

Racial Justice Sunday Worship Service

Prepared by members of the Race Equality Advisory Group for Coventry Diocese

CONFESSION/ABSOLUTION *(Written by R. Frances)*

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and our own humanity,
by failing to see and appreciate the beauty
present in the abundant diversity of your human creation.
We are sorry.

Jesus Christ, Word of God, Lord and Saviour,
we have sinned against you by failing to equally accept
all for whom you suffered and died, and
excluding our brothers and sisters with different hues of skin.
We are sorry.

Holy Spirit, Advocate and giver of every good gift,
we have sinned against you and marred your Church,
by excluding the gifts and talents you bestowed on your people,
of different ethnicities, cultures, and languages.
We are sorry.

May the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
who created all humanity in their likeness,
forgive us of every sin,
enrich us with divine enlightenment,
and empower us to serve all people
revealing the equality, justice and love of God.

COLLECTS

Option #1 *(Written by Neil Masih)*

Lord God,
as we approach Racial Justice Sunday
inspire us to reflect your love for us all
in that you made us in your own image.
Unite the people of the world you created
to love you and each other,
to understand the wrongs committed
based on ethnicity and skin colour.
May we, like Saint Peter, reflect
and understand that God shows no partiality,
but in every nation

anyone who hears your call and answers,
who fears and in humility approaches,
and does what is right and acceptable in your sight
is received by You. **Amen.**

Option #2 *(Written by Millicent Dews)*

Most Heavenly Father,
Creator of all that is good,
cover us with your illuminating and protective light
as we pray for the eradication of all that is evil in our world.
Teach us to work together for justice and equality,
regardless of ethnicity, social status, or culture,
that we may embrace and avail ourselves of the bountiful gifts
you have bestowed upon all your people
through Jesus Christ, your Son our Lord.
In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Option #3 *(Written by R. Frances)*

Merciful God,
you are righteous and love justice:
stir the hearts of your people that,
rejoicing in our diversity,
we may repent of the wrongs of the past,
and, by your grace, seek the peaceful kingdom of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION COLLECTS

Option #1 *(Written by Millicent Dews)*

Universal Saviour,
You sacrificed all,
so we could have life.
In partaking of your Body and Blood,
you have fulfilled our hunger
and quenched our thirst.
As participants in Your holy meal,
may we be united as one people,
and transformed by the redemptive work
of your magnificent glorious cross.

Psalm 101.1-10 *Refrain: Happy are those who hope in the Lord,
who executes justice for the oppressed.*

New Testament: Luke 18.1-8

LAMENTS AND POETRY

Lament for Racial Justice

“Giving You All of Me” *(Written by Emili JoLynn)*

Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, our eternal creator
How did we get to a world lacking of love and fear is greater
You're outside of time and space, you know my future and my past
Though my smile is kind and my heart is just, why am I an outcast?
Though I work twice as hard and strive for excellence, my presence instils fear
Or is my skin a reminder, of the slaves and native cries that no one cared to hear

No matter what, I'm giving you all of me
Living for you faithfully
Though I'm down and out...
On the ground...
And, I can't breathe
I'm praying for freedom
Lord, hear my cry
I'm praying for freedom
Let freedom ring
I have a dream

Separated by hatred, pushed around, ignored, humiliated and passed over
When we were made one race of humans in the image of the Lord
I stand on the word though my faith is tested
My eyes are focused on you, I'm completely invested
Though my eyes have never seen you, I blindly trust
Rise me from ashes and mould me like Adam from the dust

No matter what, I'm giving you all of me
Living for you faithfully
Though I'm down and out...
On the ground...
And, I can't breathe
I'm praying for freedom
Lord, hear my cry
I'm praying for freedom
Let freedom ring
I have a dream

You're the God of justice and mercy, You set captives free
While I stand in bondage, will you move the chains off me?
In a world plagued by hate, injustice, addiction, pollution and greed
Forced to build whilst carrying life's burden, when it's heaven I want to see
Let me be like Moses; Lord bring the change I want to see and use me
Protect me by your blood, part the waters and tell pharaoh to set your people free

No matter what, I'm giving you all of me
Living for you faithfully
Though I'm down and out...
On the ground...
And, I can't breathe
I'm praying for freedom
Lord, hear my cry
I'm praying for freedom
Let freedom ring
I have a dream

A dream where everyone can live in peace, share, be free to run the race and win
Where I no longer am afraid or feared because of the colour of my skin
My hope is that my children can grow and learn the beauty of creation
To travel safely without being considered a threat due to their home nation or life's station
My dream is that everyone will know your love and live as God intended
Where divided people are reunited in relationship with you and have befriended

No matter what, I'm giving you all of me
Living for you faithfully
Though I'm down and out...
On the ground...
And, I can't breathe
I'm praying for freedom
Lord, hear my cry
I'm praying for freedom
Let freedom ring
I have a dream

This is just a simple prayer from your humble servant is all I can give
Only you can move mountains, only by your breath of life can I live
Christ said the poor will always be with us and I believe this may be true
But no matter what I await your return and continue to do all I can do
To spread the good news, and share the love of Christ with all I see and know
In hope that your light may shine and seeds of unity will grow

Hope *(Written by Neil Masih)*

Hope for the future is often needed
Rely on Jesus who is our hope,
a light that always shines equally on all.
He offers peace and justice
to all brothers and sisters in Christ
Regardless of ethnicity, colour, male or female,
culture or class, Jesus loves each and everyone of us just as we are.
It's a hope that never fades
if we continue to have faith in Jesus!

When Justice Flows *(Written by R. Frances)*

Let justice flow like rivers
in ways that humble my heart,
and still my soul,
even as my spirit shakes and quivers.
Let this justice river flow
heavy and thick as red hot lava,
defeating hatred, bigotry, and exclusion in its wake
as my spirit soars and peacefully rests
in a 'heaven on earth' *Holy Spirit* nirvana.

What gives me strength to await this spiritual coming?
The knowledge that God, the all-seeing,
all-knowing, all-being Messiah
continually fills me with an abundant,
compassionate, forgiving love
that brings songs of joy, with praise on my lips
to keep my impatient heartbeat strumming.

Beating as one heart, in Spirit, body, and mind
I soar to a place where I glimpse the divine,
even though slightly, so gently sublime.
His touch is all that is needed
for my heart to take flight,
confident in God's love, blessings, favour – I am His, he is mine
a small sampling of eternally pure, mutual delight.

When justice pours out like mighty rivers
and over-flooded streams
we will experience powerful blessings,
miraculous healings, ever present joy and peace,
radiating from the heavenly throne room
in all-encompassing beams.

Till then, I'll endure the jeers, the passing over,
invisibility, rejection and heated tears
because I know the God who brought me here,
transformed my soul, touched by mind,
and gently held me in his arms through painfilled years.

When justice flows, we live in God's world and not our own.

CREED *(Written by R. Frances)*

We believe in one God, divine Creator of heaven and earth,
and every human being.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ the only Word of God,
through him, all beings were created
to reveal the divine creative excellence,
reflected in diverse hues of skin,
language, ethnicity, and culture.

We believe in one Spirit, Holy Advocate and Gift Giver,
who endows the people of God with divine enlightenment
to discern and embrace the spiritual gifts
bestowed upon every brother and sister united in Christ.

We believe one God – Creator, Word, and Gift Giver,
Holy Trinity, three beings in one,
who embody divine unity,
mutual equality, and abounding love extended to all.
As One, they empower all believers to do the same.

PRAYERS AND INTERCESSIONS

Option 1 *(Written by Jen Jenkins)*

Lord Jesus Christ, during your ministry you brought those from the margins into the middle. Your incarnation brought a loving God into the everyday lives of those from different classes, cultures and nations. Their cry for help was not lost to your ears and their oppression and suffering found compassion and understanding in your loving response. In you continues to be found healing and wholeness. May it be the same in the body, the Church of Christ. May we help those who struggle, take up the cry of the marginalised and embrace every opportunity for justice on behalf of our communities and neighbours.

*Lord in your mercy, **All: Hear our prayer***

Creator God, One in Three Persons, a divine Trinity of love and difference, unity and authenticity. You have created the human species in your image, in many hues and in

vibrant diversity, yet somehow our own eyes can be blind to this truth, magnifying the differences between us as a barrier instead of a bind. Where we lack the clarity to see our human sameness, help us to examine our prejudices and to view our fellow humans with the eyes of our Creator. Each of us are created in your own image, expressing the richness and diversity of our Father. When our difference makes us fearful, mistrusting and confused, let us come to you with open hearts and a willingness to understand and learn. Where some may seek to build up walls, give us leaders with the desire and the tools to create a church that offers refuge to all communities and cultures. There are no strangers, only brothers and sisters.

*Lord in your mercy, **All: Hear our prayer***

Father, we speak of you as a God of love, who sent His Son to the world out of nothing but love for humanity. Yet sometimes, it is not love that drives us. When power gets in the way of love, forgive us Lord. Let the love we show be a deep desire for equity, not just in our church communities but in our nation, so that housing, education, employment and services all offer love expressed as justice. Emboldened with your gift of courage, let us use our voices as courageous advocates, from the very youngest of us in our schools and church communities to the oldest among us with the wisdom of many decades at their service. Where we have opportunity, let us reach for systematic equity and justice.

*Lord in your mercy, **All: Hear our prayer***

Lord, Jesus Christ, you reached across the seeming boundaries of your time towards those who struggled; to talk with the Samaritan woman at the well, to heal the servant of a Roman centurion, to encourage your fellow brothers and sisters into holy and healing conversations. Your ministry was sight-giving, captive-freeing, bond-breaking. Help us to do similar in our own communities, teaching our children and young people to uproot racism and prejudice, to be interrupters of discrimination and to use their talents and creative gifts to call out what is not just or fair in today's world, as they see us doing the same.

*Lord in your mercy, **All: Hear our prayer***

Holy Spirit, you reveal your beauty in the diverse reflections of humanity made in the divine image. Help us to rediscover the truth that all humans are important and that it is only through the myriad of difference that we can truly see the face of a God who loves us.

*Lord in your mercy, **All: Hear our prayer***

Option 2 *(Written by Millicent Dews)*

Praise the Lord, all nations!
Extol Him, all peoples
for great is His steadfast love
towards us, and the faithfulness
of the Lord ensures forever.

Praise the Lord!

(Psalm 117: 1-2)

Joyous Saviour,
we give thanks for all that You have done for us.
For creation, for the many nations, cultures, ethnicities,
which we are all part of – we Praise Your Holy Name.

Joyous Saviour **All: We pray this**

Most Loving Saviour,
we give thanks for Your church.
Help us to recognise what it is to be community.
What it is to work together, to give, to share and to love.

Joyous Saviour **All: We pray this**

Father of Justice,
we come before You, as we remember our world.
A world where there is so much injustice, hatred, racism, war,
greed and so much more.
Help us to be a voice to the oppressed,
to be a comfort to the dispossessed,
and an anchor to the marginalised.
We pray that one day all leaders
will come together as one,
for the good of all humankind.

Father of Justice **All: We pray this**

Almighty and everlasting God,
by Your Holy Spirit we become one.
Hear our prayers, as we continue to follow in Your foot steps
and be guided by Your words. **Amen.**

Option 3 *(Written by Neil Masih)*

We pray for equality among people
regardless of race, gender and disability.
Equal access to education, healthcare,
careers and fairness in the justice system.
We pray that the Church will reflect fairness
and be a beacon for justice
for those who are marginalised in society.
Guide us to love our neighbours both near and far.

Our prayer is also with those who feel injustice

or inequality due to their age.
Help us to guide young people
and use the wisdom from those who have matured in life.
Thank you that you have made us in your image
and unite us in the beauty of the many nations
that worship and serve you.
Help us to live in unity with love at the centre of
those we know, and those we are to meet
so that people can see you in us.

We give thanks for the way churches around the world unite
in their desire to love and worship you.
We praise you for the joy worship brings us
and for the growth of the church in all corners of the world.
Help us to embrace different styles of Christian worship
and learn from them.
May your Holy Scripture be accessed by all
so nations can hear the truth of the living word.

We pray that we can work towards a world full of Christian love
where there is no pain or sorrow,
and where your presence is around us.
May we be part of John's vision in Revelation 7:9
where a great multitude that no one could number,
from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages
stand before the throne worshipping the Lamb. **Amen.**

PRAYER AT PREPARATION OF THE TABLE *(Written by R. Frances)*

As seeds of grain were scattered in the fields,
and grapes sprouted on vines in the hills,
unite on this table in bread and wine;
so, Lord Jesus, may your whole Church
amongst all nations and tribes and people
be drawn into your kingdom
from every corner of Your earth. **Amen.**

SHORT PREFACE *(Written by R. Frances)*

And now we give you thanks
that through the Word made flesh
your luminous light radiates – love, justice, and reconciliation,
empowering your people to turn from the sin of division and inequality
to become 'bearers of life' that reveal the radiance of your glory

to all nations and peoples,
of every colour, tongue, and culture.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and singing:

EXTENDED PREFACE *(Written by R. Frances)*

And now we give you thanks
that through your Son, Jesus Christ
the Word made flesh,
your luminous light radiates love, justice,
and reconciliation throughout all the world;
that in the power of the Holy Spirit,
all believers receive authority from on high
to become ‘bearers of life,’
defeating the sins of injustice, division and intolerance;
so as to reveal the brilliance of Your glory
present in all nations and peoples
of every ethnicity, colour, class, and culture.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and singing:

BLESSINGS

Option #1 *(Written by R. Frances)*

May God, the Creator of all living,
endow all peoples with the light of His righteousness
that all will reveal His love, integrity and impartiality. **Amen.**

May Jesus Christ, the Author of justice and peace,
bestow upon all sisters and brothers in Him
the strength to unveil His most perfect rule in word and deed. **Amen.**

May the Holy Spirit, divine Advocate and helper,
breathe such love into all sons and daughters of God,
to show forth His compassion in service to one another. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Option #2 *(Written by R. Frances)*

May the loving grace, mercy, and peace of God
fill the hearts of all people throughout the earth,
and bring us to the day
when united as one voice in the love of God
we will praise and serve Him eternally,
one people, one race created in His image;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
reign amongst us and remains with us always. **Amen.**

Option #3 *(Written by R. Frances)*

May God's steadfast love and eternal grace
fill all the earth and also your/our hearts.
May righteousness and justice flow through you/us like a roaring, mighty river.
May perfect peace descend upon you/us as a dove hovers over restful waters.
And, may we be ever mindful that in the Kingdom of God
all are loved to overflowing. **Amen.**
And, the blessing of God Almighty,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit
Be among you/us and remain with you/us always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to serve and share the generous love of God,
to all people, of every tribe, nation and tongue.

All: In the name of Christ. Amen.

BLESSING *(Addendum)*

And the blessing of God the Father,
who made from one being
every nation that occupies the earth;
and, God the Son, who ransomed us all
from every tribe, language, people and nation;
and God the Spirit, who empowers us through unity,
be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Items for addition to Racial Justice site:

Africa in the Bible

Part 1

<https://youtu.be/RLX92CI5Loo>

Part 2

<https://youtu.be/ldtI89dve1M>

Part 3

https://youtu.be/4WgLUwmp8_I

Opening Worship Video Clip