

The International Decade for People of African Descent: A 2020 Prayer Cycle: Part 3 (August 2020)

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](#). 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. Black peoples continue to live with the legacies of enslavement today.

One of the ways the church is engaging with the Decade is by doing targeted work towards 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 or 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](#) or watch the [introductory video](#) created in conjunction with our full communion partner the United Church of Christ (USA).

How to Use This Prayer Cycle

This Prayer Cycle will be released throughout 2020 in four parts; all parts will be made available for download in the [worship section](#) of the United Church website and on the [Anti-racism webpage](#).

Consider sharing your prayers on social media (use the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC). A daily schedule of intercessions is suggested in this resource for Part 3.

- **August:** Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent
- **September:** Lamenting human rights abuses faced by those of African descent
- **October:** Naming injustices faced by those of African descent

August

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:

1. Impacted by the ongoing legacy of slavery¹
2. Leaders of the Caribbean countries celebrating Independence this month
3. Teachers and educators
4. Religious and spiritual leaders
5. Working towards peace²
6. Musicians and artists pursuing their ideals of just communities
7. Black trans and gender-diverse people who are often violently targeted
8. Living with poor physical health and chronic illnesses linked to stress
9. Seeking to celebrate diversity³
10. Parents who are forced to leave their families
11. Struggling under the realities of carding, or random police checks, which disproportionately affects Black people
12. Being raised by the foster care system⁴
13. Facing economic injustice
14. Leaders of the Black Lives Matter movement
15. Healers of the body, mind, and spirit
16. Experiencing food insecurity
17. Working to eliminate racial profiling
18. Victims of anti-Black hate crimes
19. Doctors who have crossed borders and provided life-saving aid⁵
20. Working in hostile environments
21. Forced to subscribe to Western notions of beauty and internalized racism
22. Denied their basic human rights
23. Fighting a colonial mindset⁶
24. Living with the impact of anti-Black racism on their mental health
25. Activists and leaders of justice-seeking movements
26. Denied equal access to employment⁷
27. Forced into dehumanizing work
28. Experiencing micro-aggressions
29. Exploited for financial gain or personal pleasure⁸
30. Fighting for equitable pay
31. Dealing with addiction

¹ Emancipation Day

² Civic Holiday

³ International Day of the World Indigenous Peoples

⁴ International Youth Day

⁵ World Humanitarian Day

⁶ International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

⁷ Women's Equality Day

⁸ International Day Against Nuclear Tests