Bibliography of Book, Film and Other Resources for Understanding Racism
Diocesan Commission for the Racial Reconciliation of All God’s Children
The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington
Lexington, Kentucky

These resources have been recommended by members of the Diocesan Commission. The list is updated regularly, so please come back again. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact The Episcopal Diocese of Lexington at 859-252-6527.

Becoming the Beloved Community


Dr. Meeks is the retired Clara Carter Acree Distinguished Professor of Socio-Cultural Studies at Wesleyan College and serves the Diocese of Atlanta as the chair of the Beloved Community: Commission for Dismantling Racism. This book offers compelling perspectives on racial healing and justice-making through the voices of several different authors. The authors address the complexities of structural and cultural racism and offer hopeful responses for readers who are experienced racial justice advocates or just beginning to explore antiracism ministries.

Charles Marsh, a graduate of Harvard Divinity School, is professor of religion at the University of Virginia and director of the Project on Lived Theology. He traces the history of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King’s vision of creating the beloved community over the past five decades, from the racial reconciliation movement in American cities to the intentional communities that church groups have founded.

Understanding Systemic Racism

Reading list on Issues of Race recommended by Harvard faculty:
https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/06/a-reading-list-on-issues-of-race/

If you are just beginning to explore issues of race, this book is a great start. Each chapter includes questions for a book study group. Debby Irving in this personal memoir candidly discusses her journey of learning and transformation as a white person who came to understand issues of race in America. She reflects on the many ways in which racism existed in many different laws and institutions and how this racial discrimination was often subtle and unknown by many white people. It is a compelling story of growing awareness and personal transformation.

Ta-Nehisi Coates is a #1 New York Times bestseller and recipient of the National Book Award, the NAACP Image Award, a Pulitzer Prize finalist, a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist. This book was named as one of the ten best books of the year by The New York Times Book Review. In a profound memoir from a father for his son, he offers a powerful framework for understanding our nation’s history and issues of race. He offers a vision for a way forward.

Stevenson, Bryan. Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption (New York: Spiegel & Grau: 2015). This New York Times bestseller and award-winning author and civil rights leader is the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice dedicated to defending the poor, the wrongly condemned, and those trapped in the furthest reaches of the criminal justice system in America. He documents an unforgettable true story about the redeeming potential of mercy. He has been described as one of the most brilliant and influential lawyers of our time, as well as being the “Desmond Tutu of America.”

Alexander, Michelle. The New Jim Crow (New York: The New Press, 2010). This book is emotionally intense to read and digest. The author, an attorney and legal scholar, argues that the criminal justice system and mass incarceration of black men functions in the same way that Jim Crow laws functioned in the past. Millions of black men imprisoned in the War on Drugs has decimated communities of color as they lose their sons, grandsons, and fathers. When released from prison, they become second-class citizens who cannot vote and struggle to find jobs and housing. As painful as it is to read, it opens our eyes to seeing and understanding things we never knew about until now.

Catherine Meeks, Passionate for Justice: Ida B Wells as a Prophet for our Time

Wesley Lowery, They Can't Kill All of Us

The Firebrand and the First Lady by Patricia Bell-Scott (A book about Episcopal priest, lawyer and civil rights advocate The Rev. Pauli Murray and Eleanor Roosevelt),

Ibram X Kendi, How To Be Antiracist

bell hooks, Killing Rage (bell hooks is a Kentucky author.)

Will Campbell, Brother to a Dragonfly (In an attempt to find an explanation for the tragic end of his younger brother, Campbell provides an account of their lives in the South which is also an epic of a region during a period of racial struggle and turbulent social change.)

Beverly Daniel Tatum, Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria

Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man
https://www.facebook.com/theemmanuelacho/videos/272134207491609/
OR YouTube
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8jUA7JbKF4

Start a Conversation with Black Men Pt 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EenP1-r69V4
Start a Conversation with Black Men Pt. 2
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6IETwl7HEo

We All Have Implicit Bias: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kKHSJJHkPeLY&feature=youtu.be

Eliminating Microaggressions: The Next Level of Inclusion:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPqVit6TJjw&t=284s

Body Language: A Conversion on Race and Restoration: https://youtu.be/W1P6AXjXnXc


A Conversion on Race and Restoration: https://youtu.be/W1P6AXjXnXc

Books of Prayer and Other Prayer Resources

40 Days of Prayer: For the Liberation of American Descendants of Slavery,


  Walter Brueggemann is the William Marcellus McPheeters Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. His prayers explore the faithful mission of proclaiming and laboring for justice, peace, righteousness, and joy for which God ordained through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

  Malcolm Boyd was an Episcopal priest renowned for his work in the civil rights movement and as a freedom rider in 1961. Chester Talton is the first African-American Episcopal bishop in the western United States. The book offers a powerful collection of prose, poetry, and prayers that reveal the pain of racial division, placing it before a loving God for healing and reconciliation.

  Archbishop Desmond Tutu is the retired Archbishop of Capetown, South Africa and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. He provides a collection of the prayers and petitions from diverse voices in Africa including the greatest Church fathers (St. Augustine and St. Athanasius).

Resources for Clergy and Congregations

Joseph Barndt, Becoming an Anti-Racist Church: Journeying toward Wholeness (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011).
  The Rev. Joseph Barndt has been a parish pastor and anti-racism trainer and organizer for more than thirty years. The book offers informed and incisive analysis of the challenge racism poses to
our collective ability to live out our faith. It also offers practical ideas and a rich list of resources for anyone interested in addressing issues of racism in the church.

The Rev. Kenneth Leech is an Anglican priest, writer, and former theologian-in-residence at St. Botolph’s Aldgate in London, England. His work in anti-racism activism and community building has won him wide praise and support from the church as well civic and governmental organizations. In this book, he refers to history, politics, and theology to provide a full picture of the problem of race and point a way forward for the church.


Why Christianity is Perceived as the White Man’s Religion (How to Address Unconscious Bias): https://youtu.be/ex0v7IXlz5w

Religion and Power: Race in the Church https://youtu.be/1YLxVvycF3g

What’s Wrong with White Saviors: https://youtu.be/VK5EQm-B5Q0

Racism and Christianity: https://youtu.be/-mMLqBAmQWc

Do All Christians Think The Same? https://youtu.be/DQHMB7V9LtE

Ministry of Reconciliation


Michael Battle, Reconciliation: The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1977). Episcopal priest, The Rev. Michael Battle, served as an adjutant to Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa, 1993-1994. He discusses Bishop Tutu’s theology of Ubuntu, an African concept recognizing that persons or groups form their identities in relation to one another. This model was successful in opposing apartheid racism in South Africa and offers a Christian model for resisting oppression wherever it appears.


Christopher Pramuk, Hope Sings, so Beautiful (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2013). Christopher Pramuk, associate professor of theology at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, is an award-winning author. He provides compelling images and reflections for thinking and praying through difficult questions about race. It will stimulate fruitful conversation in private study and prayer, as well as in classrooms, churches, and reading groups.
Archbishop Desmond Tutu is the retired Archbishop of Capetown, South Africa and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. In 1994, he was appointed by President Nelson Mandela as Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. He argues that true reconciliation cannot be achieved by denying the past. He shows a way to move forward with honesty and compassion to build a newer and more humane world.

Archbishop Tutu and his daughter, The Rev. Mpho Tutu, provide groundbreaking insights about how to acknowledge and resolve our lifelong burdens of anguish and pain. They provide a new paradigm for transformative healing.

Cone, James H. The Cross and the Lynching Tree (Orbis Books, 2013).
Dr. Cone is a distinguished theologian and scholar, author of numerous books, and the Bill and Judith Moyers Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. The cross and the lynching tree are the two most emotionally charged symbols in the history of the African American community. In this powerful book, Dr. Cone explores these symbols and their interconnection in the history and souls of black folk. He is a nationally respected Christian and theologian of the American experience of faith and race.

Understanding the History of African-Americans in The Episcopal Church

The Rev. Harold Lewis, served as staff officer for Black Ministries at the Episcopal Center in New York, as a parish priest, Professor of Homiletics at the George Mercer School of Theology, and Adjunct Professor of Preaching at New York Theological Seminary. He provides a history of black Episcopalians and their struggle for recognition in The Episcopal Church.

Understanding Racism in America

Wendell Berry, the beloved poet and author of Kentucky, and award-winning writer provides one of the most touching and true personal testimonies concerned with our country’s racial history.

Dr. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva is professor and chair of the sociology department of Duke University. In this classic book, he explores institutional racism and how white people have used arguments, phrases and stories to justify racial inequalities in America.

Paul Harvey is professor of history and Presidential Teaching Scholar at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. Professor Harvey explains how the intersection of religion and race
indelibly shaped America’s past and why it continues to inform our future. He is the author of several books including The Color of God and the Saga of Race in America.


The Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas served as a distinguished scholar, author, and professor of religion at Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland. In this book, she explores the nature of black Christian ecclesiology and the ways in which Christianity is both a bane and blessing in the lives of black people. She was selected in May 2017 as the Dean of Episcopal Divinity School at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She is the first African-American to lead an Episcopal seminary.

Jim Wallis, America’s Original Sin (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2016)

Jim Wallis is a Christian writer and political activist. He is best known as the founder and editor of Sojourners magazine and as the founder of the Washington, D.C.-based Christian community of the same name. For decades, he has written and spoken about racial justice and reconciliation. He calls us to transcend racial categories and to see in one another the image of God.


Dr. Cornel West is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Christian Practice at Union Theological Seminary and Professor Emeritus at Princeton University. He has also taught at Yale, Harvard, and the University of Paris. Dr. West graduated Magna Cum Laude from Harvard and obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy at Princeton. He is professor Emeritus of Philosophy and Christ Practice at Union Theological Seminary. As a scholar and theologian, he is most of the most eloquent voices in America’s racial debate.

Walter Johnson, The Broken Heart of America

Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, An Indigenous People's History of the United States

Crystal M. Fleming, How To Be Less Stupid About Race

Ijeoma Oluo, So You Want To Talk About Race

Stephanie E. Jones-Rogers, They Were Her Property

Ruby Hamad, White Tears, Brown Scars

Children’s Books

Scott Woods 28 Black Picture Books That Aren’t About Boycotts, Buses, Or Basketball
https://scottwoodsmakeslists.wordpress.com/2016/01/30/28-black-picture-books-that-arent-about-boycotts-buses-or-basketball/

Scott Woods 28 More Black Picture Books That Aren’t About Boycotts, Buses, Or Basketball (Vol 3)  

Top 154 Recommended African American Children’s Books (African American Literature Book Club) 
https://aalbc.com/books/children.php

28 Day Later– The Brown Shelf  
https://thebrownbookshelf.com/28-days-later/  
This site is dedicated to books featuring mighty girl characters, there is a lot of diversity, with many books about Black, Latinx and Asian girls. https://www.amightygirl.com/books

Little People Big Dreams available at most online book sellers  
https://www.quartoknows.com/series/837/Little-People-Big-Dreams/

David A. Adler, A Picture Book of Rosa Parks (New York: Scholastic Inc., 1993)

Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Adams, Desmond and the Very Mean Word

Patsi B. Trollinger, Perfect Timing: How Isaac Murphy Become On of the World’s Greatest Jockeys (Perryville: Benjamin Press, 2006). Isaac Murphy was an African-American jockey from Lexington. There is an Isaac Murphy Memorial Art Garden located at 250 W Main St., Lexington, KY 40507. There is more information at https://www.bgcf.org/engage/community/MurphyMemorialArtGarden


Pat Sherman, Ben and the Emancipation Proclamation (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2010).


Jean Marzollo, Happy Birthday Martin Luther King (New York: Scholastic Inc. 1993).


Patricia Mckissock, Christmas in the Big House, Christmas in the Quarters (Scholastic, 1994).


**The Role of Technology in Racism**

Safiya Noble, *Algorithms of Oppression*

Rob Smith, *Rage Inside The Machine*

Sara Wachter-Boettcher, *Technically Wrong*

**Recommended Films**

*Traces of the Trade* (This documentary film explores how one Episcopal family explored its history and involvement in the historic Slave Trade. It is a powerful testimony of how a family become reconciled with its past and is now advocating for dismantling racism).

*White Like Me* by Tim Wise (This is an honest exploration of white privilege by a white man.)

*Selma* (This documentary film explores the voting rights movement in the 1960s in Alabama and the famous protest march across the Edmund Pittus bridge in Selma, Alabama.)

*Banished* (This film documents the removal of African Americans from three U.S. cities.)

*13th* (This film documents the history of racial discrimination in America that led to the mass incarnation of brown and black men.)

*Raising Bertie*, 2017

*Love Story*, Interracial couple, Richard and Mildred Loving, made history when they secretly got married in the 50s, breaking their home state’s racial integrity law. But that didn’t stop the two from taking their case to court, forcing the law to finally recognize their love. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T30Xp6Iot2U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T30Xp6Iot2U)