

## The International Decade for People of African Descent: A 2020 Prayer Cycle: Part 2 (May—July 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.

One of the ways the church is engaging with the Decade is by doing targeted work towards combating 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](#) 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 2.

- **May:** Recognizing the difficult lived experiences of people of African descent
- **June:** Recognizing that we need to take action to change the racist systems currently in place
- **July:** Recognizing the people of African descent who live outside of the African continent

## May

*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:

1. Working in hostile environments<sup>1</sup>
2. Forced to subscribe to Western notions of beauty<sup>2</sup>
3. Not free to name injustices<sup>3</sup>
4. Socially isolated from others and their peer groups<sup>4</sup>
5. Unaware of their own cultural heritage<sup>5</sup>
6. Aiding people who are racists and hostile towards them<sup>6</sup>
7. Living with unknown limitations<sup>7</sup>
8. Representing organizations that do not represent them<sup>8</sup>
9. Living in xenophobic communities<sup>9</sup>
10. Separated from loved ones
11. Living with racist family members
12. Suffering from poor health due to stress
13. Denied equal access to employment
14. Denied equal access to legal representation and council
15. Being raised by in the child welfare system or by an institution<sup>10</sup>
16. Denied equal access to education
17. Experiencing homophobia, transphobia, and/or biphobia<sup>11</sup>
18. Fighting a colonial mindset
19. Living below the poverty line
20. Denied their basic human rights
21. Seeking to educate others on diversity<sup>12</sup>
22. Seeking to celebrate diversity<sup>13</sup>
23. Suffering from low self-esteem<sup>14</sup>
24. Being used as weapons of war
25. Forced into violence and war
26. Suffering from a low sense of self worth
27. Advocating for the basic human rights of all people
28. Forced into sex work
29. Fighting for peace<sup>15</sup>
30. Exploited for financial gain or pleasure
31. Dealing with addiction<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Workers Day/ beginning of Asian Heritage Month

<sup>2</sup> Tuna Day

<sup>3</sup> World Press Freedom Day

<sup>4</sup> Firefighters Day

<sup>5</sup> Cinco de Mayo/African World Heritage Day/International Midwives Day

<sup>6</sup> Nurses Day

<sup>7</sup> National Day of Prayer/Asthma Day

<sup>8</sup> Receptionists Day

<sup>9</sup> Europe Day

<sup>10</sup> International Day of Families

<sup>11</sup> International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

<sup>12</sup> Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development Day

<sup>13</sup> Biological Diversity Day

<sup>14</sup> End Obstetric Fistula Day

<sup>15</sup> UN Peacekeepers Day

<sup>16</sup> No Tobacco Day

## June

*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:

1. Acknowledge how the legacy of slavery affects people of African descent<sup>17</sup>
2. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of civil rights
3. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social rights
4. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of religious rights<sup>18</sup>
5. Remove obstacles that hinder the right to a fair education<sup>19</sup>
6. Remove obstacles that prevent access to education<sup>20</sup>
7. Acknowledge the lived trauma of African descendants<sup>21</sup>
8. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of and access to clean water<sup>22</sup>
9. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of cultural rights
10. Remove obstacles that prevent the right to development
11. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social advancement
12. Provide cultural training for workers in child protective services<sup>23</sup>
13. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of social advancement<sup>24</sup>
14. Monitor the exploitation of Black bodies<sup>25</sup>
15. Review domestic legislation to abolish provisions that are discriminatory
16. Adopt anti-discrimination legislation
17. Acknowledge the social and economic gaps in the system<sup>26</sup>
18. Provide protection for people African descent
19. Review and repeal all laws that have a discriminatory effect
20. Remove obstacles that prevent the enjoyment of political rights<sup>27</sup>
21. Eliminate institutionalized stereotypes<sup>28</sup>
22. Adopt, strengthen, and implement action-oriented polices to combat anti-Black racism
23. Support organizations that protect the most vulnerable in the community<sup>29</sup>
24. Develop policies that monitor and combat racism
25. Financially support civil society organizations that promote and monitor human rights
26. Establish and strengthen human rights organizations<sup>30</sup>
27. Elaborate action plans to promote diversity, equality and equity
28. Make accessible data on people of African descent to identify social gaps

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<sup>17</sup> Parents Day

<sup>18</sup> Innocent Children/Victims of Aggression Day

<sup>19</sup> Environment Day

<sup>20</sup> Higher Education Day

<sup>21</sup> Environment Day/ Cancer Survivor Day

<sup>22</sup> Oceans Day

<sup>23</sup> Day against Child Labour

<sup>24</sup> Albinism Awareness Day

<sup>25</sup> Blood Donor Day

<sup>26</sup> Desertification and Drought Day

<sup>27</sup> World Refugee Day

<sup>28</sup> Indigenous Day/Yoga Day

<sup>29</sup> Widows Day

<sup>30</sup> Day in Support of Victims of Torture

## July

*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 there are around 200 million people of African descent living in the Americas alone, and many millions more living outside of the African continent. And so we pray with African descendants for:

1. Ancestors and those who stayed watch until emancipation came<sup>31</sup>
2. Kin of many nationalities and religions around the world
3. Kin in North America
4. Kin in Central America<sup>32</sup>
5. Kin in the Caribbean and Latin America
6. Kin who travelled great distances seeking freedom and liberation
7. Kin in South America
8. Kin in Northern Africa
9. Kin in sub-Saharan Africa
10. Kin in Eastern Africa
11. Kin who have been forced to migrate against their will<sup>33</sup>
12. Kin in Middle Africa<sup>34</sup>
13. Kin in Southern Africa
14. Kin in Western Africa
15. Kin in Antarctica<sup>35</sup>
16. Kin in Central Asia
17. Kin in Eastern Asia
18. Kin who marched and fought for freedom<sup>36</sup>
19. Kin in Southeastern Asia
20. Kin in Southern Asia
21. Kin in Western Asia
22. Kin in Eastern Europe
23. Kin in Northern Europe
24. Kin in Southern Europe
25. Kin in Western Europe
26. Kin in Australia and New Zealand
27. Kin who are no longer present because of genocides and ethnic cleansing
28. Kin in Micronesia<sup>37</sup>
29. Kin in Polynesia
30. Kin who died in the Middle Passage<sup>38</sup>
31. Kin who are still journeying towards safety and security

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<sup>31</sup> Canada Day

<sup>32</sup> Day of Cooperatives

<sup>33</sup> Population Day

<sup>34</sup> Malala Day

<sup>35</sup> Youth Skills Day

<sup>36</sup> Nelson Mandela Day

<sup>37</sup> Hepatitis Day

<sup>38</sup> Friendship Day/Day against Trafficking in Persons