



## THE TRUTH TELLING PROJECT

**The Grassroots Reparations Campaign, a program of the Truth Telling Project, provides spiritual and faith communities with resources to support your Reparations gathering and services.**

Suggested Reparations Sabbath / Sunday and period of preparation events:

- An Opening
- Songs
- Prayer
- Readings from your Writings/Scriptures/Holy Text that support the repair of harm
- Conversation and dialogue
- Ritual or ceremony
- Examples of what other groups are doing
- Action steps
- Setting up a Call to Action

### **Buddhism**

#### *Prayer*

#### **Bodhisattva Prayer for Humanity**

May I be a guard for those who need protection  
A guide for those on the path  
A boat, a raft, a bridge for those who wish to cross the flood  
May I be a lamp in the darkness  
A resting place for the weary  
A healing medicine for all who are sick  
A vase of plenty, a tree of miracles  
And for the boundless multitudes of living beings  
May I bring sustenance and awakening  
Enduring like the earth and sky  
Until all beings are freed from sorrow  
And all are awakened.

- Shantideva, Indian Buddhist sage 700 A.D. Prayer performed each morning by His Holiness the Dalai Lama

#### *Resources*

<http://www.wiseattention.org/blog/2015/10/01/slavery-reparations-or-moving-on/>  
<https://tricycle.org/trikedaily/scandals-buddhist/>  
<https://buddhism-today.org/the-4-thoughts-that-turn-the-mind-from-samsara/>  
<https://www.lionsroar.com/buddha-would-probably-like-restorative-justice/>

## **Christianity**

### *Prayer*

Thou Eternal God, out of whose absolute power and infinite intelligence the whole universe has come into being, we humbly confess that we have not loved thee with our hearts, souls and minds, and we have not loved our neighbors as Christ loved us. We have all too often lived by our own selfish impulses rather than by the life of sacrificial love as revealed by Christ. We often give in order to receive. We love our friends and hate our enemies. We go the first mile but dare not travel the second. We forgive but dare not forget. And so as we look within ourselves, we are confronted with the appalling fact that the history of our lives is the history of an eternal revolt against you. But thou, O God, have mercy upon us. Forgive us for what we could have been but failed to be. Give us the intelligence to know your will. Give us the courage to do your will. Give us the devotion to love your will. In the name and spirit of Jesus, we pray. Amen. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

### *Resources*

12 prayers for racial reconciliation

<http://rachbaxter.com/blog/2017/2/22/twelve-prayers-for-racial-reconciliation>

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. makes a case for reparations -

<https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2014/06/martin-luther-king-makes-the-case-for-reparations/372696/>

More on Dr. King and reparations

[-https://www.theroot.com/on-the-anniversary-of-mlk-jr-s-assassination-we-shoul-1833791552](https://www.theroot.com/on-the-anniversary-of-mlk-jr-s-assassination-we-shoul-1833791552)

## **Catholicism**

### *Prayer*

O God, who gave one origin to all peoples  
and willed to gather from them one family for yourself,  
fill all hearts, we pray, with the fire of your love  
and kindle in them a desire  
for the just advancement of their neighbor,  
that, through the good things which you richly bestow upon all,  
each human person may be brought to perfection,  
every division may be removed,  
and equity and justice may be established in human society.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

-- *Collect, Votive Mass for the Progress of Peoples, the Roman Missal*

## *Resources*

Sisters of Providence

<https://spsmw.org/prayer/slavery-still-exists/>

<https://ednyreparationsblog.wordpress.com/2017/11/11/why-lament-a-message-from-the-reparations-committee-as-we-prepare-for-diocesan-convention/>

## **Episcopal**

### *Prayer*

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart [and especially the hearts of the people of this land], that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Almighty God, you have created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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.*

## *Resources*

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/OGR/racial-reconciliation>

<https://episcopalmaryland.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2019/06/Reparations-Pastoral-Letter-May-2019.pdf>

<https://ednyreparationsblog.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/library/article/prayers-tears-and-song-mark-episcopal-repentance-slavery>

## **Presbyterian**

### *Prayer*

Affirming that Jesus Christ calls us to repair wrongs done to one another and to work for personal and social reconciliation and renewal, the General Assembly Council, on behalf of the Task Force to Study Reparations, and in consultation with the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns (ACREC), recommends that the 216th General Assembly (2004) take the following actions: 1. Encourage Presbyterians to create opportunities to tell and hear stories remembering the past and celebrating examples of repair, restoration, reconciliation, and renewal. 2. Encourage congregations, governing bodies, racial ethnic caucuses, and other PC(USA) entities to create opportunities for discussion in which participants remember the past and celebrate examples of repair, restoration, reconciliation, and renewal on issues of reparations and reconciliation. 3. Encourage the Ministries Divisions of the General Assembly Council and governing bodies to include workshops and worship services on reparations,

reconciliation, and renewal in conferences; and report their efforts to the 217th General Assembly (2006). 4. a. Commends the Belhar Confession to the church as a resource for reflection, study, and response, as a means of deepening the commitment of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to dealing with racism and a means of strengthening its unity; bearing in mind that the Belhar Confession emerged from the context of racism in South Africa; b. Requests the General Assembly Council, Office of Theology and Worship, to prepare materials to facilitate churchwide reflection and study; c. Urges each presbytery and all congregations to undertake a study of the Belhar Confession before the 218th General Assembly (2008); d. Directs the Office of the General Assembly and the General Assembly Council, Office of Theology and Worship, to receive responses, prepare a summary, and report results to the 218th General Assembly (2008), together with possible recommendations for further engagement with the Belhar Confession.

#### Resources

<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/report-of-the-task-force-on-reparations-24408/>

<https://www.cpcames.org/editoruploads/files/PCUSA%20Reparations.pdf>

#### **Baptist**

##### *Prayer*

God, may we glorify You by reflecting Your values among Your people. Let the truth of Your Word be the standard by which we measure right and wrong, and the standard by which we accept people, regardless of skin color, class or culture. (Contributor: Chris Green, The Summit Church)

Lord, give us the strength to strive for oneness, not sameness. Allow us to see that the mystery of the gospel involves You uniting all people together in Christ, so we would recognize all groups and cultures as important and valuable. (Contributor: Chris Green, The Summit Church)

Please help us make the gospel the main thing that unites us, instead of communication style, worship style or culture. (Contributor: Jerome Gay, Vision Church)

Gracious God, we ask that You would raise up more minority leaders within the Southern Baptist Convention and others to serve alongside of them. (Contributor: Jerome Gay, Vision Church)

Lord, work in and through us so that Sunday morning worship in America would no longer be the most segregated time of the week. May we truly become a priesthood from every tribe, tongue, people and nation. (Contributor: Lawrence Yoo, Waypoint Church)

Heavenly Father, please open our eyes and hearts to the hurts and concerns of people from all races and ethnicities. We ask that the Holy Spirit would compel us to develop genuine friendships with people from other races and ethnic groups. (Contributor: Lawrence Yoo, Waypoint Church) Lord, help our international brothers and sisters here in North Carolina to be bold in their faith to reach out to their own people. May they become individuals and churches that are active members of our convention and in Baptist life.

## Resources

<https://sbts-wordpress-uploads.s3.amazonaws.com/sbts/uploads/2018/12/Racism-and-the-Legacy-of-Slavery-Report-v3.pdf>

<http://www.sbc.net/resolutions/899/resolution-on-racial-reconciliation-on-the-150th-anniversary-of-the-southern-baptist-convention>

## UCC

### Prayer

A Response by *The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black General Minister and President, United Church of Christ Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:*

*In the months that have passed since the fatal shooting of Michael Brown last August, the attention of the nation on Ferguson, Missouri, has sharpened the reality that racism still exists in our country and is as deadly as ever. Our prayers for justice have been fervent but the truth remains that in communities around the country, racial profiling of people of color by law enforcement, and particularly of young African American men, far too often has lethal consequences.*

*Day after day, protestors have peacefully marched in the streets of Ferguson, demanding that justice be done. People of faith, including UCC clergy and leaders, and young people living in the area, have provided key leadership in this organizing effort. Even so, a state of emergency was declared days before the announcement of the St. Louis grand jury decision on whether or not Officer Darren Wilson would face criminal charges.\*

*Our United Church of Christ Statement of Faith reminds us that God promises to all who trust in God “courage in the struggle for justice **and** peace.” In the wake of the grand jury decision not to indict Officer Wilson and the implication that Michael Brown’s death was justified, the people of Ferguson, of the St. Louis area, and of the nation at large are left with an open wound and no visible means to begin the healing process. Disappointment, frustration and anger abound. Any and all of these responses are understandable.*

*However, we are also reminded by our statement of faith that we are engaged in a “struggle for justice and peace.” These two concepts are appropriately joined. To engage in the struggle takes courage and a renewed commitment to advocacy and action, to deepening racial awareness by engaging in sacred conversation, and to truthfully examining – then dismantling - the systems of privilege set in place by racism. It requires building God’s **beloved community** beyond racial divides. That is where true peace abides.*

*We in the national setting of the United Church of Christ stand in prayerful solidarity with the people of the St. Louis Association and the Missouri Mid-South Conference. We join you and all others who are advocating for justice and working for peace in Ferguson and the St. Louis area as well as in communities around our nation. We invite the whole United Church of Christ to do likewise.*

*Much more can and must be said on this topic. To that end, we are preparing a more extensive pastoral letter which will be issued during Advent. In the meantime, let us prayerfully face this moment of lost opportunity, seeking God’s gift of courage to continue the struggle. Therein lies our hope for the transformation of this society to a just society for all.*

*Peace and blessings, The Rev. Geoffrey A. Black*

## Resources

[https://www.ucc.org/tags/reparations\\_for\\_slavery](https://www.ucc.org/tags/reparations_for_slavery)  
[https://www.ucc.org/justice\\_racism\\_anti-racist-church](https://www.ucc.org/justice_racism_anti-racist-church)

## **Quaker**

### *Prayer*

For reflection in the Quaker silence:

"We believe that race is a powerful social construct that affects personal and institutional behaviors. That is why we believe it is important to acknowledge race and grow in our understanding of how it shapes our experience. If we ignore the reality of race in our society, it becomes more difficult to change our understandings and behavior."

Two goals from the Quaker Friends:

1. Transform our awareness so that our corporate and individual attitudes and actions fully value and encompass the blessed diversity of our human family.
2. Work to grow and sustain a vital, diverse and loving community of Friends based on a shared search for unity in the Spirit.

### *Resources*

<https://nely.org/reparations>

<https://www.friendsjournal.org/quakers-and-reparations-slavery-and-jim-crow>

## **Methodist**

### *Prayer*

"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners... to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor... and provide for those who grieve in Zion-to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair."

### *Resources*

<http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/support-reparations-for-african-americans>

## **Lutheran**

### *Prayer*

Confession and Forgiveness Gracious God, we thank you for making one human family of all the peoples of the earth and for creating all the wonderful diversity of cultures. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship and show us your presence in those who differ most from us. From the bondage of racism that denies the humanity of every human being and the prejudices within us that deny the dignity of those who are oppressed, Lord set us free: Lord, have mercy. From racism that blinds oppressors to the destruction caused by the spirit and practice of racial injustice, Christ set us free: Christ, have mercy. From the racism that will not recognize the work of your Spirit in other cultures: Lord set us free: Lord, have mercy. Forgive those of us who have been silent and apathetic in the face of racial intolerance and bigotry, both overt and subtle, public and private. And take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts. Break down the walls that separate us. And help us to find that unity that is the fruit of

righteousness and will enable us to become your beloved community. Empower us to speak boldly for justice and truth and help us to deal with one another without hatred or bitterness, working together with mutual forbearance and respect. And work through our struggles and confusion to accomplish your purposes. O God of unconditional love, you who show no partiality in respect to people or nations, we have heard your good news of great joy for all the people. We hear that good news, and in hearing, believe. We know that your sanctuary is a house of worship for all people, with no regard for the color of our skin. As we worship you, knit us into a people, a seamless garment of many colors. May we celebrate our unity, made whole in our diversity. Forgive us for our inability to let our "old selves" die to the world. Worship Resources for Sunday, Sept. 6, 2015 "Confession, Repentance and Commitment to End Racism Sunday" © 2015 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Page 2 Permission is granted to reproduce this material for local, non-sale use only. We acknowledge that we participate in structures that are inherently racist, and yet we so often do nothing to remedy it. Show us we fail when we judge others according to the color of their flesh. God, who is rich in mercy, loves us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of +Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. Amen.

### *Resources*

<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Racial-Justice-Ministries/One-Body-Many-Members>

"The common elements in a Lutheran congregation that is reaching across race, ethnicity, and class will be a clear and central vision based in scripture, intentionality, diverse and shared leadership, strong relationships, and a culture that embraces change, that welcomes everyone's voice and gifts, that continually brings new people into leadership, ONE BODY MANY MEMBERS A Journey for Christians across Race, Culture and Class that shares power, and that conveys openness and welcome in all it says and does. The journey is based on the foundation you have been building over time. Exercises and background material in this section will help to:

- Examine the dynamics of power
- Explore the shaping influence of family patterns and approaches to conflict
- Understand where and how to enter the cross-cultural conversation
- Deepen relationships and strengthen the faith journey through sharing of faith stories.

### **NCOBRA Prayer**

#### Prayer

Reparations is a love story. It begins with women, wives, mothers, sisters preventing their loves from being castrated if only for the selfish purpose that an obelisk of gold is not as pleasurable as the real thing. Do we need a celestial Supreme Court, extraterrestrials, to tell us that continuing this race war between black and white will annihilate us both? After all, the Ennead, the Celestial Council of Nine, represented the rulers of the Universe or Multiverse. As Tehuti, the Kemet predecessor of Solomon said, "As above, so below." Jesus repeated this principle in the Lord's Prayer when he said, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven." Hollywood depicts extraterrestrials as coming. I submit to you that they're already here. We are the extraterrestrials! For all we know, Auset was from Sirius, Ausar from Orion, Set from Draco, and NebHet from Venus, the Pleiades, or Hyades. The bottom line is that we can live together as brothers or die together as fools. Let's choose life. Let's let our planets, our stars, align for the sake of this planet.

## Resources

<https://www.ncobraonline.org/national-reparations-awareness-day-nrad-2018/>

<http://www.ncobraonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Example-Reparations-sermon-Produced-by-Barbara-Keshen.pdf>

## Judaism

### Prayer

The Fast of Atonement and Reparations, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

Sacred Words that ground our actions in behalf of Reparations. Reparations is a sacred obligation, a mitzvah which stems from ongoing harms to descendents of the TransAtlantic slave trade, including - list taken from HR 40 and other sources.

עמו־אֶנְכִי בְצָרָה

“I am with them in distress.” Psalm 91:15

Habbakuk 2:9 - 12 : Woe to the one who piles up what is not theirs. Woe to the one who has acquired gains to the detriment and harm of their house. For a stone will cry out from the wall. A rafter shall answer it from the woodwork. Woe to him who builds in a town with blood, and founds a city on iniquity!

Hanina, and R. Yohanan taught... Whoever can protest to their household and does not, is held accountable [for the sins] of their household; if they could protest to their townspeople and did not, they are accountable for the townspeople's sins; if they could protest to the whole world and did not, they are held accountable for the sins of the whole world (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 54b).

Is this the fast Adonai has chosen? Let your fast of reconciliation be the deeds that break the grip of oppression. Let your supplications be the hand that removes the yoke of unethical action from around your neck. Rise up from the pew and shake the foundations of exploitation. Let the incarcerated and detained go free. Break the habit of consumption. Give fresh bread to the hungry. Bring the poor you cast naked into the street into your house and home. Do not hold back, but extend a supportive hand to the human family. Then shall your inner light break forth, radiant as the dawn. Isaiah 58 This is read on Yom Kippur, day of atonement.

Public Fasting is undertaken to acknowledge the harm caused by systemic violence. Fasting is a form of public lament and a call to action. Fasting is a communal act meant to begin a process of reconciliation/teshuvah. Fasting is also a ritual of solidarity to clarify where we stand, that is, with those experiencing harm.

Today we undergo this fast of atonement and reparations owed to descendents of the Transatlantic Slave Trade for the ongoing harms of racism.

The process of teshuvah/reconciliation has several components.



\**Ha-karat ha-chet* is recognition that public harm exists and we are collectively accountable for that harm.

This is narration of ongoing history of harm, along with root cause Testimony from victims of racism from black community

\**Kharata* is an inner cultivation of empathy for victims of public harm accompanied by feelings of remorse.

Songs of lament

\**Vidui* is a ritual enumeration of specific harms we must confront and end. These harms are best articulated by those directly impacted by harm. Litany accompanied by physical movement, such as beating chest which is done in Jewish tradition after naming each harm

\**Azivat ha-chet* means we let go of harmful behavior and work to change attitudes, beliefs and behaviors which cause harm in the public and private sphere, and enter a period of transformation. We ask, what kind of world do we want to build so public harm is overcome. What do we leave behind as a society? What is the world we want to build?

\**Peira'on* is restitution and reparations for the harm causes. Reparations are key to ending the cycle of violence. People offer pathways to reparations in concrete ways as a community and individual

## Resources

<http://www.rabbilynngottlieb.com/liberation-liturgies.html>

<https://www.jfrej.org>

<https://medium.com/@aryehbernstein/the-torah-case-for-reparations-bbe41e7763c0>

<https://forward.com/opinion/198933/the-jewish-case-for-reparations-to-blacks/>

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/136670/jewish/Jewish-Prayers.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/136670/jewish/Jewish-Prayers.htm)

## Islam

### Prayer

Never should a Believer kill a Believer; but (if it so happens) by mistake, (compensation is due): if one (so) kills a Believer, it is ordained that he should free a believing slave, and pay compensation to the deceased's family . . . For those who find this beyond their means, (is prescribed) a fast for two months running: by way of repentance to Allah. (4:92)

And if any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing (to enable them to earn their freedom for a certain sum), give them such a deed if you know any good in them; yes, give them something yourselves out of the means which Allah has given to you. (24:33)

The sermon of the Holy Prophet on the occasion of his last pilgrimage declares: "All men are like brothers: the black has no superiority over the red, nor has an Arab any preferential claim on a non-Arab. All are sons of Adam and Adam was made out of clay." This was in fact a

charter of equality and freedom for the enslaved people of the world from whom loyalties of diverse types were expected. The doctrine of *tauhid* (Unity of God) broke all these chains. (Dar 19)

[Muhammad] releases them from their heavy burdens and from the yokes that are upon them. So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the Light which is sent down with him, - it is they who will prosper. (7:157)

#### *Resources*

*The promises and Pitfalls of Reparations -Dr. Yusef Nuruddin*

<https://ibw21.org/reparations/promises-pitfalls-reparations-yusuf-nuruddin/>

#### **Baha'i**

##### *Prayer*

O CHILDREN OF MEN! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

#### *Resources*

<https://www.bahai.us/path-to-racial-justice/>

<http://www.bahai.com/Bahauallah/raceunity1.htm>

US National Spiritual Assembly:

RACISM IS THE MOST CHALLENGING ISSUE confronting America. A nation whose ancestry includes every people on earth, whose motto is E pluribus unum, whose ideals of freedom under law have inspired millions throughout the world, cannot continue to harbor prejudice against any racial or ethnic group without betraying itself. Racism is an affront to human dignity, a cause of hatred and division, a disease that devastates society.

Notwithstanding the efforts already expended for its elimination, racism continues to work its evil upon this nation. Progress toward tolerance, mutual respect, and unity has been painfully slow and marked with repeated setbacks. The recent resurgence of divisive racial attitudes, the increased number of racial incidents, and the deepening despair of minorities and the poor make the need for solutions ever more pressing and urgent. To ignore the problem is to expose the country to physical, moral and spiritual danger.

Aware of the magnitude and the urgency of the issue, we, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, speaking for the entire U.S. Bahá'í community, appeal to all people of goodwill to arise without further delay to resolve the fundamental social problem of this country. We do so because of our feeling of shared responsibility, because of the global experience of the Bahá'í community in effecting racial harmony within itself, and because of the vision that the sacred scriptures of our Faith convey of the destiny of America.

## **Traditional African Spirituality Prayer:**

### *Prayer*

We are all spiritual beings having a material experience. We are so much more than the terrible things that happen to us and so much more than what the systems of oppression, the oppressors and society tell us and reinforce about us. Reminding ourselves of our power, worthiness and our divinity can fortify us and the collective.

Luisah Teish [Jambalaya: The Natural Woman's Book of Personal Charms and Practical Rituals.](#)

### *Resources*

Introduction to African Religion by John S. Mbiti

Maat the 11 Laws of God by Ra Un Nefer Amen

The Handbook of Yoruba Religious Concepts by Ifa Karade

Akan Traditional Religion: The Myths and the Truth by Kofi Bempah

African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo by Kimbwandènde Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau

<https://onbeing.org/programs/isabel-mukonyora-sacred-wilderness-an-african-story/>

<https://www.orishaimage.com/blog/yoruba-gestures>

## **Legislation on Commission to Study and Develop Reparations Proposal for African Americans.**

This bill establishes the Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African-Americans. The commission shall examine slavery and discrimination in the colonies and the United States from 1619 to the present and recommend appropriate remedies. Among other requirements, the commission shall identify (1) the role of federal and state governments in supporting the institution of slavery, (2) forms of discrimination in the public and private sectors against freed slaves and their descendants, and (3) lingering negative effects of slavery on living African-Americans and society.

### *Resources*

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/40?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22HR+40%22%5D%7D&s=1&r=1>