

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2022
BLACK HISTORY MONTH
ST. PAUL'S UNITED CHURCH**

Minister: The Reverend Karen Ptolemy-Stam

Music Director: Victoria Warwick

Readers: Doreen Gunson, Bruce Wilcox,

Tech Team: Glenn Erwin, Bruce Wilcox



WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO THE GATHERED:

HYMN: "Draw the Circle Wide"

sung by musicians from the Community of Christ, Brighton.

Refrain:

Draw the circle wide. Draw it wider still.

**Let this be our song, no one stands alone,
standing side by side, draw the circle wide.**

1. God the still-point of the circle, 'round whom all creation turns; nothing lost, but held forever, in God's gracious arm.

Refrain:

2. Let our hearts touch far horizons, so encompass great and small;
let our loving know no borders, faithful to God's call.

Refrain:

3. Let the dreams we dream be larger than we've ever dreamed before;
let the dream of Christ be in us, open every door.

Refrain:

OPENING PRAYER: Bruce Wilcox

God of compassion and justice, you taught our ancestors to sing with their souls while in a foreign land.

Through music, you taught Black peoples to persevere and trust in you, even as their hearts and bodies were broken.

Your power, God, moved through our ancestors,

as the rhythm and cadence of music moves through our bodies.

There would be no Underground Railroad or Civil Rights Movement without a song,

and there would be no song without you.

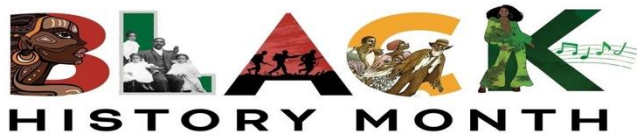
Psalm 150:6 says, "Let everything that has breath, praise you!" And so let us praise you, O God,

while journeying with our black sisters and brothers in the painful racism that was and still continues today. Help us to work with each other to end the hatred and the prejudice. Amen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE LAND

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE:

One: As we light this Christ candle may it remind us that Christ is in us and in our world.



CANADIAN BLACK HISTORY VIGNETTE read by Doreen Gunson **1900s**

Long after slavery was abolished (in 1833 in the British Empire and in 1865 in the United States), life remained difficult for Black people across North America. In the 1950s and 1960s, the fight for civil rights intensified. Several iconic moments included: Viola Desmond refusing to sit in the Black only section of the movie theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia; Rosa Parks refusing to sit at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama; the three civil rights marches from Selma to Montgomery; and the demolition of Africville in Halifax, Nova Scotia, that resulted in the forced relocation of the historic Black community. Many churches joined in the movement, while many others went about their daily business warning activists to slow down and to temper their voices. When society actively put restriction on the rights of Black peoples, "You cannot sit here" and "You cannot march there," some of the churches worked for justice.

2000s

Over 50 years later, the recent deaths of Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, and many others have tragically reminded us that the fight for equal rights is far from over. Racial profiling continues to affect every aspect of society. From childcare to educational and employment opportunities, it is clear that the fight for racial equality continues.¹ What will our church's response be to the current reality of Black and other marginalized peoples in our society?

SUNG RESPONSE: "We Shall Overcome" sung by the Morehouse College Glee Club.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4 read by Bruce Wilcox



SERMON: Oro African Methodist Episcopal Church, our Local Black History

REMINDER OF OUR OFFERING

HYMN "There is a Time for Silence" produced by Noonday films.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND LORD'S PRAYER: read by Doreen Gunson,
Written by Alydia Smith, The United Church of Canada

Recommitting to Justice, Equity, and Peace

God of peace,
give us the courage, strength, and perseverance needed to
challenge the systems of racism,
so that we can clear a path for your justice, peace, and equity.

We believe racism is present
in our society and in our church,
and throughout time has manifested itself in many forms and in varying
degrees.

We know racism is alive in our language and in our structures, and
through our systems it actively works to deconstruct your glorious design,
blocking the path to justice, equity, and peace that Jesus brings.

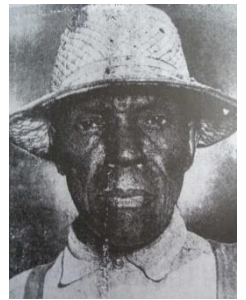
Racism exists, and it challenges the gospel message that we cry.

We cry abundant life for all,
knowing that we are slowly being suffocated by the pervasive evil of
racism: some of us are choking; some of us cannot breathe; some of us
are dead.

We cry peace,
knowing that we are the instruments of God's peace
and that such peace cannot exist without justice, equity, compassion, and
God's grace.

We cry Emmanuel, God-with-us,
knowing that to God,
every life matters—God is with all people—
even though as a community and as a society
we have stated through our actions that some lives matter more than
others.

Compassionate One,
Help us to understand how racism finds life in our hearts and in our cries.



In this time of tense anticipation,
may we commit ourselves to be people of your way, crying and creating a
path for justice, equity, and peace for all people in this wilderness of
hatred and racism. Amen

COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION

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In a world where we have, in the past, enslaved and dehumanized others,
we go to treat each person with dignity and respect.

In a world where profit is valued more than human life,
we go to proclaim the priceless worth of each person.

In a world where the ugliness of racism and White supremacy is found,
we go to show that love conquers all social ills.

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you always.

Amen.

POSTLUDE "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", spiritual, arr. by Paul Johnston