

An Anti-Racism Advent Calendar

Our Baptismal Covenant leads us to condemn racism in all forms, and stand against all that perpetuates unjust systems and undermine the creation of a civil, just and peaceful society. It calls us to embrace our siblings of all races, creeds, and origins as members of the human family of God, all whose dignity is to be respected and all who are integral parts of the creation of a civil, just and peaceful society. In the heart of Christ there is room for all and we, too, must work to create this same loving space in our homes, parish, community and world. Advent’s preparation for the first and second coming of Christ, is a fitting time to do this work.

This calendar can be used by all ages, including youth and children working alongside adults. When using this calendar with children, you may want to have paper and crayons or markers to help the children visualize some of the more complex concepts. It can be used with a home Advent wreath or with a simple candle, lit to signify that you are setting time aside to pay attention to the work of this Advent Calendar. It is made in “placemat” style to keep on the table for easy access. However you use it, may you be blessed in your endeavor of anti-racism.

December 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Who is the kindest person you know who isn't a family member? What is it that makes them kind? How could you be more like them?	2 Look up Sojourner Truth. Write down what she did. Could you be like her?	3 Jesus said, “only do to others what you want then to do to you.” What would Jesus say about bullying and teasing people because of the way they look or talk?	4 Sit quietly for five minutes, and pray for all the people you don't like.	5 Do a random act of kindness for someone. Was it easy or hard?	6 Today is St. Nicholas Day. Go to stnicholascenter.org and choose an activity. What did you learn?	7 What have you discovered about yourself this week? What was fun/ What was hard? Did you do anything for the first time? Give thanks to Jesus for all of it!
8 Watch the Youtube Video: Race: The Power of Illusion https://youtu.be/Y8MS6zublaQ One definition of racism is: “prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.” Ask God to show you how you have believed or behaved in racist ways. Confess this and ask for God's forgiveness. Ask God to help you see racism in yourself and to change you.	9 Social and Institutional Power is: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• access to resources• the ability to influence others• access to decision-makers to get what you want done• the ability to define reality for yourself and others Think about examples in your community of these kinds of power. Who in your community has and does not have this kind of power? What does your understanding of Jesus tell you about power?	10 Poet Howard Thurman tells about the movement of God's Spirit in peoples' hearts which calls them to act against the spirit of their times or causes them to anticipate a spirit which is yet in the making. Write a short prayer asking God to show you how you can be an anti-racist and act against racism in the places you go. Carry the prayer with you this week.	11 “Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing “ is often called the black national anthem, Originally a poem by James Weldon Johnson, it was later set to music by his brother John Rosamond Johnson in 1899. Artists like Beyonce and James Moran as well as numerous church choirs offer renditions of this work. Look up and listen to a recording or watch a Youtube video of Lift Every Voice and Sing. Let the song be your worship as you open your heart for God to speak to you. Be brave in living into what God is calling you to do.	12 Pay attention to the people you encounter today in person or in media. Notice how you are the same and how you are different. Think about each person as loved by God. Without judgement, pray a blessing for them. (A blessing is a prayer asking God's love, grace , goodness and will for another person.)	13 “Send them into the world in witness to your love.” – Book of Common Prayer, page 306 Spend some time today researching anti-racism initiatives in your community. Notice where they are located and how they are accessed. Pick one initiative to learn more about. Pick two events or activities that you can attend in the coming year.	14 In the busyness of these days, take “Sabbath moments”. Set a timer for 5 -10 minutes and make a gratitude list. If you missed a day on the Advent Calendar this week, go back and catch up on what you missed. Rest in the knowledge of God's love for you and the whole world and God's reconciling work in the world. Breathe deeply and know that God is God.

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15 Redeeming the Past is written by an Anglican priest from South Africa who had his hands blown off for being against apartheid. He now travels the world helping people to heal and reconcile, especially after trauma. All throughout, his faith informs his work and writing. How do you use your own life story for compassion towards yourself and others?	16 White Rage; The Unspoken Truth of our Racial Divide: The most readable recent history that covers a vast amount of historical time, roughly Civil War to now. In just 178 pages you will learn how the history of our nation is much more tragic and complicated then we learned in school. Where did you learn most about history? Did it feel like the whole picture?	17 The Cross and the Lynching Tree: James Cone's most recent book. There are two essays to really focus in on. One, on the cross and black experience, and the other, on MLK Jr. The last two examine topics of interest in literature and Cone's engagement with Womanist thinkers. The author is a renowned black theologian who began his work on the intersections of Black Power and theology. When you hear "Black Power and theology", what do you think?	18 Where Do We Go From Here, Chaos or Community: If you have never actually read MLK outside of his speeches you must read this book now. He writes poetically, he quotes profusely from academics to everyday wisdom, and he calls people out. If you want to read a book that takes on the evil of the world from the words of scripture and theology this is the book How does your faith inform how you interact with the community?	19 Dear White Christians; For Those Still Longing for Racial Reconciliation: Jennifer Harvey's book. She looks at various initiatives throughout Christians churches in the USA. This book is for anyone who wants to see how some of the theology becomes real and to be pointed towards more resources to hopefully come up with something that fits your own particular context. What does reconciliation mean to you?	20 Jesus and the Disinherited: Howard Thurman's book is written from a Black perspective of those "who have their backs against the wall". The book is a response to a question he was asked while travelling in India: "How can you, a black man, be the member of the White Colonial Religion?" If you are looking for a spiritually deep book, look no further. When you are wrestling with something or feel like you have your back against the wall, how does your faith help?	21 The Fire Next Time by James Baldwin is a deeply theological book divided into two parts. The first is written as a letter or epistle to his nephew. It is meant to be a preparation letter so that his relative can have a brief idea of what to expect in life as a black man. The second part is an autobiography of sorts about Baldwin's views on American culture and race. How do you teach the generation after you about identity and justice?
22 Read Matthew 1:18-25 Get a box of markers or crayons or colored pencils and a piece of paper. On one side draw the story with only one color. On the other side, draw the story with the whole box. Which drawing is more interesting? How do all the colors tell a story? Talk about why it is important to respect people of different cultures and races.	23 Read the Magnificat (BCP page 119 or Luke 1:46b-55), and reflect on how God is acting in the story. Look up the words equality, equity, and justice. Listening to Mary, what do you think God wants for us?	24 Christmas Eve Today may be a busy day for you or your family. Take a couple minutes to thank God for creating us in all of the different ways that humans look, speak, and live.	25 Christmas Day Before any Christmas Day activities, spend 5-10 minutes in prayer using form IV (Book of Common Prayer, pages 388-389) Pray for the people who are different than you, ask God to give you the love of Jesus and the strength of the Holy Spirit to stand up for what is right like Jesus did.	26 Feast of St. Stephen the Martyr Look up and consider joining a nearby chapter of Showing Up for Racial Justice (https://surjneo.org), the NAACP, or another racial justice organization. What are some ways that you can share in the work of anti-racism? Have a conversation as a family about 3 things you will do in 2020 to work to end racism.	27 Feast of St. John the Evangelist Talk to a friend or family member today about your favorite things about yourselves. What are the gifts that God has given you? What are the gifts that God has given them?	28 Feast of the Holy Innocents Take some time to go on a walk with family or friends in your neighborhood, and ask God to guide you. How is God present today?
29 Jacob Lawrence was an incredible visionary and artist who portrayed African American life through multiple media. Look up his artwork, from his Migrations series. https://lawrencemigration.phillipscollection.org/ What do the images show and how do they make you feel?	30 In two days it will be the New Year. For today and tomorrow, read and reflect upon Howard Thurman's Poem, <i>The Work of Christmas</i> . Think and pray about what your anti-racism wok for the New Year will be.	31 <i>The Work of Christmas.</i> "When the song of the angels is stilled, when the star in the sky is gone, when the kings and princes are home, when the shepherds are back with their flocks, <i>The Work of Christmas</i> begins to find the lost, to heal the broken, to feed the hungry, to release the prisoner, to rebuild the nations, to bring peace among the people, to make music in the heart." - Howard Thurman	Resources to learn more: https://episcopalchurch.org/racial-reconciliation/resources https://www.dohio.org/offices/ministries/commission-for-racial-understanding https://episcopalchurch.org/teconversations https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/ http://www.centerforracialhealing.org/ This Anti-Racism Advent Calendar was created as a collaborative effort of the clergy of The Episcopal Church of Lorain County (The Rev. Alex Barton, Church of the Redeemer, Lorain; the Rev. June Hardy Dorsey, St. Andrew's, Elyria and the Rev. Gregory Stark, Christ Church, Oberlin and St. Andrew's, Elyria) along with The Rev. Margaret D'Anieri, Canon for Mission, The Episcopal Diocese of Ohio. November 2019			