# The International Decade for People of African Descent: A 2021 Prayer Cycle

## Introduction to the Decade

The General Assembly of the United Nations has declared 2015–2024 to be the [International Decade for People of African Descent](https://www.un.org/en/observances/decade-people-african-descent). In proclaiming this Decade, the international community is recognizing “that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected.”

As people of faith, we know every part of humanity is a reflection, an embodiment of the wisdom and power of God. Yet all of our collective humanity has been diminished and ruptured through the enslavement of African peoples and the colonization and exploitation of those same peoples’ land.

One of the ways the church is engaging with the Decade is by doing targeted work toward combatting racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances faced by people of African descent. We know that prayer has the power to transform and amplify our actions. We therefore invite people to pray during this midway point in the Decade for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent.

For more information on how The United Church of Canada is engaging in this Decade, visit the [Anti-racism webpage](https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism) or watch the [introductory video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFkQdEQ1BxA&feature=youtu.be) created in conjunction with our full communion partner, the United Church of Christ (USA).

## How to Use This Prayer Cycle

This Prayer Cycle can be downloaded from the [worship section](https://united-church.ca/leadership/worship-resources) of the United Church website and the [Anti-racism webpage](https://united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/anti-racism); daily posts appear on <https://twitter.com/UnitedChurchCda>.

Consider sharing your prayers on social media (use the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC). A daily schedule of intercessions is suggested in this resource:

* [**January**](#_January:_Praise,_Promise,)**:** Praise, Promise, Providence, Persistence, and Progress
* [**February**](#_February:_Recognizing_people)**:** Recognizing people of African descent
* [**March**](#_March:_Lamenting_human)**:** Lamenting human rights abuses faced by those of African descent
* [**April**](#_April:_Naming_injustices)**:** Naming injustices faced by those of African descent
* [**May**](#_May:_Recognizing_the)**:** Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent
* [**June**](#_June:_Recognizing_that)**:** Recognizing that we need to take action to change the racist systems currently in place
* [**July**](#_July:_Recognizing_the)**:** Recognizing the people of African descent who live outside the African continent
* [**August**](#_August:_Recognizing_the)**:** Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent
* [**September**](#_September:_Lamenting_human)**:** Lamenting human rights abuses faced by those of African descent
* [**October**](#_October:_Naming_injustices)**:** Naming injustices faced by those of African descent
* [**November**](#_November:_Resistance_and)**:** Resistance and Resilience for People of African Descent
* [**December**](#_December:_Hope_and)**:** Hope and Joy for People of African Descent

## January: Praise, Promise, Providence, Persistence, and Progress

The year that has passed has been challenging for many reasons, and particularly because of the global pandemic.

We could come into this new year singing, with those who have gone ahead of us, “[We’ve come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGbkokO-TsM).” (This song uses male imagery for God. You may want to adapt the language to speak to your context.) As we sing, we offer prayers based on Praise, Promise, Providence, Persistence, and Progress. You are encouraged at the end of each day’s prayer to sing, hum, or remember the words of the spiritual, “We’ve come this far by faith.”

Let us give thanks and praise for:

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| **01-Jan** |  | The blessings for the start of another year, and the possibilities this New Year may bring |
| **02-Jan** |  | The ongoing advocacy against anti-Black racism and work towards justice last year |
| **03-Jan** |  | The many medical professionals who have worked tirelessly in the midst of a pandemic |
| **04-Jan** | World Braille Day | The protection given to Black youth and children over the past year |
| **05-Jan** |  | The work of organizations to help alleviate the threat of HIV and AIDS in Black communities |
| **06-Jan** |  | The ways in which families were protected, provided for and blessed last year |
| **07-Jan** |  | A greater awareness of the need to provide a world free of gender-based violence |
| **08-Jan** |  | Black people to receive equal pay for equal work done by other workers |
| **09-Jan** |  | Police services to become intentionally aware of systemic racism and work to become anti-racist |
| **10-Jan** |  | The anti-racism movements in churches, and that they will be guided and led in righteousness and justice |
| **11-Jan** |  | Black young people to realize the promise of possibilities as they grow |
| **12-Jan** |  | People to continue to fight against homophobia and transphobia, recognizing that Black LGBTQ+ people also live with racism and other oppressions |
| **13-Jan** |  | Systemic changes to enable more opportunities and equity for Black, Indigenous and Persons of Colour to flourish in our country |
| **14-Jan** |  | Black women to be able to work and live without fear of violence or harm |
| **15-Jan** |  | Black families, who live with disproportionate realities of poverty, will have their needs be met |
| **16-Jan** |  | Persons will better understand the impact of microaggressions against Black and racialized people, and then work to change their behaviours |
| **17-Jan** |  | There is health and safety for those who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 virus, including racialized and lower-income communities |
| **18-Jan** |  | There are role models, mentors, and trusted persons who can support Black children and youth as they grow |
| **19-Jan** |  | Black LGBTQ+ persons are affirmed, accompanied, advocated for, and supported |
| **20-Jan** |  | The intrinsic value and worth of all Black peoples be named and affirmed |
| **21-Jan** |  | There is an end to the sexualization and exploitation of Black women and girls |
| **22-Jan** |  | Economic justice for Black families |
| **23-Jan** |  | A world free of systemic racism and oppression |
| **24-Jan** | International Day of Education | An end to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the world |
| **25-Jan** |  | Safe and wholesome environments for all children to live, play and grow |
| **26-Jan** |  | Respect and validation of all Black LGBTQ+ persons |
| **27-Jan** | Holocaust Remembrance Day | An end of the violence against Black trans people and Black people of all gender identities |
| **28-Jan** |  | Systemic change in the criminal justice system, where Black and Indigenous people are overrepresented in prisons |
| **29-Jan** |  | More families to have the food they need for each day |
| **30-Jan** |  | Hate crimes and violence based on race to be no more |
| **31-Jan** |  | Churches to become anti-racist churches in their worship, ministry, policies, and practices |

## February: Recognizing people of African descent

For each day, add specific names of African-descendant people related to each intercession. If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We recognize that people of African descent have contributed to the development and advancement of society through culture, science, and the arts; these contributions are often hidden, undervalued, and underappreciated. And so we give thanks for and celebrate African descendants who have made an undeniable difference in the betterment of society. We give thanks for:

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| **01-Feb** | World Interfaith Harmony Week (Feb 1-7) | Rap masters, as well as the early DJs and MCs that have spoken for generations |
| **02-Feb** |  | Environmentalists who have been attentive to the cries of the earth |
| **03-Feb** |  | Athletes who have challenged our understanding of the human body |
| **04-Feb** | Human Fraternity/World Cancer Day (WHO) | Doctors who have crossed borders and provided life-saving aid |
| **05-Feb** |  | Trendsetters and visionaries |
| **06-Feb** | Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (WHO) | Reggae music and its cultural significance to Jamaica and the world |
| **07-Feb** |  | Rock ‘n’ roll icons who pioneered new styles and forms of music |
| **08-Feb** |  | Classical musicians who work in predominately White spaces |
| **09-Feb** |  | Folk artists who keep and celebrate customs and traditions |
| **10-Feb** | World Pulses Day | The session musicians who provide the musical foundation for popular music |
| **11-Feb** | International Day of Women and Girls in Science | Women and girls who are leading in STEM research |
| **12-Feb** |  | Visual artists who express what words cannot |
| **13-Feb** | World Radio Day (UNESCO) | Broadcasters and TV producers |
| **14-Feb** |  | Religious leaders and moral teachers |
| **15-Feb** |  | Inventors and innovators |
| **16-Feb** |  | Caregivers who nurture and support |
| **17-Feb** |  | Teachers and educators |
| **18-Feb** |  | Political figures and world leaders who have advocated for positive change |
| **19-Feb** |  | Human rights advocates |
| **20-Feb** | World Day of Social Justice | Activists and movement leaders |
| **21-Feb** | International Mother Language Day | Linguists and teachers of heart languages |
| **22-Feb** |  | Peacebuilders and peacekeepers |
| **23-Feb** |  | Civil servants |
| **24-Feb** |  | Builders, contractors, and construction workers |
| **25-Feb** |  | Healers of the body, mind, and spirit |
| **26-Feb** |  | Midwives, doulas, and all those who help to birth new life |
| **27-Feb** |  | Accountants, economists and financial advisors |
| **28-Feb** |  | Correctional officers who protect the dignity of people |

## March: Lamenting human rights abuses faced by those of African descent

For each day, please name specific human rights violations related to each intercession. If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We recognize that the human rights of people of African descent need to be protected and promoted. We lament that the human rights of African descendant people have been abused by:

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| **01-Mar** | Zero Discrimination Day (UNAIDS) | Micro-aggressions and denial of anti-Black racism |
| **02-Mar** |  | Teaching false histories of African-descendant people |
| **03-Mar** | World Wildlife Day | Hunters and poachers who destroy natural habitats |
| **04-Mar** |  | Juvenile arrests and over-sentencing |
| **05-Mar** |  | Eliminating the right to vote and access to voting polls |
| **06-Mar** |  | Food insecurity |
| **07-Mar** |  | Stereotyping and name-calling |
| **08-Mar** | International Women’s Day | Pay inequality for women of colour |
| **09-Mar** |  | Economic obstacles, forced poverty, and a lack of social security |
| **10-Mar** |  | Late detection and limited access to testing for STDs |
| **11-Mar** |  | Over-sexualizing and eroticizing of women of colour |
| **12-Mar** |  | Racial profiling |
| **13-Mar** |  | Prejudice and overt bias |
| **14-Mar** |  | Over-suspension and the streamlining of youth into basic and applied educational programs |
| **15-Mar** |  | Subtle and subversive discrimination |
| **16-Mar** |  | Overt fear tactics |
| **17-Mar** |  | Violent behavior and anti-Black hate crimes |
| **18-Mar** |  | Denial of racism |
| **19-Mar** |  | The over-policing of Black bodies |
| **20-Mar** | International Day of Happiness | Physical exploitation of Black bodies for entertainment |
| **21-Mar** | Down Syndrome Day and International Day for the Elimination of Racism | Denial of Intersectionality |
| **22-Mar** | World Day for Water | Unequal access to clean drinking water |
| **23-Mar** | World Meteorological Day | Denial of systemic and institutional racism |
| **24-Mar** | World Tuberculosis Day (WHO) | Unequal access to health care and medication |
| **25-Mar** | Day for the Remembrance of Slavery Victims and the Transatlantic Slave Trade | Dehumanizing and characterizing of Black people |
| **26-Mar** |  | Death from preventable/manageable diseases |
| **27-Mar** |  | Harmful stereotyping |
| **28-Mar** |  | Environmental pollution |
| **29-Mar** |  | Eliminating the right to fair and just legal action |
| **30-Mar** |  | Separation of Black families |
| **31-Mar** |  | Black trans people who are often violently targeted |

## April: Naming injustices faced by those of African descent

If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We are aware of the systemic injustices that people of African descent fight against, and so we pray for actions to be taken to ensure access to justice by/through:

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| **01-Apr** |  | Eliminating racial profiling |
| **02-Apr** | World Autism Awareness day | Punishing/denigrating anti-Black treatment |
| **03-Apr** |  | Equality through equity |
| **04-Apr** | International Day of Mine Awareness & Assistance in Mine Action | Eliminating institutionalized stereotypes |
| **05-Apr** | International Day of Conscience | Access to justice for people who are victims of racism |
| **06-Apr** | Sport for Development and Peace | Advocacy for equal treatment of Black athletes |
| **07-Apr** | World Health/ Remembrance of the Victims of the Rwanda Genocide | Acknowledging the untold suffering resulting from genocides |
| **08-Apr** |  | Ensuring access to competent tribunals against acts of racial discrimination |
| **09-Apr** |  | Equitable pay for people of colour |
| **10-Apr** |  | Ensuring the right to a fair trial and the assumption of innocence |
| **11-Apr** |  | Legal action on the dissemination of ideas that support racial superiority or hatred |
| **12-Apr** | International Day of Human Space Flight | Adequate reparation for damages suffered as a result of racism |
| **13-Apr** |  | Legal action for acts of hate and terror against people of African descent |
| **14-Apr** | World Chagas Disease Day | Legal action against racist propaganda and racist activities |
| **15-Apr** |  | Educating people of African descent about their legal rights |
| **16-Apr** |  | Education on anti-Black racism and its many manifestations |
| **17-Apr** |  | Preventing and punishing all human rights violation |
| **18-Apr** |  | Acknowledging the untold suffering resulting from slavery |
| **19-Apr** |  | Applying sanctions against officials who act on the basis of racial profiling |
| **20-Apr** |  | Acknowledging the impact of generational trauma |
| **21-Apr** | World Creativity and Innovation Day | Honouring the creative work and intellectual property of people of African descent |
| **22-Apr** | International Mother Earth Day/Girls in ICT Day | Ensuring access to clean and safe water |
| **23-Apr** | World Book and Copyright Day | Honouring the memory of enslaved artists whose creative work was stolen |
| **24-Apr** | International Day of Multilateralism & Diplomacy for Peace | Honouring the skills of enslaved laborers |
| **25-Apr** | World Malaria Day (WHO) | Honouring parents forced to leave their families |
| **26-Apr** | World Intellectual Property Day (WIPO) | Honouring intellectual property of enslaved people |
| **27-Apr** |  | Acknowledging the untold suffering resulted from Apartheid |
| **28-Apr** | World Day for Safety and Health at Work | Acknowledging untold deaths from inhuman working conditions |
| **29-Apr** |  | Honouring the rich legacy of art and culture from the African Diaspora |
| **30-Apr** | International Jazz Day | Honouring the influence of African descendants on popular art and music |

## May: Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent

For each day, add specific examples of African-descendant people related to each intercession. If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We are aware of the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent and so we pray with African-descendant people who are:

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| **01-May** |  | Working in hostile environments |
| **02-May** | World Tuna Day | Forced to subscribe to Western notions of beauty |
| **03-May** | World Press Freedom Day | Not free to name injustices |
| **04-May** |  | Socially isolated from others and their peer groups |
| **05-May** |  | Unaware of their own cultural heritage |
| **06-May** |  | Aiding people who are racists and hostile towards them |
| **07-May** |  | Living with unknown limitations |
| **08-May** | Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives during WW2 | Representing organizations that do not represent them |
| **09-May** |  | Living in xenophobic communities |
| **10-May** |  | Separated from loved ones |
| **11-May** |  | Living with racist family members |
| **12-May** |  | Suffering from poor health due to stress |
| **13-May** |  | Denied equal access to employment |
| **14-May** |  | Denied equal access to legal representation and council |
| **15-May** | International Day of Families | Being raised by in the child welfare system or by an institution |
| **16-May** | International Day of Living Together in Peace | Denied equal access to education |
| **17-May** | Telecommunication and Information Society Day | Experiencing homophobia, transphobia, and/or biphobia |
| **18-May** |  | Fighting a colonial mindset |
| **19-May** |  | Living below the poverty line |
| **20-May** |  | Denied their basic human rights |
| **21-May** | Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development | Seeking to educate others on diversity |
| **22-May** | Biological Diversity | Seeking to celebrate diversity |
| **23-May** | End Obstetric Fistula | Suffering from low self-esteem |
| **24-May** |  | Being used as weapons of war |
| **25-May** | Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories (May 25‒31) | Forced into violence and war |
| **26-May** | United Nations Peacekeepers | Suffering from a low sense of self worth |
| **27-May** |  | Advocating for the basic human rights of all people |
| **28-May** |  | Forced into sex work |
| **29-May** |  | Fighting for peace |
| **30-May** |  | Exploited for financial gain or pleasure |
| **31-May** | World No-Tobacco Day | Dealing with addiction |

## June: Recognizing that we need to take action to change the racist systems currently in place

For each day, please name specific government actions related to each intercession. If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We recognize that, in order for people of African descent to enjoy the right to equality and non-discrimination, our governments need to take action to change the racist systems currently in place. So we pray that our governments:

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| **01-Jun** | Global Day of Parents | Acknowledge how the legacy of slavery affects people of African descent |
| **02-Jun** |  | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of civil rights |
| **03-Jun** | World Bicycle Day | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social rights |
| **04-Jun** | International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of religious rights |
| **05-Jun** | World Environment Day | Remove obstacles that hinder the right to a fair education |
| **06-Jun** |  | Remove obstacles that prevent access to education |
| **07-Jun** | World Food Safety Day | Acknowledge the lived trauma of African descendants |
| **08-Jun** | World Oceans Day | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of and access to clean water |
| **09-Jun** |  | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of cultural rights |
| **10-Jun** |  | Remove obstacles that prevent the right to development |
| **11-Jun** |  | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social advancement |
| **12-Jun** | World Day Against Child Labour | Provide cultural training for workers in child protective services |
| **13-Jun** | International Albinism Awareness Day | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social advancement |
| **14-Jun** | World Blood Donor Day (WHO) | Monitor the exploitation of Black bodies |
| **15-Jun** | World Elder Abuse Awareness Day | Review domestic legislation to abolish provisions that are discriminatory |
| **16-Jun** | International Day of Family Remittances | Adopt anti-discrimination legislation |
| **17-Jun** | World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought | Acknowledge the social and economic gaps in the system |
| **18-Jun** |  | Provide protection for people African descent |
| **19-Jun** | Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict | Review and repeal all laws that have a discriminatory effect |
| **20-Jun** | World Refugee Day | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of political rights |
| **21-Jun** | Celebration of the Solstice | Eliminate institutionalized stereotypes |
| **22-Jun** |  | Adopt, strengthen, and implement action-oriented polices to combat anti-Black racism |
| **23-Jun** | United Nations Public Service Day | Support organizations that protect the most vulnerable in the community |
| **24-Jun** |  | Develop policies that monitor and combat racism |
| **25-Jun** |  | Financially support civil society organizations that promote and monitor human rights |
| **26-Jun** | International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking/ Support of Victims of Torture | Establish and strengthen human rights organizations |
| **27-Jun** |  | Elaborate action plans to promote diversity, equality and equity |
| **28-Jun** |  | Make accessible data on people of African descent to identify social gaps |
| **29-Jun** |  | Acknowledge the damage of stereotypes in Media responses |
| **30-Jun** | International Day of Parliamentarism | Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of civil rights |

## July: Recognizing the people of African descent who live outside the African continent

For each day, please reflect on the unique struggles of African descendants in particular regions. If you are sharing prayers on social media, include the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC.

We recognize that around 200 million people of African descent live in the Americas alone, and many millions more live outside of African continent. And so we pray with African descendants for:

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| **01-Jul** | International Day of Cooperatives (1st Saturday of July) | Ancestors and those who stayed watch until emancipation came |
| **02-Jul** |  | Kin of many nationalities and religions around the world |
| **03-Jul** |  | Kin in North America |
| **04-Jul** |  | Kin in Central America |
| **05-Jul** |  | Kin in the Caribbean and Latin America |
| **06-Jul** |  | Kin who travelled great distances seeking freedom and liberation |
| **07-Jul** |  | Kin in South America |
| **08-Jul** |  | Kin in Northern Africa |
| **09-Jul** |  | Kin in sub-Saharan Africa |
| **10-Jul** |  | Kin in Eastern Africa |
| **11-Jul** | World Population Day | Kin who have been forced to migrate against their will |
| **12-Jul** |  | Kin in Middle Africa |
| **13-Jul** |  | Kin in Southern Africa |
| **14-Jul** |  | Kin in Western Africa |
| **15-Jul** | World Youth Skills Day | Kin in Antarctica |
| **16-Jul** |  | Kin in Central Asia |
| **17-Jul** |  | Kin in Eastern Asia |
| **18-Jul** | Nelson Mandela International Day | Kin who marched and fought for freedom |
| **19-Jul** |  | Kin in Southeastern Asia |
| **20-Jul** | World Chess Day | Kin in Southern Asia |
| **21-Jul** |  | Kin in Western Asia |
| **22-Jul** |  | Kin in Eastern Europe |
| **23-Jul** |  | Kin in Northern Europe |
| **24-Jul** |  | Kin in Southern Europe |
| **25-Jul** |  | Kin in Western Europe |
| **26-Jul** |  | Kin in Australia and New Zealand |
| **27-Jul** |  | Kin who are no longer present because of genocides and ethnic cleansing |
| **28-Jul** | World Hepatitis Day (WHO) | Kin in Micronesia |
| **29-Jul** |  | Kin in Polynesia |
| **30-Jul** | World Day Against Trafficking in Persons/ International Day of Friendship | Kin who died in the Middle Passage |
| **31-Jul** |  | Kin who are still journeying toward safety and security |

## August: Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent

For each day please add specific examples of African Descendant people related to each intercession and include the hashtag #AfricanDescent.

We are aware of the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent and so we pray with African-descendant people who are:

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| **01-Aug** | World Breastfeeding Week (WHO) Aug. 1‒7 | Impacted by the ongoing legacy of slavery |
| **02-Aug** | Civic Holiday (Many regions) | Leaders of the Caribbean countries celebrating Independence this month |
| **03-Aug** |  | Teachers and educators |
| **04-Aug** |  | Religious and spiritual leaders |
| **05-Aug** |  | Working towards peace |
| **06-Aug** |  | Musicians and artists pursuing their ideals of just communities |
| **07-Aug** | Labour Day | Black trans and gender-diverse people who are often violently targeted |
| **08-Aug** |  | Living with poor physical health and chronic illnesses linked to stress |
| **09-Aug** | International Day of the World’s Indigenous People | Seeking to celebrate diversity |
| **10-Aug** |  | Parents who are forced to leave their families |
| **11-Aug** |  | Struggling under the realities of carding, or random police checks, which disproportionately affects Black people |
| **12-Aug** | International Youth Day | Being raised by the foster care system |
| **13-Aug** |  | Facing economic injustice |
| **14-Aug** |  | Leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement |
| **15-Aug** |  | Healers of the body, mind, and spirit |
| **16-Aug** |  | Experiencing food insecurity |
| **17-Aug** |  | Working to eliminate racial profiling |
| **18-Aug** | UN International Equal Pay Day | Victims of anti-Black hate crimes |
| **19-Aug** | World Humanitarian Day | Doctors who have crossed borders and provided life-saving aid |
| **20-Aug** |  | Working in hostile environments |
| **21-Aug** | International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to Victims of Terrorism | Forced to subscribe to Western notions of beauty and internalized racism |
| **22-Aug** | International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief | Denied their basic human rights |
| **23-Aug** | International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition | Fighting a colonial mindset6 |
| **24-Aug** |  | Living with the impact of anti-Black racism on their mental health |
| **25-Aug** |  | Activists and leaders of justice-seeking movements |
| **26-Aug** |  | Denied equal access to employment |
| **27-Aug** |  | Forced into dehumanizing work |
| **28-Aug** |  | Dealing with addiction |
| **29-Aug** | International Day Against Nuclear Tests | Exploited for financial gain or personal pleasure |
| **30-Aug** | International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances | Fighting for equitable pay |
| **31-Aug** | International Day for People of African Descent | Experiencing micro-aggressions |

## September: Lamenting human rights abuses faced by those of African descent

For each day please add specific examples of African Descendant people related to each intercession and include the hashtag #AfricanDescent.

Lamenting has an important place in the life of faith. We lament in the face of injustice, wrongs, and calamities. However, lamenting is not to mourn. We are not hopeless when we lament. When we lament, we acknowledge the pain and the suffering, we name the wrongs and injustices, but we do so with hope. Hope, believing that we are being heard and that the One who hears will respond.

During this month we lament for the human rights abuses faced by those of African descent. We lament and pray for:

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| **1-Sep** |  | The higher death rate of people of African descent from COVID-19 |
| **2-Sep** |  | Health facilities in many countries in Africa and the Caribbean that are struggling to provide adequate health care in the face of COVID-19 |
| **3-Sep** |  | Black youth and children who live in fear for their lives because of the colour of their skin |
| **4-Sep** |  | Black women who are forced to take lower-paying jobs despite their qualifications |
| **5-Sep** | International Day of Charity | The high murder rates and violence experienced by trans women of African descent |
| **6-Sep** |  | The experience of Black clergy in the church who face discrimination, and who find it more difficult to secure calls and appointments in ministry |
| **7-Sep** | Labour Day/International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies | People who are forced to work in abusive or exploitative situations |
| **8-Sep** | International Literacy Day (UNESCO) | Immigrants of African descent who face discrimination |
| **9-Sep** | International Day to Protect Education from Attack | The refusal of some in our society to acknowledge and confront systemic racism |
| **10-Sep** | World Suicide Prevention Day (WHO) | The history of racial surveillance, over-policing, and mass incarceration of Black people |
| **11-Sep** |  | Black women who are sexualized or who live or work in the context of gender-based violence |
| **12-Sep** | UN Day for South-South Cooperation | The alienation and rejection faced by LGBTQIA2S+ people of African descent from their families |
| **13-Sep** |  | Institutional racism embedded in the policies and practices of the church |
| **14-Sep** |  | Higher unemployment rate for Black people in Canada |
| **15-Sep** | International Day of Democracy | Microaggressions faced by people of African descent |
| **16-Sep** | International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer | Systemic racism present in our systems to dispense justice |
| **17-Sep** | World Patient Safety Day (WHO) | Racial profiling and carding by many police departments against Black people |
| **18-Sep** | UN International Equal Pay Day | Black women being paid lower than the average wage paid to all women |
| **19-Sep** |  | Bullying and ostracism faced by LGTBQIA2S+ youth of African descent in communities and schools |
| **20-Sep** |  | The association of the church in the past with racist groups such as the KKK |
| **21-Sep** | International Day of Peace | The difficulty of Black people in finding higher-paying jobs because of employment discrimination |
| **22-Sep** |  | The unfair profiling of women of African descent as “drug mules” |
| **23-Sep** | International Day of Sign Languages | Systemic racism present in our health systems |
| **24-Sep** |  | The destruction of family because of higher incarceration rates of Black people |
| **25-Sep** |  | Black women, who have higher representation in unemployment rates |
| **26-Sep** | International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons | Lack of sensitivity and care for the mental health of people of African descent |
| **27-Sep** | World Tourism Day (UNWTO) | The apathy or cynicism of people toward issues of anti-Black racism |
| **28-Sep** | World Rabies Day (WHO) | Higher rates of Black people living in poverty |
| **29-Sep** | International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste | Rendering people of African descent as invisible and treating them as non-human |
| **30-Sep** | Maritime/Translation Day | Systemic racism present in the education system, resulting in higher drop-out rates and lower educational achievements for Black youth |

## October: Naming injustices faced by those of African descent

The International Decade for People of African Descent: A 2021 Prayer Cycle

Naming is an important part of eradicating injustice. It is important to resist attempts to deny the truth by reframing injustice in ways that blame those who are casualties of injustice, or trying to convince those who suffer that their suffering is not real. Strategies that euphemize oppression, that seek to provide a façade of beautiful words while keeping the structures of injustice operating, must also be resisted. Injustice is to be named―in its entirety and in its intensity.

During this month we name the injustices faced by people of African descent. We pray for:

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| **1-Oct** | International Day of Older Persons (UN) | Elders in the African continent and the African Diaspora who are denied access to health care and basic services |
| **2-Oct** | International Day of Non- Violence UN) | The violence unleashed by the state and agents of the state against people of African descent who struggle for political, social, and economic change |
| **3-Oct** |  | People of African ancestry who are underpaid and are denied adequate rest and respite from work |
| **4-Oct** | World Space Day (UN) | Young people of African ancestry who are denied the opportunities to fulfill their potential to become scientists, as astronauts Mae C. Jemison and Ronald McNair were able to do |
| **5-Oct** | World Teacher’s Day (UNESCO)  World Habitat Day (UN) | Lack of adequate shelter, and laws and customs that deprive people of African ancestry of ownership of land and housing |
| **6-Oct** |  | The destruction and despising of African systems of knowledge by colonial powers |
| **7-Oct** |  | Undocumented African migrants and people of African descent in countries where they are forced to work in abusive or exploitative situations |
| **8-Oct** | World Sight Day (WHO) | The church failing to ensure that persons with disabilities from Africa and the African Diaspora enjoy full participation in theological discourse and the ministries of the church |
| **9-Oct** | World Post Day (UN) | Global economic model that privileges profit and promotes economic growth at the expense of social protection for people of African descent |
| **10-Oct** | World Mental Health Day (UN) | The lack of access to good health care for people of African descent in North American countries |
| **11-Oct** | International Day of the Girl Child (UN) | That all girls of African ancestry will have a voice, resources for development, and the opportunity to contribute to a brighter future |
| **12-Oct** | Thanksgiving Day (Canada) | Thanksgiving for Indigenous people and people of all ethno-cultural heritages who have advocated for an end to anti-Black racism |
| **13-Oct** |  | For the pioneers who fought against institutional racism, causing laws to be changed allowing for people of African descent to gain more human rights under the law |
| **14-Oct** | International Day for Disaster Reduction (UN) | For Black youth and adults who face disproportionately high rates of incarceration in penal institutions in North America |
| **15-Oct** | International Day of Rural Women (UN) | Black women farmers who are denied ownership of land |
| **16-Oct** | World Food Day (UN) | For people of African descent who hunger for food, a healthy diet; for justice and peace. |
| **17-Oct** | International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (UN) | Exploitation of resources across the African continent to enrich a few international private companies and deprive African peoples of just and equitable access of Africans to resources to end poverty |
| **18-Oct** |  | The discrediting of the diverse cultures and spiritualties across the African continent and in the African Diaspora, which provided a healthy sense of identity, meaning, and purpose |
| **19-Oct** |  | Racial profiling that causes people of African descent to be exposed to extra scrutiny when travelling through countries in North America |
| **20-Oct** |  | Environmental racism that results in toxic waste being dumped in countries across the African continent |
| **21-Oct** |  | For committed allies in the struggle to end anti-Black racism |
| **22-Oct** |  | That people of African ancestry may be strengthened to hold true to the highest ethical principles in the face of racism and injustice |
| **23-Oct** |  | Redlining: the systematic tactic by governments and private sector to prevent people of African descent from having access to financial resources and social services |
| **24-Oct** | United Nations Day (UN) | For African and African-Caribbean nations to have equitable power and influence in the United Nations |
| **25-Oct** |  | For the return to the original owners of artifacts and art taken from African countries to museums and private collections in other countries |
| **26-Oct** |  | For the release of victims of human trafficking, whether of African or other ancestry |
| **27-Oct** |  | Cultural, social, and political systems that value and privilege White people over people of African descent |
| **28-Oct** |  | That people of African descent will reclaim the wisdom of their ancestors that is helpful in facing current challenges = |
| **29-Oct** |  | Voter suppression, intimidation, and all barriers to the full participation of people of African descent in determining leaders of government for the countries in which they live = |
| **30-Oct** |  | Racism in health systems in North America, resulting in higher infant mortality among people of African descent |
| **31-Oct** |  | Refusal to apologize and pay reparation to Africans affected by the atrocities of the16th- to 19th-century transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans |

## November: Resistance and Resilience for People of African Descent

Resistance and resilience are important aspects of the agency of people of African descent. Actions of resistance and strategies to nurture resilience can influence an individual’s life, the experience of the community, and wider relationships for the greater good. Even in the face of grave injustice and dehumanizing conditions of enslavement, racism, and poverty there is the possibility of change. People of African descent have in the past, and currently, continue to protest injustice, overcome setbacks, and have the courage to hope and work for a better future.

During this month, we name groups and individuals of African descent and the traditions of resistance and resilience that they pass on. We pray for the following groups and peoples:

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| **1-Nov** | All Saints Day | Recall the saints and ancestors, and pray for them. They were not perfect, yet they sought to cultivate their innate capacities and offer their best service to others. Let us honour them, avoid their mistakes, and imitate their virtues. | |
| **2-Nov** |  | Many African countries have shown resilience in the face of the coronavirus pandemic. Strategies used include screening, testing, using community workers to reach households, and sharing resources across the continent. Let us pray that we can learn from them. | |
| **3-Nov** |  | Music and dance for resilience in the drumbeats and body movements of the continent―retained and revisited in African-American and African-Caribbean religious rituals. Let us offer prayers of thanksgiving! | |
| **4-Nov** |  | Young Africans on the continent and in the diaspora making a difference, organizing protests, and demanding justice, sometimes in the face of police brutality. | |
| **5-Nov** | Guy Fawkes Day (UK) | Who decides whether a protestor is a villain or a hero? Continuing to fight for what is right even after making mistakes, and praying for justice to prevail. | |
| **6-Nov** | World Day to Protect the Environment in War (UN) | African-born leadership in promoting climate justice, such as Vanessa Nakate, a Ugandan youth climate justice activist. | |
| **7-Nov** |  | Black soldiers from the British Empire who fought in World War II encountered racism among the Allies while fighting with White troops against Nazism. We will remember them, and pray for them and for peace. | |
| **8-Nov** | Remembrance Sunday (UK)  International Restorative Justice Week | Advocates argue for including an anti-racist lens to restorative justice in the USA. We pray for there to be restorative justice with racial justice. | |
| **9-Nov** |  | African and Caribbean governments who spearhead policies and programs to improve the lives of the citizens. What are some examples of good practice? We pray for learning for us all. | |
| **10-Nov** | World Science Day | Remembering and praying for Black scientists and inventors. Recognizing and praying for Black teachers who nurture a love for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) in Black students. | |
| **11-Nov** | Veterans Day (USA)  Remembrance Day (Canada) | Remembering Black soldiers who fought in European and American wars. The Tuskegee Airmen, the first Black aviators in the USA who fought in World War II. We pray for a desire for the day when there are no wars. | |
| **12-Nov** |  | Susu or partner: an informal saving and credit venture of Caribbean people, especially women. A small group of friends each contribute a regular set amount to a saving pool and rotate turns to get the total sum known as the “draw.” We give thanks for this cultural wisdom in saving and sharing. | |
| **13-Nov** | World Kindness Day | African proverbs and traditions of kindness including offering water and serving meals to friends and strangers. We pray for continued kindness among us all. | |
| **14-Nov** | World Diabetes Day | Black church and other -based groups with programs for preventing of diabetes through exercise groups, and distribution of inexpensive nutritious food and fresh vegetables to Black people in urban areas affected by poverty. We give thanks for such programs and pray for people among us who are living with diabetes and other health challenges. | |
| **15-Nov** | National Addiction Awareness Week (Canada) | Groups working to end substance abuse and mental illness in African communities on the continent and the diaspora. We pray for the use of culturally appropriate strategies for prevention and treatment. | |
| **16-Nov** | International Day for Tolerance (UN) | Managing conflict through speech to de-escalate tension and conflict resolution measures. We give thanks for this conflict resolution work. |
| **17-Nov** |  | African Americans in Flint, Michigan and other parts of the USA who protested water supply polluted by lead and other contaminants. We pray for all affected by environmental racism. |
| **18-Nov** |  | Spirituality used as a source of resistance and resilience by many. Critical thinking and accountability question the use of religion/spirituality in abusive ways. We pray for continued means of resistance and resilience. |
| **19-Nov** |  | Courage of Black persons from marginalized groups such as women, working class, and LGBTQ+ communities who offer themselves for public leadership. We give thanks for their faithful leadership. |
| **20-Nov** | Universal Children’s Day (UN)  Africa Industrialization Day (UN) | Innovative strategies by Black teachers to deliver education to children in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Jamaican primary school teacher Taneka McKoy-Phipps’ Community Blackboard strategy was highlighted by UNICEF. We give thanks for their innovation and pray for their continued strength. |
| **21-Nov** | World Television Day (UN) | Research that documents negative stereotypes of Africans in global media. Journalists, actors, filmmakers, and news anchors creating more opportunities for African actors and media workers, as well as programs from African perspectives. |
| **22-Nov** |  | Black Community Development Workers supporting empowerment and self-advocacy of disenfranchised groups. |
| **23-Nov** |  | Using African traditions of proverbs and storytelling to teach wisdom and resilience to succeeding generations. Affirming traditional African knowledge systems. |
| **24-Nov** | United Nations Day (UN) | Acknowledging the work of Africans in the United Nations, such as Kofi Annan of Ghana, former Secretary General, and Angela E.V. King of Jamaica, standard-bearer for the empowerment of women. |
| **25-Nov** | International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (UN) | Feminist and womanist theologians’ leadership in exploring and re-interpreting instances of gender-based violence and sexual gender-based violence in the scriptures. |
| **26-Nov** | Thanksgiving (USA) | Conversations in the USA about African Americans’ celebrating Thanksgiving. Concern about the holiday’s link with the arrival of European Settlers. Affirmation of the psycho-spiritual value of gratitude. | |
| **27-Nov** | Native American Heritage Day (Parts of the USA) | Solidarity between Black and Indigenous peoples in the Americas in the struggle to combat racism. | |
| **28-Nov** | Advent begins | Black anti-slavery campaigners in Britain, such as Mary Prince and Olaudah Equiano, who in the late 18th and early 19th centuries wrote accounts of their lives to expose the evils of slavery. | |
| **29-Nov** | First Sunday of Advent | Black entrepreneurs on the continent and in the diaspora working to secure financial freedom and safeguard the well-being of future generations. | |
| **30-Nov** | Full Moon | Traditions for observing and appreciating nature. Marking the seasons and cycles of life; and resilience in knowing and responding to the changes and opportunities of each season. | |

## December: Hope and Joy for People of African Descent

Advent and Christmas are times of the Christian year when aspects of the mystery of God’s work in the world are symbolized by motifs of pregnancy, birth, and new life. There is uncertainty, sometimes even fear. But there are also possibilities that are in embryonic stage and a promise of good things to come. There is the beginning of a new order with concrete evidence of God present in the affairs of humanity.

Enslaved Africans in the Americas kept possibilities of freedom and joy alive even in the direst circumstances. They claimed freedom and joy in the presence of hardship through song, dance, humour, and cultivating a connection with the Divine. They kept hope alive as they worked and organized for a better future for their children and their children’s children.

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| **1-Dec** | World AIDS Day | We are thankful that many people now have access to antiretrovirals at affordable costs. We celebrate the solidarity of people living with HIV/AIDS with those affected by HIV and AIDS and allies, working to remove stigma and discrimination. |
| **2-Dec** | World Day for Slavery Abolition (UN) | We honour all organizations working to end modern forms of slavery. We pray that those affected by forced labour, child marriage, and sex trafficking will find resilience and release. We are grateful for the International Labour Organization and all institutions and groups working to end modern slavery and its strategies of intimidation, deceit, and violence. |
| **3-Dec** | International Day for Persons with Disabilities (UN) | We are grateful for the insights persons with disabilities offer to the whole church about who God is and what it means to be made in God’s image. We pray for the work and ministry of the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network of the World Council of Churches. |
| **4-Dec** |  | We celebrate experiences of restoration of broken relationships. We pray for a deepening of understanding and solidarity among all people of African descent. |
| **5-Dec** | International Volunteer Day (UN) | We celebrate International Volunteer Day with the theme “Together we can through volunteering.” We repossess the live-giving, ancient African values of community, such as *Ubuntu: I am because we are.* |
| **6-Dec** | National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women (Canada) | We resolve to remember women, and people of all gender identities, who have experienced violence and to act for an end to gender-based violence. |
| **7-Dec** | International Civil Aviation Day | We remember with pride pilots of African descent, many of whom persevered despite the racism they encountered. We remember Eugene Bullard and Bessie Coleman, the first African Americans to become licensed pilots after training in France. We remember the pilots of World War II: the Tuskegee Airmen of the USA and the Caribbean and African members of the Royal Air Force (RAF), and give thanks for their pioneering and perseverance. |
| **8-Dec** |  | We celebrate the gift of faith passed on by our ancestors. We repossess the power of faith to banish fear. And it is so. |
| **9-Dec** | International Anti- Corruption Day (UN) | We acknowledge that today is International Anti-Corruption Day, and that the United Nations theme for today, “Recover with Integrity,” focuses on COVID-19 recovery through corruption mitigation. The theme notes that COVID-19 recovery can only be achieved with integrity. We lament the disproportionate effect that COVID-19 has had on Black Canadians and racialized people in Canada and around the world, and we pray for an inclusive COVID-19 recovery for all peoples. |
| **10-Dec** | Human Rights Day (UN) | We commend civil rights leaders in Canada and the USA who name and counter the human rights violations embedded in anti-Black racism and made worse by the pandemic. |
| **11-Dec** | International Mountain Day (UN) | We rejoice in the beauty of mountains: Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Mount Kenya in Kenya, Mount Stanley in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mount Elgon in Uganda and Kenya, Mount Semien in Ethiopia, the Blue Mountain Peak in Jamaica…. We are grateful for the inspiration mountains provide and embrace the call to protect their biodiversity. |
| **12-Dec** |  | Let us recall a time when we or our community experienced rescue from disaster, tragedy, or adversity. Let us treasure the memory and affirm that rescue from the crises of the present and the misfortune of the future will come. And it is so. |
| **13-Dec** |  | What causes give you energy and fires up your passion? This energy is a cause for joy! Rejoice at the power of the passion God has put in you to right wrongs and call life out of death-dealing situations. |
| **14-Dec** | Total solar eclipse  New moon | An Ancient West African story tells of the spread of humans’ fighting to the sun and moon, causing a solar eclipse. Ancestral mothers Puka Puka and Kuiyecoke convinced the people to stop fighting and to influence peace in the heavenly bodies. We pray that we may find wisdom today to help us to be at peace with each other and with the whole created order. |
| **15-Dec** |  | The mantle has been passed to us in our families, faith communities, and wider global communities. Let us honour the ancestors who have guided and mentored us. Let us recommit ourselves to be our best and truest selves, and may we, by example in life and legacy left after death, pass the mantle on to those who come behind us. |
| **16-Dec** |  | Let us celebrate those among us who speak truth to power. Let us emulate their example of courage, so we and those we influence will taste and embrace liberation from lies. As people of African descent, we announce liberation from the lie that we don’t matter and claim the truth that we are precious in God’s sight―that we matter. |
| **17-Dec** |  | When we miss the mark, we are encouraged by the example of faithful Christians of old. We give thanks for the example of St. Moses the Black, the Ethiopian ascetic who overcame experiences of enslavement, violence, trauma, and doubt about his worthiness to become a revered saint of the church. |
| **18-Dec** | International Migrants Day (UN) | We remember migrant workers of African descent and acknowledge the challenges they face as they seek to provide a better life for themselves and their families. We pray for migrant worker activists and organizations working to uphold their rights as workers. |
| **19-Dec** |  | We celebrate moments when we are inspired, when we experience joy and peace that link us to something more beautiful, more peaceful, and more joyful than the mundane routines of everyday life. You are invited to identify a symbol, word, or object that recalls you to these moments of inspiration, and to focus on this symbol at times when inspiration is hard to find. |
| **20-Dec** | International Human Solidarity Day (UN) | We affirm our commitment to solidarity with all human beings and especially with individuals and groups who are vulnerable and despised. We celebrate the HeForShe global program of UN Women, and honour the men who have joined the global movement for gender equality. |
| **21-Dec** | December Solstice | The winter solstice is an opportunity to remember the importance of rest. In the northern hemisphere, animals hibernate and trees shed their leaves. We give thanks for African descendant leaders who call us to rest and renewal. |
| **22-Dec** |  | We remember people of African descent who have overcome poverty, racism, and adversity to achieve greatness. We applaud those who are so beaten down by the troubles of the world that getting out of bed each day is a major feat of heroism. We find our image in these heroes and heroines and hear God say, “Good job!” |
| **23-Dec** |  | We rejoice in the power of God to create the universe, to create clean hearts within us., to create form out of what was/is unformed. God is the Power that was and is and is to be. Amen |
| **24-Dec** |  | Waiting is an in-between place that can cause impatience. Waiting times can also be filled with hope, joy, faith, and love. May we experience the God who waits with us and waits for us. |
| **25-Dec** | Christmas Day | May God reveal to us individually and as a community the ways people of African descent are being called to give birth to Jesus the Christ at this time |
| **26-Dec** | Boxing Day (Canada) | We are grateful for the joy of giving: for giving gifts, giving time, giving service, giving a phone call of encouragement, giving forgiveness…. May God lead us to those who are in need of our gift, and may joy strengthen both gift and giver. |
| **27-Dec** |  | May we be attentive today to all the gifts that are around us in friends, pets, refreshing solitude, the marvel of details of colour on leaf or bark, the sunrise, and the sunset. Let us receive and enjoy the little gifts in life. |
| **28-Dec** |  | We are thankful for those who rescue children whose lives are in danger and children who are without care and protection. We remember that Egypt provided a place of refuge for the Holy Family. We pray for those who, like St. Joseph, care for adopted children. |
| **29-Dec** |  | We are thankful for siblings, whether they are siblings by means of family, friendship, mentorship, or faith community. We pray that God will guard and bless our relationships with our siblings. |
| **30-Dec** |  | We give thanks for wisdom, for the Woman-Wisdom Hakmot and Sophia of the Bible, and wise women and grandmothers of many African traditions. May the Wise Women continue to guide us to the Divine. May we seek the Wise Women and may they find us. |
| **31-Dec** |  | God has brought us to this day. We are alive! We give thanks for all we have experienced in 2021: sweet smells, delicious tastes, soothing sounds, beautiful sights, healing touch; laughter, relief, survival, resilience, dance, peace…. For all that has been good, we give thanks. |