



EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Resources

Titles noted in bold are those recommended for beginning congregational study.

Books

Alexander, Michelle. ***The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*** (The New Press, 2012).

In the era of colorblindness, it is no longer socially permissible to use race, explicitly, as a justification for discrimination, exclusion, and social contempt. Yet, as legal star Michelle Alexander reveals, today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against convicted criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you are labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service are suddenly legal.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism with Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in America* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2013).

Documents how, beneath our contemporary conversation about race, lies a full-blown arsenal of arguments, phrases, and stories that whites use to account for—and ultimately justify—racial inequalities. This provocative book explodes the belief that America is now a color-blind society. The fourth edition adds a chapter on what Bonilla-Silva calls "the new racism," which provides the essential foundation to explore issues of race and ethnicity in more depth. This edition also updates Bonilla-Silva's assessment of race in America after President Barack Obama's re-election. Obama's presidency, Bonilla-Silva argues, does not represent a sea change in race relations, but rather embodies disturbing racial trends of the past.

Bray, Melvin. *Better: Waking Up to Who We Could Be* (Chalice Press, 2017).

What if we could actually change the world by telling better stories? What if the world we have—with its racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism, religious hatred,

ecological disregard—is exactly the world we have spun into existence through the stories we have told? In his new book, Melvin Bray insists that a better world is possible if the stories around which we organize our lives begin to match the beauty we imagine is possible. Bray puts forth his own daring yet faithful re-imaginings of classic faith stories that inspire more beautiful, more just, more virtue-filled ways of being in the world. *Better* offers a spiritual path on which people—for whom life has called into question many of their assumptions about God and the world—can continue to hold onto their faith, while joining others of goodwill in seeking sustainable, cooperative, and courageous answers to the seemingly intractable problems of our time.

Brown, Austin Channing. *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* (Convergent, 2018).

In a time when nearly all institutions (schools, churches, universities, businesses) claim to value “diversity: in their mission statements, *I'm Still Here* is a powerful account of how and why our actions so often fall short of our words. Austin writes in breathtaking detail about her journey to self-worth and the pitfalls that kill our attempts at racial justice, in stories that bear witness to the complexity of America's social fabric—from Black Cleveland neighborhoods to private schools in the middle-class suburbs, from prison walls to the boardrooms at majority-white organizations.

Coates, Ta-Nehisi. *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel & Grau, 2015)

In a series of essays, written as a letter to his son, Coates confronts the notion of race in America and how it has shaped American history, many times at the cost of black bodies and lives. Thoughtfully exploring personal and historical events, from his time at Howard University to the Civil War, the author poignantly asks and attempts to answer difficult questions that plague modern society. In this short memoir, the Atlantic writer explains that the tragic examples of Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and those killed in South Carolina are the results of a systematically constructed and maintained assault to black people—a structure that includes slavery, mass incarceration, and police brutality as part of its foundation. From his passionate and deliberate breakdown of the concept of race itself to the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement, Coates powerfully sums up the terrible history of the subjugation of black people in the United States.

Cone, James H. *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (Orbis Books, 2011).

The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. In this powerful new work, theologian James H. Cone explores these symbols and their interconnection in the history and souls of black folk.

Cooper, Brittney. “How Michelle Obama subverted respectability politics with a ponytail” *Christian Century* February 28, 2018.

If you weren't looking for it, you might have missed her act of resistance at Trump's inauguration.

- <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/critical-essay/how-michelle-obama-subverted-respectability-politics-ponytail>
- A version of this article appears in the print edition under the title "Ponytail politics." It was excerpted from Brittney Cooper's *Eloquent Rage*, (St. Martin's Press, 2017).

Douglas, Kelly Brown. *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God* (Orbis Books, 2015).

The 2012 killing of Trayvon Martin, an African-American teenager in Florida, and the subsequent acquittal of his killer, brought public attention to controversial "Stand Your Ground" laws. The verdict, as much as the killing, sent shock waves through the African-American community, recalling a history of similar deaths, and the long struggle for justice. On the Sunday morning following the verdict, black preachers around the country addressed the question, "Where is the justice of God? What are we to hope for?" This book is an attempt to take seriously social and theological questions raised by this and similar stories, and to answer black church people's questions of justice and faith in response to the call of God. But Kelly Brown Douglas also brings another significant interpretative lens to this text: that of a mother. "There has been no story in the news that has troubled me more than that of Trayvon Martin's slaying. President Obama said that if he had a son his son would look like Trayvon. I do have a son and he does look like Trayvon." Her book will also affirm the "truth" of a black mother's faith in these times of stand your ground.

Douglas, Kelly Brown. *What's Faith Got to Do with It? Black Bodies/Christian Souls* (Orbis Books, 2005).

This book was inspired by a challenge from one of Douglas's students: "How could you, a black woman, possibly be a Christian?" Reflection on the historical sins of Christians, particularly the role of white Christians in countenancing the lynching of African Americans, led her to broader questions: What is it about Christianity that could lend itself to racism and its violent abuses? What is it about Christianity that has allowed it to be both a bane and a blessing for black people? Douglas examines the various "distortions" in early Christianity--particularly the influence of platonic dualism, with its denigration of the body, and the alliance with imperial power. She shows how this later helped support white racism, just as it later fed homophobia and other distortions in the black church. Nevertheless, she ends by sharing an inspiring account of her own Christian faith, and why she is still a Christian.

Dyson, Michael Eric. *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America* (St. Martins, 2017).

The book is structured as a religious service, and its cadences practically demand to be heard rather than read. Here is what he calls “a plea, a cry, a sermon, from my heart to yours,” because “what I need to say can only be said as a sermon,” one in which he preaches that “we must return to the moral and spiritual foundations of our country and grapple with the consequences of our original sin.” Not that the faith Dyson espouses is specifically or narrowly Christian or directed solely to those of that religion. In his recasting, the original sin might be seen as white privilege and black subjugation, addressed throughout as a white problem that white people must take significant steps to confront—first, by accepting that “white history disguised as American history is a fantasy, as much a fantasy as white superiority and white purity. Those are all myths. They’re intellectual rubbish, cultural garbage.” The author demands that readers overcome their defensiveness and claims to innocence and recognize how much they’ve benefitted from that myth and how much black Americans have suffered from it—and continue to do so. Dyson personalizes the debates surrounding Black Lives Matter and the institutional subjugation of black citizens by police. He also proposes a form of reparations that is individual rather than institutional, that conscientious white people might set up “an I.R.A., an Individual Reparations Account” and commit themselves to the service of black children, black prisoners, black protestors, and black communities.

- Study Guide: <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-tears-we-cannot-stop-a-sermon-to-white-america/#gsc.tab=0>

Harvey, Jennifer. *Dear White Christians: For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation* (Eerdmans, 2014)

In this provocative book Jennifer Harvey argues for a radical shift in how justice-committed white Christians think about race. She calls for moving away from the reconciliation paradigm that currently dominates interracial relations and embracing instead a *reparations* paradigm. Harvey presents an insightful historical analysis of the painful fissures that emerged among activist Christians toward the end of the Civil Rights movement, and she shows the necessity of bringing “white” racial identity into clear view in order to counter today’s oppressive social structures.

Harvey, Jennifer. *Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America* (Abingdon, 2017)

Families, churches, educators, and communities who want to equip their children to be active and able participants in a society that is becoming one of the most racially diverse in the world while remaining full of racial tensions. For white people who are committed to equity and justice, living in a nation that remains racially unjust and deeply segregated creates unique conundrums. These conundrums begin early in life and impact the racial development of white children in powerful ways. What can we do within our homes, communities and schools? Should we teach our children to be “colorblind”? Or, should we teach them to notice race? What roles do we want to equip them to play in addressing racism when they encounter it? What strategies will help our children learn to

function well in a diverse nation? Talking about race means naming the reality of white privilege and hierarchy. How do we talk about race honestly, then, without making our children feel bad about being white? Most importantly, how do we do any of this in age-appropriate ways?

Irving, Debby. *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race* (Elephant Room Press, 2014)

For twenty-five years, Debby Irving sensed inexplicable racial tensions in her personal and professional relationships. As a colleague and neighbor, she worried about offending people she dearly wanted to befriend. As an arts administrator, she didn't understand why her diversity efforts lacked traction. As a teacher, she found her best efforts to reach out to students and families of color left her wondering what she was missing. Then, in 2009, one "aha!" moment launched an adventure of discovery and insight that drastically shifted her worldview and upended her life plan.

- End of chapter questions: <http://www.debbyirving.com/end-of-chapter-questions/>
- PCUSA study guide for the book: https://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/waking_up_white_study_english.pdf
- Other resources for study related to the book: <http://www.debbyirving.com/study-facilitation-guides/>

King, Martin Luther Jr. "Letter from the Birmingham Jail." In *Why We Can't Wait*, ed. Martin Luther King, Jr., 77-100, 1963.

Dr. King wrote this letter to fellow clergy, so it is particularly relevant to us as a church. Second, I am haunted by his indictment of the white moderate "who is more devoted to 'order' than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice...Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding of people of ill will." In many ways, his statements mesh with those expressed in "Waking up White", except they are more forceful because they are written by a person who was the recipient of this behavior. This letter is just as relevant now as it was in 1963. (Jim Myslik, 2/28/18)

- http://kingencyclopedia.stanford.edu/kingweb/popular_requests/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf

Lewis, Harold T. *Yet With a Steady Beat: The African American Struggle for Recognition in the Episcopal Church* (Trinity Press International, 1996).

The Episcopal Church was the first in the American colonies to baptize blacks, to ordain a black minister, and to establish an African American congregation. Yet membership by blacks in the Episcopal Church has always been viewed as an anomaly. In a nation in which 80 percent of the black Christian population belong to black denominations, it has seemed incongruous to many that the descendants of slaves and the descendants of slaveholders could together find a spiritual home

in the Episcopal Church. Moreover, the mode of religious expression of Anglicanism has been seen as incompatible with the black religious ethos. Attempts to explain this phenomenon frequently dismiss black Episcopalians as social climbers, and their authenticity as African Americans, and even as Christians, is called into question. *Yet With a Steady Beat*, however, argues that blacks have remained in the Episcopal Church because they have recognized it as catholic and therefore inclusive institution. For two hundred years blacks have challenged the church to be true to its catholic claims and have used this principle as a basis for their demands for recognition. This book chronicles the “steady beat” of that challenge.

Mazel, Ella. *“And don’t call me a racist!”: A treasury of quotes on the past, present, and future of the color line in America* (Lexington, MA: Argonaut Press, 1998).

An anthology of quotes and voices regarding race in America from the past and present. Dated, but a good collection of provocative statements and truths told by well-known individuals and those who have been “in the news.”

McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” *Peace and Freedom Magazine*, July/August, 1989, pp. 10-12, a publication of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Philadelphia, PA.

- <https://nationalseedproject.org/itemid-fix/entry/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack-available-online-to-public-for-first-time-in-authorized-version>
- *Note:* Anyone who wishes to reproduce more than 35 copies of this article must apply to the author, Dr. Peggy McIntosh, at mmcintosh@wellesley.edu. This article may not be electronically posted except by the National SEED Project.

Meeks, Catherine, ed. *Living into God’s Dream: Dismantling Racism in America* (Church Publishing, 2017).

While the dream of a “Post-Racial” America remains unfulfilled, the struggle against racism continues, with tools both new and old. This book is a report from the front, combining personal stories and theoretical and theological reflection with examples of the work of dismantling racism and methods for creating the much-needed “safe space” for dialogue on race to occur. Its aim is to demonstrate the ways in which a new conversation on race can be forged. The book addresses issues such as reasons for the failure of past efforts to achieve genuine racial reconciliation, the necessity to honor rage and grief in the process of moving to forgiveness and racial healing, and what whites with privilege and blacks without similar privilege must do to move the work of dismantling racism forward.

- Study guide included.

Stevenson, Bryan. *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* (Spiegle and Grau, 2014).

Bryan Stevenson was a young lawyer when he founded the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending those most desperate and in need: the poor, the wrongly condemned, and women and children trapped in the farthest reaches of our criminal justice system. One of his first cases was that of Walter McMillian, a young man who was sentenced to die for a notorious murder he insisted he didn't commit. The case drew Bryan into a tangle of conspiracy, political machination, and legal brinkmanship—and transformed his understanding of mercy and justice forever. *Just Mercy* is at once an unforgettable account of an idealistic, gifted young lawyer's coming of age, a moving window into the lives of those he has defended, and an inspiring argument for compassion in the pursuit of true justice.

Theoharis, Jeanne. *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (Beacon Press, 2018).

From “the histories we get” to “the histories we need,” Theoharis challenges nine key aspects of the fable to reveal the diversity of people, especially women and young people, who led the movement; the work and disruption it took; the role of the media and “polite racism” in maintaining injustice; and the immense barriers and repression activists faced. Theoharis makes us reckon with the fact that far from being acceptable, passive or unified, the civil rights movement was unpopular, disruptive, and courageously persevering. Activists embraced an expansive vision of justice—which a majority of Americans opposed and which the federal government feared.

Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited* (Beacon Press, 1976).

In this classic theological treatise, the acclaimed theologian and religious leader Howard Thurman (1900-1981) demonstrates how the gospel may be read as a manual of resistance for the poor and disenfranchised. Jesus is a partner in the pain of the oppressed and the example of His life offers a solution to ending the descent into moral nihilism. Hatred does not empower—it decays. Only through self-love and love of one another can God's justice prevail.

West, Cornel. *Race Matters* (Vintage, 1994).

Cornel West is at the forefront of thinking about race. In *Race Matters* he addresses a range of issues, from the crisis in black leadership and the myths surrounding black sexuality to affirmative action, the new black conservatism, and the strained relations between Jews and African Americans. He never hesitates to confront the prejudices of all his readers or wavers in his insistence that they share a common destiny. Bold in its thought and written with a redemptive passion grounded in the tradition of the African-American church, *Race Matters* is a book that is at once challenging and deeply healing.

Websites, Films, and Downloadable Resources

Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing – an inter-generational, faith-based organization providing curriculum, activities and experiences to all participants to engage their heads and their hearts in the daily work of dismantling personal prejudice and ending systemic racism. Executive Director, Catherine Meeks. <https://www.centerforracialhealing.org>

The Beloved Community (Diocese of Atlanta)

https://www.episcopalatlanta.org/Dismantling_Racism/

- Youth curriculum <https://www.eycdioatl.org/dismantling-racism-youth-curriculum.html>

Code Switch: Race and Identity Remixed (NPR)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/>

A podcast series from NPR: “Ever find yourself in a conversation about race and identity where you just get...stuck? *Code Switch* can help. We're all journalists of color, and this isn't just the work we do. It's the lives we lead. Sometimes, we'll make you laugh. Other times, you'll get uncomfortable. But we'll always be unflinchingly honest and empathetic. Come mix it up with us.”

Episcopal Church (Racial Reconciliation)

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

- Resource listing <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/resources-racial-reconciliation-and-justice>
- *Seeing the Face of God in Each Other* (training materials from 2003) https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/antiracism_book-revise3.pdf
- *Becoming Beloved Community Where You Are: A Resource for Individuals, Congregations and Communities* https://www.episcopalchurch.org/files/documents/becoming_beloved_community_individuals_and_congregations.pdf

Fifty Years Later: The State of Racism in America

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/state-racism>

To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and other important milestones in the civil rights movement, The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Mississippi hosted a 90-minute forum, *Fifty Years Later: The State of Racism in America*, live-streamed from St. Andrew's Episcopal Cathedral in Jackson, Mississippi. Useful as an educational resource.

I Am Not Your Negro (film)

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5804038/>

In 1979, James Baldwin wrote a letter to his literary agent describing his next project, "Remember This House." The book was to be a revolutionary, personal

account of the lives and assassinations of three of his close friends: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. At the time of Baldwin's death in 1987, he left behind only 30 completed pages of this manuscript. Filmmaker Raoul Peck envisions the book James Baldwin never finished.

Kaleidoscope Institute – Eric Law's site for training and resources

<http://www.kscopeinstitute.org>

- *Photolanguage* <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/photolanguage/> A copy of this program material can be borrowed from the Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation Ministry Network
- Mutual Invitation <http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/mutual-invitation/>

Listen for Change: Sacred Conversations for Racial Justice

Videos of Trinity Institute's (Wall Street) annual conference

- *Speakers and worship videos* <https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/trinity-institute/2016/schedule>
- *Racism with Racists* - Duke University sociology professor Eduardo Bonilla-Silva offers some suggestions to white Americans who want to challenge the systems and institutions that give them privileges based on skin color. <https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/video/racism-without-racists>
- *Renouncing Privilege* - The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas finds a lesson about racial privilege in the story of Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. <https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/video/ti2016-renouncing-privilege-well-samaria>
- *Changing the Narrative* - In this excerpt of his speech at the first of the Pre-TI Dialogues series, Bryan Stevenson, attorney, author, and advocate, urges us to change the narrative of racial difference created to justify slavery that still infects our country today. <https://www.trinitywallstreet.org/video/changing-narrative>

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond – <http://www.pisab.org>

- *Racial Equity Resource Guide* <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/guides-workshops/the-people-s-institute-for-survival-and-beyond>

Rows of Sharon – Sharon Ely Pearson's resource blog with links to numerous resources:

- *Resources for Discussing Racism* <https://rowsofsharon.com/2015/07/21/resources-for-discussing-racism/>
- *Violence, Racism, and Hostile Rhetoric* <https://rowsofsharon.com/2016/07/10/violence-racism-and-hostile-rhetoric/>
- *The Work Ahead* <https://rowsofsharon.com/2017/08/18/the-work-ahead/>

Standing Commission on Liturgy & Music – [Resolution A182](#) of the 2015 General Convention calls the wider church to be in conversation and to take action on racial

reconciliation and justice. Specifically, the resolution called on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to produce and post applicable prayers.

- <https://liturgyandmusic.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/prayers-sclm-racial-reconciliation-and-justice-final1-3.pdf>

Teaching Tolerance – sponsored by the Southern Poverty Law Center, this site has articles, lesson plans, free resources, and a monthly magazine. Good resource for educators and resources to use with children and youth. <https://www.tolerance.org>

Traces of the Trade (Film)

<http://www.tracesofthetrade.org>

In *Traces of the Trade*, Producer/Director Katrina Browne tells the story of her forefathers, the largest slave-trading family in U.S. history. Given the myth that the South is solely responsible for slavery, viewers will be surprised to learn that Browne's ancestors were Northerners. The film follows Browne and nine fellow family members (Episcopalians) on a remarkable journey which brings them face-to-face with the history and legacy of New England's hidden enterprise.

Visions Inc. – “Our vision is to be a catalyst for a more equitable world where differences are valued and used for the benefit of all.” <http://visions-inc.org/>