterwards my brother and I moved from Jacksonville to New York, and the song passed out of our minds. But the school children of Jacksonville kept singing it, they went off to other schools and sang it, they became teachers and taught it to other children. Within twenty years it was being sung over the South and in some other parts of the country. Today, the song, popularly known as the [Black] National Hymn, is quite generally used.

"The lines of this song repay me in elation, almost of exquisite anguish, whenever I hear them sung by [Black] children." - James Weldon Johnson, 1935

Lift every voice and sing,
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the list'ning skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us, Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us; Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chast'ning rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered.
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered, Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,

Thou who hast brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who hast by Thy might,
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee, Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee; Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand,
True to our God,
True to our native land.

“the school children...kept singing it”ⁱⁱ

It's a beautiful hymn. Everyone loves to sing it. But it is borne out of experience—Black experience. It is important that we acknowledge and affirm that sacred grounding. Before you begin this month, be sure to listen and watch the rendition linked below. Then return to it over the course of your other activities. And the next time it's part of the music at church, remember.

Remember. Hope, pray, act.

read more at: blackpast.org/black-past-features/black-national-anthem/

i. Contemporary words and phrases have been used in place of historically racially charged epithets.

ii From the web page of the James Weldon Johnson Foundation: jamesweldonjohnson.org/press-1

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/february



READ

Book of the Month: *Why We Can't Wait* by Martin Luther King Jr.

[The 1619 Project](#) began as an idea pitched by Nikole Hannah-Jones (from Waterloo, Iowa), one of The New York Times' staff writers, during a meeting in January. Her proposal was clear and ambitious: to dedicate an issue of the Sunday magazine to examining the ways the legacy of slavery continues to shape our country.

[African American History in Iowa](#) (article) A brief summary of African American history in Iowa.

[Colored Conventions](#) (website) From 1830 until the 1890s, free as well as formerly enslaved Africans and African-American people came together in state and national political meetings called “Colored Conventions.” Before the War, they strategized about how to achieve educational, labor and legal justice at a moment when Black people's rights were constricting nationally and locally. After the War, their numbers swelled as they continued to mobilize to ensure that Black citizenship rights and safety, Black labor rights and land, Black education and institutions would be protected under the law.

[“Why we don't need a white history month”](#) Short article/video from Huffpost Black Voices to help you share with people who wonder why there is no “White History Month.”

[Absalom Jones](#): Learn about The Episcopal Church's first Black priest.

WATCH

[Race: the Power of an Illusion](#) (available through Vimeo to stream for \$4.99) (2 hours 50 minutes for all three sections). This video questions the very idea of race as biology, suggesting that a belief in race is no more sound than believing that the sun revolves around the earth. Yet, race still matters. Just because race doesn't exist in biology doesn't mean it isn't very real, helping shape life chances and opportunities. Each of the three sections is about an hour and would be powerful to watch and discuss in 3 group settings.

[The Time Has Come](#) (30:19 min) Narrated by James Earl Jones, this short film describes and illustrates progress of Black Americans through Black elected officials.

LISTEN

[The 1619 Audio Series](#) is part of The 1619 Project, a major initiative from The Times observing the 400th anniversary of the beginning of American slavery.

[Historically Black](#) (podcast) The Historically Black podcast brings historical objects and their stories to life through interviews, archival sound and music.

NOTICE *Choose one or more*



As you move through the day, what's the racial composition of the people around you? On your commute? At the coffee shop you go to? At the gym? At your workplace?

Visit your local library and identify books that are available for kids and adults to check out that deal with Black history. Is there a display?

Consider this journal prompt: When was the first time you learned about African American History? Was it in school, with a friend, a parent, or on your own? What topic or person was the focus? How did exposure to this topic impact you? Or, how do you think exposure can impact you or others in the future?

ENGAGE

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*

Interrupt the pattern of white silence by speaking openly with family, friends, and colleagues about what you're doing and learning.



What is your family's history in the United States? How much is passed down through oral history versus city or state records?

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER

Holy and Gracious God, we give you thanks for the lives of your faithful people throughout history. For the privilege of learning about those, who in their time and place, have called us toward racial justice, we give you thanks. For _____(name the people you've learned about this month), we give you thanks. For people of glorious color who call us to accountability in our own day, we give you thanks. As we continue to expand our knowledge of history, give us the courage to tell the truth and proclaim your dream. And finally, give us grace to love, honor, and follow the communion of saints of every creed and color, in order to bring your love to action. In faith we pray. Amen.



From Ages to Ages – God Throughout History

This month's reflection is taken from the book *Stand Your Ground*ⁱ by Kelly Brown Douglas.

The Rev. Canon Kelly Brown Douglas is the Canon Theologian at the Washington National Cathedral. In 2017, she was named Dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She is considered a leader in the field of womanist theology, racial reconciliation and sexuality and the black church. She wrote *Stand Your Ground* as a result of the murder of Trayvon Martin – and the many others that followed.

“Moral memory is nothing less than telling the truth about the past and one’s relationship to it. Moral memory is not about exonerating ourselves from the past. Rather, it is taking responsibility for it. To have a moral memory is to recognize the past we carry within us, the past we want to carry within us, and the past we need to make right. Righting the past is about more than facile apologies or even guilty verdicts for killers of innocent black children. Rather, to right the past is to acknowledge the ways in which our systems, structures, and ways of being in society are a continuation of the myths, the narratives, the ideologies of the past and then to transform these present realities.

Moral identity recognizes, as Paul Tillich says, “that every human soul has infinite value.” A moral identity is what Tillich calls the “courage to be oneself.” To be oneself is to be the child of God that one is, nothing more and nothing less. A moral identity, therefore, is free from any “social usages and customs” that distort the identity of another’s creation . . . It is this identity that makes possible “sympathetic understanding.” . . . it opens one to move through the world with empathy, thus feeling the suffering, the heartache, the hunger of others for life, liberty, and happiness. In many respects, a moral identity is the human response to Jesus . . . the way in which he emptied himself of anything that would set him apart from humanity, especially crucified humanity.

[Moral] participation is marked by a commitment to freedom, love, and life. Such participation is a matter of faith. The Greek word for faith, as used in the Gospels, is *pistis*. This word does not suggest a way of thinking about who God is or reflecting upon to God’s relationship to us. Rather, it points to a way of acting in light of our relationship to God. Put simply, faith is not about loyalty to a certain doctrine, dogma or set of beliefs. Instead, it involves commitment to a certain way of “living and moving and having our being” in the world. . . To have faith is to accept the invitation to be an “active presence in human history.”

How shall we, as God’s people, accept the invitation to be an active presence in human history?

ⁱ Douglas, Kelly Brown, *Stand Your Ground*, Orbis Books, 2015, Part 2, Section 6

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/march

READ

Book of the Month: *Passionate for Justice: Ida B. Wells As Prophet for Our Time* by Catherine Meeks and Nibs Stroupe

“[35 Queens of Black History Who Deserve Much More Glory](#)” (article) The revolutionary words Angela Davis spoke, the record-breaking feats of Wilma Rudolph and the efforts of Shirley Chisholm paved the way for Black women and girls across the country to dream big and act courageously.

Visit the [Black Past](#) website to learn about several prominent African American Women in U.S. history.



[African American History and Women](#): (timeline) Online timeline detailing some of what African American women have contributed to American history and the impact of historical events.

[“The Bold Accomplishments of Women of Color Need to Be a Bigger Part of Suffrage History”](#) (article).

[“Black Mothers Keep Dying After Giving Birth”](#) Shalon Irving’s story explains some of the reasons why. (article)

WATCH

[Thus a Black Woman Speaks](#): (15 min) a poem by actress Beah Richards (Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner, 1967). A searing call to awareness and action to white women written decades ago and still fully relevant today.

[The Danger of a Single Story](#): (19:16 min) Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice -- and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

LISTEN

[Podcast on Mary Jackson](#). Jackson is most well known as the first Black woman to become an engineer at NASA. But she also worked to clear the way for other underrepresented people at NASA.

[Podcast on Shirley Chisolm](#). From her college years, Chisolm was politically active. Her drive and desire to make positive change led her to many political firsts, including being the first Black woman elected to the U.S. Congress representing the 12th Congressional District of New York.

NOTICE *Choose one or more*



Who are your ten closest friends? What is the racial mix in this group?

Consider the words of 1973 Presidential Candidate, Shirley Chisholm: “If you don’t have a seat at the table, bring a folding chair.” What instances can you think of your life where white women or women of color were not provided with access. This could refer to conversations, opportunities, jobs, support, etc. Think of examples that you have witnessed in your personal life.

Where do you experience a “single story” in your world view?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*

Learn who is working in your county or city on issues that pertain to women of color. Is there an equity committee or commission that the public can attend?



Choose one of these women of color from Iowa's history (Ruth Bluford Anderson, Sue M Wilson Brown, Charlotta Pyles, Willie Stevenson Glanton) do some research, and share about her with your church family, Sunday School class, or community group.

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER

O God, you have bound us together in a common life.
Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth,
to confront one another without hatred or bitterness,
and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Prayer by the Rt. Rev. Barbara Harris, first female bishop in The Episcopal Church

Easter

"The cross and the lynching tree interpret each other. Both were public spectacles, shameful events, instruments of punishment reserved for the most despised people in society. Any genuine theology and any genuine preaching of the Christian gospel must be measured against the test of the scandal of the cross and the lynching tree. 'Jesus did not die a gentle death like Socrates, with his cup of hemlock....Rather, he died like a [lynched black victim] or a common [black] criminal in torment, on the tree of shame.' The crowd's shout 'Crucify him!' (Mk 15:14) anticipated the white mob's shout 'Lynch him!' Jesus' agonizing final cry of abandonment from the cross, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mk 15:34), was similar to the lynched victim Sam Hose's awful scream as he drew his last breath, 'Oh, my God! Oh, Jesus.' In each case it was a cruel, agonizing, and contemptible death."

— James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*

Holy One, We know that you are the Maker of all.

Your hand, your spirit, your glory is reflected in the beauty of your creation, vast in it's manifestation of size, shape, color, and personality.

Each body blessed with the task of opening our eyes to seeing you from a different angle. We are perfect in the ways our flesh carries the wonder of your creative self-revealing.

Black bodies are sacred.

Brown bodies are sacred.

White bodies are sacred—and yet... We acknowledge O God that white bodies, though created in goodness, have collectively become reflections not only of you—not only of Love, or Justice, or Compassion, or beauty—but also of a system of violence, power, fear, and greed reigning terror upon others. White flesh bears testament to white supremacy.

God of resistance, and justice, and righteous anger, make those whose bodies have become signs and symbols of white power, make those who benefit from the powers and privileges of its terror, hear your call - your demand to live, speak, pray, and organize against every manifestation of white supremacy.

Hold accountable all who let you down by letting down their black and brown siblings through apathy or fear or lack of action or selfishness or refusal to own compliance in the violence of it all.

You call all of us to show up.

Help us show up.

May we all show up, and may those who are white seize every opportunity to reject each false proclamation of supremacy made upon their skin. It is the responsibility of those who are white to proclaim - in word and in action - over and over and over:

white supremacy is a lie.

white supremacy is a lie.

white supremacy is a lie.

white supremacy is a lie.

Fill all your people who are committed to resistance with strength and courage and ground them in assurance that in bearing testament to Justice and Love and the belovedness of black and brown bodies - you are there also.

Hold tenderly all who are afraid.

Weep with all whose hearts are ripped open by each act of violence or injustice. Rage with those who wish to tear down every word, structure, and symbol of racist power.

Give us each the discernment to hear what you would have us do - today and everyday going

APRIL
Easter

forward until all your people are free.

May courage, care, solidarity, peace, and righteous anger manifest in all of us. Amen.

(from “enfleshed,” a community and online resource that seeks to provide individuals and communities with spiritual and theological resources for liturgy, prayer & contemplation, preaching, teaching, and consulting that speak directly to what matters the most.)

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/april



READ

Book of the Month: *While the World Watched: A Birmingham Bombing Survivor Comes of Age during the Civil Rights Movement* by Carolyn McKinstry

[Southern Poverty Law Center’s Civil Rights Memorial](#): Learn about the people on the Civil Rights Memorial who lost their lives in the struggle for freedom during the modern Civil Rights Movement - 1954 to 1968. The martyrs include activists who were targeted for death because of their civil rights work; random victims of vigilantes determined to halt the movement; and individuals who, in the sacrifice of their own lives, brought new awareness to the struggle.

[“Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror”](#) (report)

WATCH

[Here Am I, Send Me: The Story of Jonathan Daniels](#) (57 min)

Ruby Sales’ TED talk, [How do we maintain our courage to fight for change?](#) (20 min)

[5 Things to know about Emmett Till’s reopened case](#) (8:29)

[The Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1871](#): Video on white supremacy, manifest destiny, racism and lynchings of Chinese (and Latin Americans) and mob violence against Chinese in Los Angeles, late 19th century (26:15)

LISTEN

Ruby Sales: [Lessons from the Southern Freedom Movement for Right Now](#) podcast (58 min)

[The Assassination of Medgar Evers](#) podcast (11 min)

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s [I’ve Been to the Mountaintop](#) sermon, delivered April 3, 1968 at the Mason Temple in Memphis, Tennessee (43 min)

NOTICE *Choose one or more*

Who are the people you see risking their safety or security to stand up for the freedom and flourishing of other people—here in the U.S. or in other parts of the world?



Look through the Episcopal calendar of saints in [A Great Cloud of Witnesses](#). How many of them were killed because of their dedication to standing up for the freedom and flourishing of other people?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*

Connect with someone you admire who is speaking and acting to address racial injustice in your community. Consider thanking them for the work they do by sending a card or an email.



Uncover your church's history of participation in behaviors and structures of both racial injustice and racial justice and healing. Interview elders in the church and look through church and diocesan documents, and newspaper reports.

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

[illegible]

PRAYER

Christ is risen! Alleluia! God lives and is alive in us. Beauty, love, joy, passion, justice - despite everything, they persist! No spirit of destruction, no forces of violence, no means of everyday evil can steal our hope. The stone has been rolled away. The Spirit of Life cannot be contained. Christ is risen! Alleluia!



Holy One, through you the impossible becomes possible. You birth hope into inconceivable places: In our greatest pain. In our heaviest grief. In our weightiest battles with injustice. Even when we cannot yet perceive it, your Spirit is at work. Give us the faith, O God, to trust in the mystery of your redemptive hand. Amen.

(from "enfleshed," a community and online resource that seeks to provide individuals and communities with spiritual and theological resources for liturgy, prayer & contemplation, preaching, teaching, and consulting that speak directly to what matters the most.)

Eleven Reflections on Asian Americans, Native Hawai'ians, and Pacific Islanders in the US—We're Here, Too

by Aileen Chang-Matus, Diocese of Iowa

1. Names: Asian Americans

This moniker is an invention, something meant to encompass communities and individuals with a great variety of origins, languages, cultures, faiths, and economic, legal, and social status, tracing back to anywhere between Japan and the Caucasus region, anywhere between Siberia and southern India. People from islands in the Pacific vary among themselves, yet their situations are interwoven, and they have sometimes intermarried, often enough to justify the term "Asian and Pacific Islander." And yet the experiences of Native Hawaiians have been different enough from those from many other islands, that sometimes NHPI (Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander) is used—but then again, the Hawai'ian Islands are in the Pacific. Still, I think I prefer "NHPI" because it feels like a way for me to recognize and respect the different lives and experiences of people from the Pacific Islands other than where my family came from.

These constructs are clumsy tools yet the best we have for obtaining some place at the table, some minimal part in the conversation on race. When people talk as though race in America were all on a black-white binary, they push us toward a mis-identification as either white people or Black people unless we push back firmly. This happens in the public media, and it also happens when our friends are speaking and we are present.

God, our creator, holds precious all our identities. May God sustain us in the work of claiming who we are and honoring who each other are.

2. Exclusion and Detention

Laws designed for exclusion were first invented for Chinese immigrants, eventually extended to other Asian immigrant groups. While some immigrants from Asia, and their descendants, have become highly successful business people, academics, software or traditional engineers, others face great barriers in educational progress, financial progress, and acceptance and assimilation.

Chinese Americans strove on in spite of this oppression until the 1940's, when, in the context of World War II, they were suddenly compared favorably against Japanese Americans, who were, in spite of citizenship and loyalty, forced away from their homes and land and detained in camps.

Our children may learn nothing or little about these things in our schools, but Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans do remember. Overall, our position is improved, but disrespect still lingers, and a pendulum can swing both ways. Asian American subgroups, by ethnicity, have not always supported each other in their difficulty.

We also see other immigrants from other places in Asia, the Pacific, or other parts of the world treated with hostility now. Are we doing all we can to offer support to them? Or have we, in our assimilation, now adopted an exclusionary position toward the new New Americans or racist attitudes toward African, Latinx, and Indigenous Americans?

It is a terrible loss to our humanity, when our own inclusion leads us to exclude others or accept their exclusion. Let us never do so.

3. Māhele and Annexation

American business interests required the commodification of the land and the wresting of governance from the people. In this, Hawai'ians lost not an asset but a family member, a nurturing elder brother. Having gained the highest literacy rate in the world, they then lost it when the use of their language was banned in the schools. In similar ways, their right to dance and chant were denied for a time. When traditions - the things handed down - are lost, as well as sustenance from the earth, the ability to be who you are suffers a devastating loss that cannot be compensated by all the tourist dollars in the world.

If you need help understanding cultural appropriation, look at Hawai'ians—never seen in their full complex humanity, but as travel poster tropes —while the nation downs "Hawai'ian style" pizzas and "Big Kahuna" drinks and celebrates the end of school with plastic leis and a picnic recast as a luau.

The losses of other Pacific Islanders in other colonial experiences—I know they lost self-governance, and surely much of their way of life. May we learn more, and may their lives be recognized and honored also. Let us delve into our own cultural traditions with relish. Let us also learn from others' with humility and some respectful distance.

4. Looking at the Full Range

From other islands of the Pacific, from the Philippines and India and South Asia, Southeast Asia and Korea—in response to pressures at home, persecutions and wars, or a hope to build a new life in a new place - they have come, some in earlier waves and some later. Some are doctors and nurses and engineers, some laborers in farms or factories or hotels, hospitals, and caregiving homes. Some are builders, some librarians, some academics, journalists, I cannot say where they all are and how they are all working. Only some have good incomes and economic security. Some struggle terribly.

Let us not forget that all are here, that all who have something to share—whether API/NHPI Americans or any Americans - need to offer support to those who need it, as moral human beings.

5. Our History and US National Identity

Ellis Island is in the text books, but Angel Island is usually not. The different ways arriving immigrants were treated is not studied. Many Chinese American laborers at the railroad may be mentioned, but what about the Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and other early immigrants in many trades and occupations, building the infrastructure, the economy, and the culture of the United States alongside European- descended immigrants? The historical narrative of a European civilization, with some add-ons from other cultures, is incomplete.

When we have an incomplete history, we not only fail to honor all contributors, we fail to understand fully who our nation is, who we are.

6. Gender and Family

Gender and family stereotypes abound. Can we please be done with the stereotypes and misconceptions about the sexual lives of Asian women, the parenting styles and the lives of the children, the suppositions about patriarchal roles in cultures not well understood?

7. One-Way Accommodations

If you identify as a white person, do you have a friend or coworker or neighbor who is a person of color (maybe API/NHPI), and do you have a very smooth-running, comfortable relationship where race seems to have no impact? Is this relationship as easy as all your relationships with others of your own race? This may not be a post-racial triumph. It may well be a working or social relationship which you both value, and while the white person may participate with little attention to race, the other consistently—even habitually— accommodates, allowing misunderstandings, cultural appropriations, and other things to pass because it would be too complicated, too uncomfortable, to discuss “just now.”

Maybe there are no problems with the words spoken, but someone of color understands that a white person lives in a world that continually reinforces a white perspective, so it is necessary to communicate with them referring only to the things they already understand from within their dominant culture so that the conversation will run smoothly —this is another one-way accommodation.

And if you weren't aware—when accommodations always flow in the same direction because the naming and confronting difference would make one party too uncomfortable or would be too costly in the relationship - then that's a power differential.

8. Identity Not Expressed

When the cultural or racial identity cannot be freely expressed, when some are implicitly asked to keep it within bounds so that dominant groups can continue the prerogative of feeling normal without interruption while others feel counter to the norm, then what happens to their identity? Identity may survive, depending on the private resilience and how well the racial group can preserve it in its “own time.” But the energy given to continually restoring identity has its own personal cost.

This is certain: Where identity cannot be expressed, people of different identities cannot grow in understanding of each other. Friendships begin with introductions, do they not? One cost of accommodations that can only flow one way is that the old relationship based on maintaining the comfort of the already-comfortable reinforces a status quo, rather than allowing for growth of understanding and change. Of course, preserving stasis is considered a benefit for systemic racism.

9. “Community”

Let's please be careful how we use this word. Many Asian Pacific Islander groups exist, and they may have their own relationships among each other, but those might not even be very well developed. If a network of churches, civic organizations, or business identities, a range of them within the API/NHPI designation, respond together to a particular current event—in the context of a local political election, for example— then it makes sense to say that the “API/NHPI community” responded. But if the local Japanese community responded, let's just say that.

Some Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders in the U.S. live very dispersed lives, in small, largely non-Asian towns, with very little contact with others of their race. They may just barely participate in an API/NHPI community, through ties to out-of-town relatives or online connections. But if we're not talking about their community involvement, wouldn't “Indian

American person” make more sense than “member of the Indian American community?”

Maybe this is a small matter. It isn’t a shared preference among API/NHPI folks. But my own personal hope is that paying close attention to how our words describe our realities can help us better understand those realities and each other

10. A mixed relationship with privilege

Some—not all—API/NHPI Americans are excluded from privilege in the ways I’ve described, yet they have also, through hard work and some plain good luck, reached an enviable level of education and socio-economic status.

Money and education do not always translate into power. Still, whatever educated, financially successful API/NHPI Americans are able to do within their sphere, to participate in dismantling racism, that is their responsibility. Their inclusion in favored spaces may be late in coming and always contingent in a society where white privilege predominates. Yet if they currently participate in the material gains of an economy that has become great largely through enslaved labor (and also the labor of other oppressed people of color) – then financially successful API/NHPI Americans have the responsibility of confronting questions of reparations and economic amends for slavery just like everyone else.

We have to acknowledge the pot itself is tainted until it is equitably distributed. We have to assert that access to funds does not nullify the importance of full inclusion in our nation, of cultural transmission and survival, and of our history and identity in the American story.

11. Implications of the “model minority” myth

The phrase myth of the model minority may not convey how many impacts there are. The implication that other groups, such as African Americans or Latinx, should match Asian and NHPI American experience is offensive and divisive. Many Asian American groups’ struggles needs are masked by this myth: Khmer, Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese students are reported to be doing about as well in school as African American and Latinx students. The income levels of Khmer, Laotian, Cambodian, and Bangladeshi Americans were under \$16,785 per capita per year in 2007-2009, with Vietnamese Americans doing only a little better. Even among East Asian Americans (whose higher averages contribute to this “positive stereotype”) attainment is not all equal because individuals vary. In the case of the Chinese Americans, also, earlier migrations tended to bring far more impoverished, uneducated laborers, while in the mid 20th century, there was an influx of highly trained middle class Chinese or Taiwanese immigrant professionals, possibly creating an “optical illusion” of more advancement than had actually happened.

Even for individuals and families that have had very rapid assimilation, high educational and financial achievement, how much difficulty is not recognized in those lives? Some individuals have traversed much ground, from one set of circumstances, responsibilities, cultural worlds, kinds of social networks and professional communities and sometimes world view - so very fast - this seems likely to create a strain on some individuals and families.

The factual inaccuracy of this “myth” is not its only flaw. What about its ethics? What is the value placed on assimilation and competitive achievement, rather than wholeness in God and the well-being of all people, in their beautiful diversity, together?

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/may

READ

Book of the Month: *Dear America: Notes of an Undocumented Citizen* by Jose Antonio Vargas who was born in the Philippines (biography)

[*Inside the Numbers: How Immigration Shapes Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities*](#) (website)

[“Asian Americans speak out against a decades-old ‘model minority’ myth”](#) (article)

[“America’s Real Migrant Crisis Is the One You’ve Never Heard Of”](#) An obscure 30-year-old treaty has landed thousands of Micronesians in poverty and homelessness in Hawaii (article)

[Japanese Internment Camps](#) (website)

[“Asian Americans Aren’t ‘Basically White’”](#) – Here Are 5 Ways Racism Hurts Us (article)



WATCH

[Asian Americans fight for equality](#): (19 min) The video explores the growth of the Asian American civil rights movement.

[Mixed Race Asians](#) (6:06) what they'll never tell you.

[Pacific Islanders: what they want you to know](#) (5:23 min)

[Cambodian-American Fights 'Model Minority' Stereotype In Education](#): (6:13) Cambodian-American education activists discuss the struggles the community faces in schools, and why there is no "one-mold-fits-all" approach that can address the needs of all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Explore [Na Maka o ka Aina, The Eyes of the Land](#) Hawaiian documentary and educational videos

LISTEN

[Songs for Ourselves](#): an Asian American music playlist

[Interview with Erika Lee](#), author of *The Making of Asian America* (29 min)

NOTICE Choose one or more



Notice where in your life you encounter people of Asian descent. Are they treated with respect?

When you talk with your friends, notice comments about API Americans. Have you or your friend made an assumption about the traits or mindset of someone that is what influenced by the model minority myth or by assumptions involving gender or childrearing styles?

Notice cultural appropriations in the naming and styling of toys, foods, restaurants, entertainment, digital technology, etc.

ENGAGE

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*

Explore: *A Different Asian American Timeline* (website)



Check out the [Iowa Asian Alliance](#) website. You will find information about CelebrAsian (an annual event in Des Moines each May), donating, and their newsletter. Or visit the Cedar Rapids AsianFest, and aim to use this time as a way to move beyond enjoying colorful sights, music, and foods to gaining deeper understandings.

Read through the list of Asian ethnic organizations on the Iowa International Center website. Are there any near you that you can connect with to learn more?

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

PRAYER



Holy One, we have heard your call to justice and repentance, and we are responding.

We resist temptations to look away, pretending not to hear.

We perceive your mandate to move beyond regret or "I'm sorry" to the active work of undoing systems of racism, whether they function at the legal or economic level or in our hearts or minds.

Layer on layer, we learn and grieve: new understandings of how one group imposes control on another, of forms of aggression and denial, of how far our communities are from what they should be.

We are not looking away. We are not pulling back. We turn to you for help. You are our God of judgment and our God of hope.

Do not excuse us from this work, but grant us courage to press on. We do not give you rationalizations but our hearts eager for change and our hands ready to respond. We turn away from "not my fault" to "ours to change." Guide us forward, together, in this work. Keep alive in us a flame of hope for justice for all races. Amen.

- Prayer by Aileen Chang-Matus

Intersections in Identity

"Many Black Christian girls are seduced by white evangelicalism, because, hell, it seems to be working out so well for white people. I mean, white Jesus helps white people to win a lot. But when my grandmother showed me that I could take a different approach to my theology, that it could be a push and pull, a debate, and even an ongoing set of arguments with God, she freed me up from my investment in being a Christian Goody Two-Shoes. I don't even believe God wants that. The God of Christianity seems to love people who are engaged in all manner of scandals, affairs, and murders. But I digress. We also have an absurd theology of discrimination against LGBTQ people. And far too many churches still believe that women can't be preachers or pastors. The thing we would all do well to remember is that conservative Christian theology was used to enslave Black people. We can use our theology to oppress people or to liberate them. That's our choice.

Sometimes this means that we have to reject the kind of Christian teaching that sets up a false binary between flesh and spirit, mind and body, and sacred and secular. To be Black in the United States is to be taught our flesh is dirty and evil. A liberatory theology for us cannot be at war with our very bodies. A liberatory theology for women cannot set us at war with the desires for touch, companionship, and connection that well up like deep springs in our spirits. When we hear about how "the heart is deceitful above all things," which is an actual verse, it teaches us to suppress our deepest longings, not to trust our own thoughts and our own counsel. For people who have been enslaved and oppressed because of their race, or gender, or sexuality, such interpretations are dangerous."

- from *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*, by Brittney Cooper, p139-140,

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/june

READ

Book of the Month: *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir* by Patrisse Khan-Cullors and Asha Bandele

["Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"](#) by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (paper)

[*Violence Against the Transgender Community in 2019*](#): HRC has been tracking reports of fatal anti-transgender violence for the past several years (website).

WATCH

[*The Urgency of Intersectionality*](#) (17:58 minutes) TED talk with Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Now more than ever, it's important to look boldly at the reality of race and gender bias -- and how the two can combine to create even more harm.

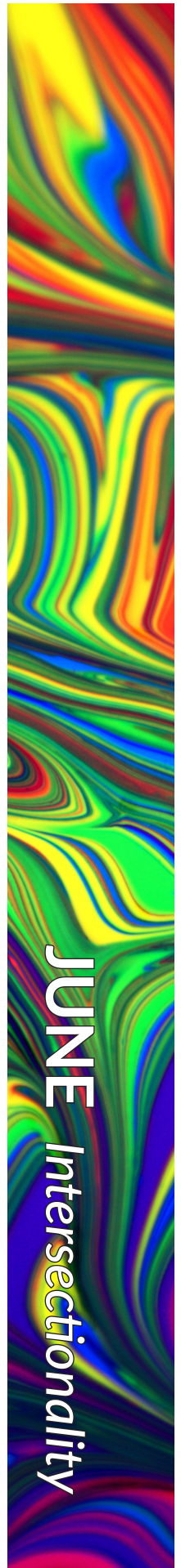
[*Outside Brother: The Life of Bayard Rustin*](#) (1 hr 24 min available on Netflix) This powerful documentary chronicles the life of openly gay civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, who, among many contributions to the cause, is best known for organizing the 1963 March on Washington, D.C., involving hundreds of thousands of people.

[*Why violence against transgender Americans is a crisis that's under reported*](#) (6:58)

[*Immigration is Love*](#): (3:35) In this video, diverse couples discuss the ways racism and immigration policy impact them in deeply personal ways. Their loving relationships are impacted and also are revealed as a source of strength and joy.



JUNE
Intersectionality



LISTEN

[The truth about Juneteenth](#) (12:48) June 19th is traditionally embraced as the day in 1863 when enslaved Africans in Texas learned they'd been freed. But historian Hari Jones, Assistant Director of the African-American Civil War Museum in Washington, D.C., says many are misinformed about the true significance of the holiday.

[Audre Lorde Reads Her Poems](#) (55:33) A self-described "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet," Audre Lorde dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing injustices of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia.

NOTICE *Choose one or more*



How do your local library and city programs honor Juneteenth? Is there a Juneteenth celebration in your community? If so, who are the majority of attendees? If there is not a Juneteenth celebration in your community, do you think there should be?

Check out the demographics for the LGBTQ+ population of Iowa from the [Williams Institute](#). What are your noticings?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*



Brainstorm with your family, or congregation on how your community can honor Juneteenth.

How is PRIDE month celebrated in your community? Are there any resources or special gatherings for people of color? Is there a parade or other activities you or your church community can participate in?

REFLECT



- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Holy God, like clay in the hands of the potter, you shape our lives and bring us into being,
each of us, creative expressions of your Divine intention. We are people of beauty.
We are people born from love. We are people who believe justice shall come.
We believe we are part of Your dream – for the flourishing of all life.
Bless us with confidence as we go forth this day to follow Christ. Amen.

- Adapted from *enfleshed*, September 8, 2019 liturgy notes



Housing and the Wealth Gap

If you lend money to my people, to the poor among you, you shall not deal with them as a creditor; you shall not exact interest from them.

Exodus 22:25

The following is from *Decolonizing Wealth*ⁱ, by Edgar Villanueva

*Villanueva is an expert on social justice philanthropy and an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe*ⁱⁱ

Now, some will say that it's "just the economy, stupid," the natural outcome of an ideology that puts the welfare of the free market and the rights of corporations before the welfare and rights of people. But I say that those who would focus the blame on the system of capitalism or neoliberalism are obscuring the real root of the problem. As Malcolm X said, "You can't have capitalism without racism."

Since at least the 1400's white supremacy has been the justification for colonization, the conquest and exploitation of non-European lands, backed by a claim of divine sanction. European white imperialism spent centuries marching around the world, using whatever means necessary to amass and consolidate resources and wealth. Now, adding insult to injury, those who were stolen from or exploited to make that wealth – Indigenous people, people of African descent, and many other people of color – must apply for access to that wealth in the form of loans or grants; we must prove ourselves worthy. We are demeaned for our lack of resources, scrutinized, and often denied access at all. . .

For most people, medicine is something used to treat or cure a disease, often a [synthetic] drug or sometimes an herb. In Native traditions, however, medicine is a way of achieving balance. An Indigenous medicine person doesn't just heal illnesses -- he or she can restore harmony or establish a state of being like peacefulness. . . many kinds of things can be medicine: a place, a word, a stone, an animal. . . Anyone can find and use medicine, just by allowing your intuition and feelings. . .

It has taken me a long time. . . to accept that the medicine that has chosen me is money. Because, I mean, money? Come on. Money corrupts. Money is dirty, even filthy. Money is the root of all evil, doesn't the Bible say that?

. . . in fact, the Bible doesn't say money's the root of all evil. It says the love of money is the root of all evil – in other words, when we let it be more important than life, relationships and humanity.

...Money is like water. Water can be a precious life-giving resource. But what happens when water is dammed, or when a water cannon is fired on protestors in sub-zero temperatures? Money should be a tool of love, to facilitate relationships, to help us thrive, rather than to hurt and divide us. If it's used for sacred, life-giving, restorative purposes, it can be medicine.

Can you imagine ways to use money as medicine, promoting healing?

Think of this, not only as your own individual money,
but money that is gathered collectively; church, government, local taxes, etc.

ⁱ Villanueva, Edgar, "Decolonizing Wealth," Bennett-Kohler Publishers, 2018.

ⁱⁱ © 2018 this excerpt is used under "fair use guidelines and should not be reproduced." From pp. 7-9

LEARN Choose one or more



For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/july

READ

Book of the Month: *The Hidden Rules of Race: Barriers to an Inclusive Economy* by Andrea Flynn, Susuan R. Holmberg, Dorian T. Warren, and Felicia J. Wong

Read: (long article) "[The Making of Ferguson](#)"

WATCH

[Struggle for black and Latino mortgage applicants suggests modern-day redlining](#) (11:12) The gap between white and Black homeownership is wider now than it was in 1960, with signs of modern-day redlining showing up across the country.

[The Disturbing History of the Suburbs](#) (6:19) Learn about redlining: the racist housing policy from the Jim Crow era that still affects us today.

[History of Sundown Towns](#) (2:24)

LISTEN

[House Rules](#): Where you live is important. It can dictate quality of schools and hospitals, as well as things like cancer rates, unemployment, or whether the city repairs roads in your neighborhood.

NOTICE Choose one or more



If you're traveling by car, train, or air, do you notice housing patterns? How is housing arranged? Who lives near the downtown commerce area and who does not? What is the density of a given neighborhood? Can you correlate any of this to racial identity?

What do you know about the history of your neighborhood? Do you live in a home that was passed down in your family? How is your relationship with your neighbors? Who do you and your neighbors consider to belong in your neighborhood?

ENGAGE

Choose one or more



Do some research to discover if your town or a town you have lived in was a Sundown Town. Visit your local library and ask them to help you identify Sundown Towns in your area.

Contact a realtor in your area and ask about housing patterns and lending practices in your town. Are there banks in your area that are known for discriminatory lending practices?

Explore the demographic profile of the 3-mile radius around your church.

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

PRAYER

Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me

Open unto me, light for my darkness

Open unto me, courage for my fear

Open unto me, hope for my despair

Open unto me, peace for my turmoil

Open unto me, joy for my sorrow

Open unto me, strength for my weakness

Open unto me, wisdom for my confusion

Open unto me, forgiveness for my sins

Open unto me, tenderness for my toughness

Open unto me, love for my hates

Open unto me, Thy Self for myself

Lord, Lord, open unto me!

- Howard Thurman



Back to School with School Equity

Matthew 18:2-6 New International Version (NIV)

He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

"Like other religions and denominations, the Episcopal Church has for many years and in many ways affirmed the importance of quality public education for all children as a justice issue, a moral issue, and a community issue. Since 1985, Episcopalians have passed resolutions at eight General Conventions and participated in ecumenical and interfaith collaborations . . .

However, the quality of US public education has deteriorated over those same decades.

More than twenty years after he was fired for teaching a Langston Hughes poem to Black fourth graders in Boston, Jonathan Kozol spent two years documenting the inequities between rich and poor students in cities like Detroit, New York, San Antonio, and Chicago. He documented in vivid heart-wrenching prose the inequalities between rich and poor children at school. In 1991, Kozol called his landmark book *Savage Inequalities*, and we are required to acknowledge now that our inequalities have become even more savage.

The Church's statements, agreements, and resolutions have had little impact, which should not surprise us. Resolutions are not enough."

- From Lallie Lloyd in *All Our Children: The Church's Call to Address Education Inequity*, Church Publishing, 2017

"Public education is a divine right, a human right, and for the common good." - The Rt. Rev Michael Curry

This month we'll learn about school inequity from various perspectives. As you see our children returning to school, you might ask yourself: "Are all our children receiving the same quality education in our community?" And, "How might we welcome and nurture all our children, as Jesus bids us to do?"

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/august

READ

Book of the Month: *The Hate You Give* by Angie Thomas or *Pushout* by Monique Morris

"[Racism Harms Children's Health](#)" (article) a growing body of research finds that racism has lasting physical and mental effects on children

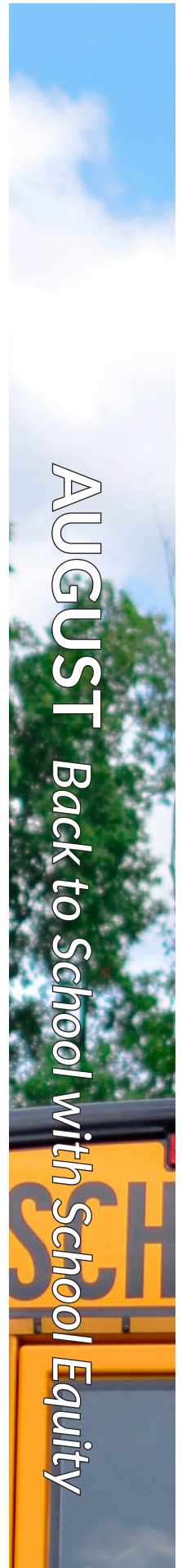
"[A letter to my son](#)" Ta-Nehisi Coats

"[Racism has devastating effects on children's health, Pediatricians warn](#)" by William Wan, Washington Post, August 2019

"[Becoming Upended: Teaching and Learning about Race and Racism with Young Children and Their Families](#)" by Kristen Cole, Diandra Verwayne, Publication: NAEYC May 2018



AUGUST Back to School with School Equity



WATCH

[Dear White Counselor](#) (5:05) by Sy Stokes

[School to Prison Pipeline](#) (3:16) A short video explaining the school-to-prison pipeline

[Why Black Girls are Targeted for Punishment at School:](#) (12:38) Ted talk by Monique W. Morris about the policies, practices, conditions and prevailing consciousness that criminalize and exclude children from learning environments.

LISTEN

[A Tale of Two Districts](#) 30:07 (podcast) In many parts of the U.S., public school districts are just minutes apart, but have vastly different racial demographics — and receive vastly different funding. That's in part due to *Milliken v. Bradley*, a 1974 Supreme Court case that limited a powerful tool for school integration.

[The Problem We All Live With](#) (podcast) Right now, all sorts of people are trying to rethink and reinvent education, to get poor minority kids performing as well as white kids. But there's one thing nobody tries anymore, despite lots of evidence that it works: desegregation. Nikole Hannah-Jones looks at a district that, not long ago, accidentally launched a desegregation program.

NOTICE *Choose one or more*



Iowa Code requires that equal opportunity in programs is provided to all students regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, socioeconomic status, disability, religion, or creed. 281—IAC 12.1(1), Iowa Code 280.3. Do some inquiring to find out what the barriers to participation in school programs might be in your area: cost, access, transportation for after-school activities, etc.

Iowa code requires nondiscrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, creed, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Title IX 34CFR 106.9 Section 504 34 CFR 104.8, Iowa Code 216.6. Find out what your district is doing to attract and retain teachers and employees of color.

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*

Find out if there are equity policies in place in your school district and what they are.



Look through your school district's website for things like: disparities in suspension rates, graduation rates, gifted and talented programs, hiring practices for teachers and administrators.

What steps has your church community taken towards school equity?

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

God our Creator, you created humankind in your image, and blessed us with your love. Help us to show that love to one another as we work for equality for all races in education, housing, public services, and employment. Give us strength and courage to speak out against injustice, and to work for the transformation of unjust systems that keep some in bondage: that we may more fully live out your kingdom here on earth; through Jesus Christ your son, who came to set us free." Amen.

Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage

An excerpt from the written testimony of Clara Long before the U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Reform, Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, July 11, 2019.ⁱ

"From June 17 to June 19, 2019, I was part of a team of lawyers, doctors and interpreters monitoring conditions for children in Border Patrol stations in the El Paso, Texas area on behalf of the class of children protected by the Flores Settlement Agreement. On June 17 and 19 I interviewed children detained at the Clint Border Patrol Station, and on June 18, I interviewed children and their families at the El Paso Station (also known as Station 1) and the Santa Teresa Border Patrol Station. I personally interviewed 16 detained children in these three facilities, while our monitoring team interviewed over 50 children throughout our visit.

Our in-depth interviews with children revealed that the US Border Patrol is holding many children, including some who are much too young to take care of themselves, in jail-like border facilities for weeks at a time without contact with family members, or regular access to showers, clean clothes, toothbrushes, or proper beds. Many were sick. Many, including children as young as 2 or 3, were separated from adult caretakers without any provisions for their care besides that provided by unrelated older children also being held in detention. These conditions are consistent with those Human Rights Watch documented in our February 2018 report, "In the Freezer." In contrast with the conditions as of February 2018, the harms of CBP detention for children are now compounding over weeks instead of days.

On my first day at Clint, I spoke with an 11-year-old boy who was caring for his 3-year-old brother. Both were fending for themselves in cinder-block cells with dozens of other children for three weeks. When I met them, the little one was quiet with matted hair, a hacking cough, muddy pants and eyes that fluttered closed with fatigue. As we spoke, he fell asleep on two office chairs drawn together. "I am the one who takes care of him here," the older brother told us. "There was a teenage girl with curly hair who was helping me take care of him for a while. I don't know her name. But she's gone now. Now, no one helps me to take care of him."

A 14-year-old told our team she was taking care of a 4-year-old girl who had been placed in her cell with no relatives. "I take her to the bathroom, give her my extra food if she is hungry, and tell people to leave her alone if they are bothering her," she said. "She has been sick the whole time I have been taking care of her, and is coughing and has mucous. She doesn't talk hardly at all, just 'yes' and 'no.' She wears diapers and I change them for her."

An 11-year-old boy detained with his 9-year-old brother and 7-year-old sister told us, "Nobody takes care of us here. I try to take care of my little brother and sister since no one will take care of them. There are little kids here who have no one to take care of them, not even a big brother or sister. Some kids are only 2 or 3-years-old and they have no one to take care of them."

"Here the church, like every human being, is faced with the choice that is most fundamental for its faith: to be on the side of life or on the side of death. We see very clearly that on this point no neutrality is possible. Either we serve the life of the Salvadoran people or we connive in their death. Here, too, is the historical mediation of what is most fundamental in the Christian faith: either we believe in a God of life or we serve the idols of death" (Address at Louvain, Feb. 2, 1980; in SVF, p. 373)."

— Gustavo Gutiérrez, *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*

ⁱ https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/11/written-testimony-kids-cages-inhumane-treatment-border#_ftn4

LEARN Choose one or more

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/september



READ

Book of the Month: *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* by Gloria E. Anzaldúa

[“Moving beyond the black/white binary article”](#) about how the black-white binary keeps Latino/a/x voices out of public discourse and erases important stories of history.

[Latino Civil Rights Timeline](#) (website)

[“Why are people using the term ‘latinx’”](#) (article)

[“How do latinos really feel about Hispanic Heritage Month?”](#)

WATCH

[Postville: When Cultures Collide](#) (53min) Through the prism of Postville, Iowa (population 1,500), this documentary examines what happens when a once homogeneous town becomes a new model for the American melting pot. This program investigates the roots of cultural misunderstanding, explores the meaning of community, showcases the manifestation of underlying racism and offers a glimpse into what might be the future of small town America.

[Peril and Promise](#): (55min) Takes viewers through the past 30 years, with a second wave of Cubans arriving in Miami during the Mariel exodus and with hundreds of thousands Salvadorans, Nicaraguans and Guatemalans fleeing civil wars, death squads and unrest to go north into a new land — transforming the United States along the way.

[Latino and Hispanic identities aren't the same. They're also not racial groups.](#) (6min)

LISTEN

Podcast on [Hernandez v. Texas](#), which addressed civil rights for Mexican Americans, and was the first case to be argued before the Supreme Court by Mexican American attorneys. It set a new precedent in how the 14th Amendment was interpreted in terms of race and ethnicity.

NOTICE Choose one or more

What opportunities are there in your community to celebrate Latino and Hispanic Heritage month?



Follow the Iowa Department of Human Rights on Facebook where they highlight Latino & Hispanic Iowans during September and October.

ENGAGE

Choose one or more



Connect with people in your area working on immigration issues.

Prepare yourself to interrupt racial jokes.

Join national advocacy campaigns such as the #DisarmHate campaign organized by the Detention Watch Network.

REFLECT

- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER

Creator God, We thank You for our wondrous diversity, for our cultures, traditions and languages, for all the ways we celebrate our humanity and praise Your divinity. We value all peoples, and in this time, we celebrate Hispanic and Latino/a/x Heritage Month. May we remember in our churches the leaders, teachers, and theologians that have been part of our Christian faith tradition. May we continue to hear from diverse voices that speak the truth of God's love, peace and justice for all peoples. Guide us in ways of new understandings to build a more inclusive church. In the name of Christ Jesus, our Savior, Redeemer and Friend, we pray. Amen.

-adapted from a prayer by Rev. Mindi Welton-Mitchell



People of Corn, People of Light

An excerpt from *Braiding Sweetgrass*ⁱ by Robin Wall Kimmerer, a mother, a scientist, and a decorated professor who is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potowatomi Nationⁱⁱ

Perhaps you can remember back to our first month, when we read the story of Skywoman. During this month of October, as we reflect on Indigenous People's Day (formerly Columbus Day), think again about what we've learned about the Doctrine of Discovery. Below is another beautiful story, this time about the creation of humans. Dr. Kimmerer shows us, once again, the importance of being one with Creation. She writes:

"The story of our relationship to the earth is written more truthfully on the land than on the page. It lasts there. The land remembers what we said and what we did. Stories are among our most potent tools for restoring the land as well as our relationship to the land. We need to unearth the old stories that live in a place and begin to create new ones, for we are storymakers, not just storytellers. All stories are connected, new ones woven from the threads of the old. One of the ancestor stories, that waits for us to listen again with new ears, is the Mayan story of Creation.

It is said that in the beginning there was emptiness. The divine beings, the great thinkers, imagined the world into existence simply by saying its name. The world was populated with rich flora and fauna, called into being by words. But the divine beings were not satisfied. Among the wonderful beings they had created, none were articulate. They could sing and squawk and growl, but none had voice to tell the story of their creation nor praise it. So the gods set about to make humans.

The first humans, the gods shaped of mud. But the gods were none too happy with the result. The people were not beautiful; they were ugly and ill formed. They could not talk – they could barely walk and certainly could not dance or sing the praises of the gods. They were so crumbly and clumsy and inadequate that they could not even reproduce and just melted away in the rain.

So the gods tried again to make good people who would be givers of respect, givers of praise, providers and nurturers. To this end they carved a man from wood and a woman from the pith of a reed. Oh, these were beautiful people, lithe and strong; they could talk and dance and sing. Clever people, too: they learned to use the other beings; plants and animals, for their own purposes. They made many things, farms and pottery and houses, and nets to catch fish. As a result of their fine bodies and fine minds and hard work, these people reproduced and populated the world, filling it with their numbers.

But after a time the all-seeing gods realized that these people's hearts were empty of compassion and love. They could sing and talk, but their words were without gratitude for the sacred gifts they had received. These people did not know thanks or caring and so endangered the rest of the Creation. The gods wished to end this failed experiment in humanity and so they sent great catastrophes to the world – they sent a flood, and earthquakes, and most importantly, they loosed the retaliation of the other species. The previously mute trees and fish and clay were given voices for their grief and anger at the disrespect shown them by the humans made of wood. Trees ravaged against the humans for their sharp axes, the deer for their arrows, and even the pots made of earthen clay rose up in anger for the times they had been carelessly burnt. All of the misused members of Creation rallied together and destroyed the people made of wood in self-defense.

Once again the gods tried to make human beings, but this time purely of light, the sacred energy of the sun. These humans were dazzling to behold, seven times the color of the sun, beautiful, smart, and very, very powerful. They knew so much that they believed they knew everything. Instead of being grateful to the creators for their gifts, they believed themselves to be the gods' equals. The divine beings understood the danger posed by these people made of light and once more arranged for their demise.

And so the gods tried again to fashion humans who would live right in the beautiful world they had created, in respect and gratitude and humility. From two baskets of corn, yellow and white, they ground a fine meal, mixed it with water, and shaped a people made of corn. They were fed on corn liquor and oh these were good people. They could dance and sing and they had words to tell stories and offer up prayers. Their hearts were filled with compassion for



the rest of Creation. They were wise enough to be grateful. The gods had learned their lesson, so to protect the corn people from the overpowering arrogance of their predecessors, the people made of light, they passed a veil before the eyes of the corn people, clouding their vision as breath clouds a mirror. These people of corn are the ones who were respectful and grateful for the world that sustained them -- and so they were the people who were sustained upon the earth. (Adapted from oral tradition)"

Of all the materials, why is it that people of corn would inherit the earth, rather than people of mud or wood or light? Could it be that people made of corn are beings transformed? For what is corn, after all, but light transformed by relationship? Corn owes its existence to all four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. And corn is the product of relationship not only with the physical world, but with people too.

... Creation, then, is an ongoing process and the story is not history alone – it is also prophecy. Have we already become people of corn? Or are we still people made of wood? Are we people made of light, in thrall to our own power? Are we not yet transformed by relationship to earth?

As you reflect on this story, can you see our corn differently? Can you imagine, once again, the ways in which we are partners with God in the care of Creation?

i Kimmerer, Robin Wall, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Milkweed Editions, 2013, pp. 341-343

ii © 2013 this excerpt is used under "fair use guidelines and should not be reproduced."

LEARN *Choose one or more*

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/october



READ

Book of the Month: *There There* by Tommy Orange. A chorus of voices tells of the plight of the urban Native American—grappling with a complex and painful history, with an inheritance of beauty and spirituality, with communion and sacrifice and heroism. (fiction)

["Winona LaDuke Calls for Indigenous-Led 'Green New Deal' as She Fights Minnesota Pipeline Expansion"](#) (interview transcript)

["Settlement Sovereignty: The Meskwaki Fight for Self-Governance, 1856–1937"](#) (36 pages) by Eric Steven Zimmer

WATCH

[*Paha Sapa: The struggle for the Black Hills*](#) (59 min) The continuing struggle of the Cheyenne and Lakota Sioux peoples to regain their sacred ground is movingly portrayed in this documentary video.

A tribe called Red: [*Black Snakes*](#) (music video) A music video about resistance and resilience at Standing Rock by a member of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe.

[*Stand Up/Stand N Rock*](#) (music video) This song and video were created in support of the Standing Rock Reservation and the Sioux Tribe, as part of the movement to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL).

LISTEN

[*Native America Calling*](#) (podcast) Based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, this podcast features a "thought-provoking national conversation from a Native perspective." The program includes Native-related news, guests, and discussions of Native issues, culture, and people.

[*The Fight To End Violence Against Indigenous Women Continues In Iowa*](#) (48:31) Iowa Public Radio interview with three Indigenous women, who are fighting to raise awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women and relatives, and end the cycle of violence.

NOTICE *Choose one or more*



Follow the hashtag #MMIW (Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women) to stay aware of violence against Indigenous women and how people are taking action across the country.

Follow St. Paul's Indian Mission on Facebook to learn more about the diocesan ministry in Sioux City, Iowa.

Do any of the schools in your area use Native American people and spiritual symbols as sports team names and mascots? Are there streets or landmarks in your area that have Indigenous roots?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*



Visit the Meskwaki Cultural Center & Museum in Tama, Iowa and learn about the Meskwaki nation's rich history and traditions. Open M-F 8:30am-4:00pm or other times by appointment.

Conduct and disseminate research on your denomination's involvement as operators, promoters, managers, teachers, and funders of Indian boarding schools. Explore the resources from the [Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition](#).

Attend a school board meeting and inquire about the representation of Native Americans in current books used at school and inquire about how the district plans to recognize Indigenous People's Day (formerly celebrated in the state as Columbus Day).

REFLECT



- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

- from *A Year of Prayers to End Racism*

Moving from Ally to Accomplice

“White people raised in Western society are conditioned into a white supremacist worldview because it is the bedrock of our society and its institutions. Regardless of whether a parent told you that everyone was equal, or the poster in the hall of your white suburban school proclaimed the value of diversity, or you have traveled abroad, or you have people of color in your workplace or family, the ubiquitous socializing power of white supremacy cannot be avoided. The messages circulate 24-7 and have little or nothing to do with intentions, awareness, or agreement. Entering the conversation with this understanding is freeing because it allows us to focus on how--rather than if--our racism is manifest. When we move beyond the good/bad binary, we can become eager to identify our racist patterns because interrupting those patterns becomes more important than managing how we think we look to others.

I repeat: stopping our racist patterns must be more important than working to convince others that we don't have them. We do have them, and people of color already know we have them; our efforts to prove otherwise are not convincing. An honest accounting of these patterns is no small task given the power of white fragility and white solidarity, but it is necessary.”

— Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*

DiAngelo's book makes it clear that white supremacy is much more pervasive and subtle than the actions of explicit white nationalists that we might read about or see on the news. She demonstrates that White supremacy is more than the idea that whites are superior to people of color; it is the deeper premise that supports this idea—the definition of white people as the normative or standard mode of being human, and different skin colors as a deviance from that.

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Because racism is embedded in our daily lives in this country, DiAngelo says that feedback is essential to be able to recognize the places where we have been complicit in that system and to learn, grow and change our patterns of behavior. How can we become grateful for feedback and see it as part of what we need to be able to persevere in resisting evil?

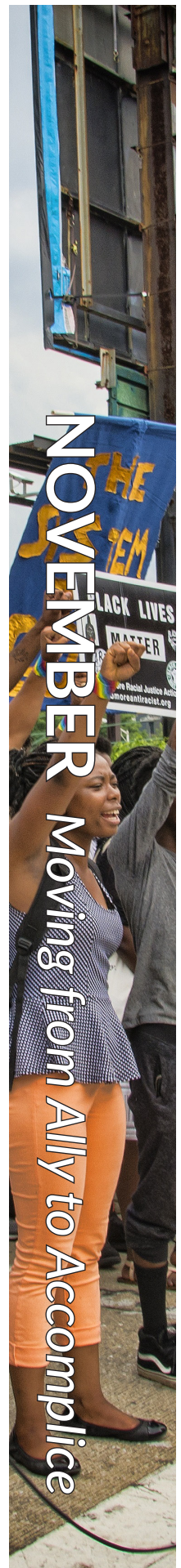
Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

DiAngelo says, “The idea of racial inferiority was created to justify unequal treatment; belief in racial inferiority is not what triggered unequal treatment. Nor was fear of difference. As Ta- Nehisi Coates states, “But race is the child of racism, not the father.” He means that first we exploited people for their resources, not according to how they looked. Exploitation came first, and then the ideology of unequal races to justify this exploitation followed.”

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

In *White Fragility*, DiAngelo says, “Race scholars use the term white supremacy to describe a sociopolitical economic system of domination based on racial categories that benefits those defined and perceived as white. This system of structural power privileges, centralizes, and elevates white people as a group. If, for example, we look at the racial breakdown of the people who control our institutions, we see telling numbers in 2016–2017:

- Ten richest Americans: 100 percent white (seven of whom are among the ten richest in the world)
- US Congress: 90 percent white
- US governors: 96 percent white
- Top military advisers: 100 percent white
- President and vice president: 100 percent white
- US House Freedom Caucus: 99 percent white
- Current US presidential cabinet: 91 percent white
- People who decide which TV shows we see: 93 percent white



- People who decide which books we read: 90 percent white
- People who decide which news is covered: 85 percent white
- People who decide which music is produced: 95 percent white
- People who directed the one hundred top-grossing films of all time, worldwide: 95 percent white
- Teachers: 82 percent white
- Full-time college professors: 84 percent white
- Owners of men's professional football teams: 97 percent white"

These percentages do not match racial makeup of our country, which is only 72.4% white. What does striving for justice and peace mean to you in terms of racial justice and healing?

LEARN Choose one or more

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/november



READ

Book of the Month: *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo

"[Moving from Ally to Accomplice: How Far Are You Willing to Go to Disrupt Racism in the Workplace?](#)" (article)

"[White People: This Is How To Check Your Privilege When Asking People of Color For Their Labor](#)" (article)

"[Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice Moving from Actor → Ally → Accomplice](#)"

WATCH

[I didn't tell you:](#) (7:27) A poem about the difference in the ways our daily lives play out due to race.

[How to overcome our biases? Walk boldly toward them](#) (17:53) A TED talk by Verna Meyers inviting people to acknowledge our biases. Then move toward, not away from, the groups that make us uncomfortable.

America Inside Out Series 1 [White Anxiety](#) (46:34) A documentary with Katie Couric Katie Couric that examines the real roots of anger and frustration among America's white working class. In this episode, The anxiety among the white working class is examined to understand its impact on America's political and cultural divide.

LISTEN

[How to move from ally to accomplice](#) (podcast) DeRay Mckesson—civil rights activist, author of *On the Other Side of Freedom*, and host of the podcast *Pod Save the People*—gives us all a reason to feel hopeful. Part of Mckesson's work is rooted in the highest form of make-believe: telling stories about a more just future, a world we haven't seen yet. The next part of this important work is getting people ready to live in that world. Our broken systems, Mckesson reminds us, were made up—and so we can make better ones.

NOTICE



Notice how you are showing up in the work of racial justice - as an actor, ally, or accomplice. Has that changed at all over this year?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*



Learn about and support policies put forward by The Movement for Black Lives.

Organize a film night or book group with family, friends, colleagues, or neighbors to learn and discuss together the dynamics and realities of privilege and power.

Participate in a program that accompanies formerly incarcerated or detained people returning to community and their families. Such programs offer mentoring, job skills, clothing closets, and spiritual and emotional support, and help churches to listen and learn from wise, vulnerable neighbors.

Consider what you have learned with us so far. What topic areas do you know your relatives or friends may have a problem with? Why? Consider engaging in conversations with people you know as a way to challenge perspectives that are dehumanizing to others who may not look like your family, believe in the same God, or share the same experiences.

REFLECT



- What stood out to you the most?
- How are you feeling?
- What action will you take?
- Who in your family/community may want to take action with you?

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER

Holy God, becoming allies and accomplices requires risk.
Creating a better world with you takes courage.
Remind us each day of your love. Holy Word made Flesh, you came to show us how to live.
You invited everyone to be an accomplice with you.
Be with us as we strive to tell the truth and repent.
Be with us as we seek to proclaim your dream and practice the way of love.
Holy Spirit, envelop us as we work to repair the breach.
Bind us together in new ways with our allies and accomplices and new friends.
All this, we ask in the name of your one holy and undivided Trinity. Amen.



Ushering in the Kin-dom of God

Look around.

The Sacred has collided with the flesh.

Holiness incarnates.

The Spirit of Christ has come.

Wars still rage. Hunger persists. White supremacy continues.

The joy of Christmas does not shield us from betraying one another,
from building walls, from shunning queer love or normalizing misogyny.

And yet.

And yet.

Here in the midst of it

God is with us.

As close as our own breath,

as deep as our longings,

as intimate as the love we share,

as present as our hunger, our pain, our pleasure, our touch.

In the middle of a world swirling with chaos,

something new is born.

Something that turns us towards each other,

that will keep us dreaming of an economy that doesn't profit from the poor,

that will make us proud of queering notions of love and relationship,

that will give us the courage to disrupt the lies of white supremacy,

that will help us stay soft even when things are so very hard,

that will remind us how powerful Love can be when it is channeled in the direction of
collective liberation.

Today, we are reminded that we don't have to look very far for the source of our hope.

We just have to pay attention. Close attention.

Listening carefully in the midst of all the noise.

Letting wisdom bubble up from within.

Moving at the pace of God, not of production.

Take courage. Linger in the mystery. Look anew at one another.

Christ has come. All flesh shall be set free.

(from "enfleshed," a community and online resource that seeks to provide individuals and communities with spiritual and theological resources for liturgy, prayer & contemplation, preaching, teaching, and consulting that speak directly to what matters the most.)

LEARN Choose one or more

For links to these resources visit: becomingbelovedcommunity.org/december

READ

Book of the Month: *Meditations of the Heart* by Howard Thurman

"[The King Philosophy](#)" from the King Center. Includes the Triple Evils, Six Principles Of Nonviolence, Six Steps of Nonviolent Social Change and The Beloved Community

"[The Case for Reparations](#)" (article) by Ta-Nehisi Coates



[“The Subversive Work of Kin-Dom Building”](#) (article)

[“The American Church’s Complicity in Racism: A Conversation with Jemar Tisby”](#) (article)

WATCH

Presiding Bishop Michael Curry on the [church’s work for racial healing](#). (5:46)

Learn about the [Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing](#) (3:18)

LISTEN

[A Brave Space](#) (podcast) with Dr. Catherine Meeks of the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing. The sessions explore various topics that address the intersections between slavery, lynching, the prison industrial complex, the death penalty and 21st-century police killings and the ways in which these issues prohibit racial healing in America.

[Are Private Schools Immoral?](#) A conversation with Nikole Hannah-Jones about race, education, and hypocrisy. (34:17) Nikole Hannah-Jones and The Atlantic’s editor in chief, Jeffrey Goldberg, discuss how integrated schools are good for white children and Black children.

NOTICE



In *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*, Kelly Brown Douglas writes about kairos time. Douglas explains that, “...this time in the life of the country is a *kairos* time. *Kairos* time is the right or opportune time. It is a decisive moment in history that potentially has far-reaching impact. It is often a chaotic period, a time of crisis, However, it is through the chaos and crisis that God is fully present, disrupting things as they are and providing an opening to a new future – to God’s future” (Douglas, p. 206). What are you noticing around you that might indicate we are living in *kairos* time?

ENGAGE *Choose one or more*



Explore with your friends, family, and/or members of your congregation: what collective commitments and behaviors could you all make that would begin to foster Beloved Community?

Become involved with and support the work of Beloved Community Initiative in the Diocese of Iowa.

REFLECT

- 

[illegible]

[illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

PRAYER



O, God, like Mary, we rejoice in you.
Our souls magnify you, for you have done great things for us.
You look with favor on all who serve Love.
You uplift the overlooked and under-represented.
You tear down the powerful from their thrones.
You fill the hungry and redistribute the resources of the rich.
The promises made to the ancestors of our faith are fulfilled.
Blessed are all who believe. A new day is dawning. Christ is being birthed among us.

As we pray with all who have joined us in this study, help us remember that You take on flesh among us. We will see it in bold actions that confront evil. We will hear it in silences broken. We will feel it in full bellies and warm bodies, and comforting embraces. We will know it is You when it leads us to collective salvation. Help us go from here in courage. Love is on the way.

Amen.

- adapted from enfleshed, December 23, 2018



Beloved Community Initiative

26 E Market St., Iowa City, IA 52245

becomingbelovedcommunity.org

a mission of the Diocese of Iowa