

A 28 DAY DEVOTIONAL

GOD OF JUSTICE

A thick, horizontal orange brushstroke with a textured, watercolor-like appearance. It has irregular, feathered edges and a slightly darker orange tip on the left side.

A UNITED PETITION

*“Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of wickedness,
to undo the straps of the yoke,
to let the oppressed go free,
and to break every yoke?”*

*Is it not to share your bread with the hungry
and bring the homeless poor into your house;
when you see the naked, to cover him,
and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?*

*Then shall your light break forth like the dawn,
and your healing shall spring up speedily;
your righteousness shall go before you;
the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.*

*Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you
shall cry, and he will say, ‘Here I am.’”*

AN INVITATION

Dear Christ Central Church Family,

Welcome to God of Justice, a 28-day devotional for Black History Month. This devotional is meant to help our congregation **celebrate, pray, and seek justice** together.

We **celebrate** Black History Month. There are many reasons, and my friend and fellow pastor, Rev. Duke Kwon, shares five reasons that resonate deeply. First, to deepen fellowship with our black Christian sisters and brothers by honoring their family stories and learning about the historical and cultural contexts that shape who they are. We celebrate to cultivate cross-cultural skills in order to love our black local neighbors more genuinely and more electively; after all, we cannot love our neighbors well without knowing their stories and without sharing a “common memory” of the past. We celebrate to learn more of the all too neglected history of the black church, recognizing that black church history is church history. We celebrate to model the gospel ethic of mutuality/interdependency by esteeming a subdominant culture—historically, one that has been devalued and subjugated, even in and by the church—celebrating its people and achievements and witnessing its vast potential to fortify the ministry and mission of the church. We also celebrate to grow in repentance for corporate sins committed against Black people, often in the name of Christ—sins past and present, of commission and omission—as a necessary step toward true reconciliation and inter-ethnic unity in the church.

May we also **pray** throughout Black History Month. As a church, we believe in the power of prayer to form us, to lead us to action, and to move us to petition. The habit of prayer forms and shapes our hearts, minds, and therefore our loves. As we pray for God to work in and among us in Black History Month, God is changing our hearts and lives as we become more a praying people. We believe prayer is not passive but active. We don’t want to be a church that just talks about

racial equity and cross cultural community, we desire to be a people who act and move on our value of being a cross cultural community. We also believe that God hears and is moved by the prayers of His people. As we seek God and call out to Him for justice to roll down, for His peace to prevail, His kingdom to come, we believe God uses the prayers of His people for His purposes.

Lastly, we seek **justice** during Black History Month. Justice is God's Heart. God longs for earth to be transformed to heaven. God gets angry about the injustices and inequities of our world. So, when Christ's kingdom comes to earth as it is in heaven, that means God's Shalom, God's peace, will be brought to bear in the broken lives of people, and the broken systems of society. Justice should be at the Christian's heart, too. We realize as a church that everyone has different gifts, passions, and callings. This is to be celebrated. Justice being at the heart of God means that we as Christians who strive to have His heart should care about justice. How we seek justice and love mercy will look differently based on gifts, passion, and callings. Nonetheless, justice should be something every Christian seeks, because it is integral to God's kingdom. Lastly, justice is at the heart of Christ Central Church. We desire to herald the gospel, which means we make much of Jesus in word and deed. As a church, we want to be mindful of injustices and inequities that exist relationally and systemically in our church, in our city, and in the world. Therefore, we engage with word and deed to see Christ lifted up and His kingdom advanced.

Until His Kingdom comes,

Rev. Daniel Mason

Note: Follow Saints of Sparrows on Spotify for access to the complete 28-song companion playlist.

FEBRUARY 1

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalms 36:5-6

*Your love, O LORD, reaches to the heavens; Your faithfulness to the skies.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Your justice like the great deep
O LORD, you preserve both man and beast.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Father in heaven, we need to be forgiven. We have tried to heal ourselves. Instead of trusting in the death of Jesus Christ, we have tried to work off our guilt. We have tried so hard to pile up good deeds that outweigh our sins. When this doesn't work, we quickly turn to denial and distraction. Instead of trusting in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have tried to change through our own efforts. We have tried to change our hearts through sheer willpower.

This has left some of us arrogant. This has left most of us anxious and depressed. Forgive us for trying to heal ourselves. Forgive us for neglecting your grace. Forgive us and heal us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Colossians 2:13-14

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

Read Genesis 37:1-10 | John 10:1-21

Petition the Lord for the commitment to do justice and show mercy.

SONG

Isaiah 58 | Urban Doxology

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 2

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 30:18

Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the Lord is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 1:4-7

And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

Read Genesis 37:12-36 | John 10:22-42

Petition the Lord for servant leadership, kingdom vision, godly stewardship, and effective organization of the local church.

SONG

My World Needs You | Kirk Franklin, Sarah Reeves, Tasha Cobbs Leonard

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 3

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 10:17-18

*O Lord, you hear the desire of the afflicted;
you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear
to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 Peter 2:24-25

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Read Genesis 39:1-23 | John 11:1-16

Petition the Lord for our capacity to suffer with others.

SONG

I Surrender All | Cece Winans

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 4

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jeremiah 9:23-24

Thus says the Lord: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord."

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of everlasting love, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our covenant with you and with one another. We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and comfort. We have served our own self-interest instead of serving only you and your people. We have not loved our neighbor as you have commanded nor have we rightly loved ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 8:1-2

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Read Genesis 40:1-23 | John 11:17-44

Petition the Lord for deep heart repentance and genuine humility born of the gospel.

SONG

Purge Me | Urban Doxology

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 5

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalms 20:5-8

May we shout for joy over your salvation, and in the name of our God set up our banners! May the Lord fulfill all your petitions! Now I know that the Lord saves his anointed; he will answer him from his holy heaven with the saving might of his right hand. Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They collapse and fall, but we rise and stand upright.

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when we are stained, and great when we are small. We have failed in love, neglected injustice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy on us, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 44:22-23

I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like a mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you. Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.

Read Genesis 41:1-40 | John 11:45-57

Petition the Lord for racial reconciliation.

SONG

Heal Us | Indelible Grace

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 6

CALL TO WORSHIP

Zephaniah 3:5

*The Lord within her is righteous;
he does no injustice;
every morning he shows forth his justice;
each dawn he does not fail;
but the unjust knows no shame.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Lord God, You require us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before You. We confess that we have not loved You or our neighbor in this way. We repent of this. Grant that Your Holy Spirit drives us to seek these things through Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Read Genesis 41:41-57 | John 12:1-11

Petition the Lord for a love of and commitment to the communities in which God has placed us.

SONG

No Longer Slaves | Bethel Music

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 7

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 101:1

*I will sing of steadfast love and justice;
to you, O Lord, I will make music.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done Your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against Your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 40:1-2

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.*

Read Genesis 42:1-17 | John 12:12-19

Petition the Lord for governments, leaders, and the needs of our world.

SONG

Made a Way | Travis Greene

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 8

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jeremiah 23: 5

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land."

CONFESSION OF SIN

Father in heaven, we need to be forgiven. We have tried to heal ourselves. Instead of trusting in the death of Jesus Christ, we have tried to work off our guilt. We have tried so hard to pile up good deeds that outweigh our sins. When this doesn't work, we quickly turn to denial and distraction. Instead of trusting in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have tried to change through our own efforts. We have tried to change our hearts through sheer willpower.

This has left some of us arrogant. This has left most of us anxious and depressed. Forgive us for trying to heal ourselves. Forgive us for neglecting your grace. Forgive us and heal us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalms 130: 3-4

*If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.*

Read Gen 42:18-38 | John 12:20-36

Petition the Lord for the wonder of creation, for the care of a broken creation.

SONG

The Earth Shall Know | Urban Doxology

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 9

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:8-10

*Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!*

*Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!*

*Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Matthew 5:14-16

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Read Genesis 43:1-14 | John 12:37-50

Petition the Lord for eyes to see God's work in the world around us.

SONG

Amazing Grace | Aretha Franklin

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 10

CALL TO WORSHIP

John 4:23-24

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalms 36:7-9

How precious is your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house, and you give them drink from the river of your delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.

Read Genesis 43:15-34 | John 13:1-20

Petition the Lord for those who work in service to others.

SONG

What Wondrous Love is This | Keith & Kristyn Getty

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 11

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 99:4-5

The King in his might loves justice. You have established equity; you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the Lord our God; worship at his footstool! Holy is he!

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of everlasting love, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our covenant with you and with one another. We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and comfort. We have served our own self-interest instead of serving only you and your people. We have not loved our neighbor as you have commanded nor have we rightly loved ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 55:6-9

"Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

Read Genesis 44:1-13 | John 13:21-38

Petition the Lord for areas of hunger, famine, and disease--that none may go hungry.

SONG

How I Got Over | Mahalia Jackson

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 12

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:11-13

Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually! Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered, O offspring of Israel his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when we are stained, and great when we are small. We have failed in love, neglected injustice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy on us, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Titus 3:4-7

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

Read Genesis 44:14-34 | John 14:1-4

Petition the Lord for those whose needs cannot be spoken and suffer in silence.

SONG

So Will I (100 Billion X) | Hillsong United

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 13

CALL TO WORSHIP

Daniel 2:20-23

"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him. To you, O God of my fathers, I give thanks and praise, for you have given me wisdom and might, and have now made known to me what we asked of you, for you have made known to us the king's matter."

CONFESSION OF SIN

Lord God, You require us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before You. We confess that we have not loved You or our neighbor in this way. We repent of this. Grant that Your Holy Spirit drives us to seek these things through Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Colossians 2:6-7

Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Read Gen 45:1-15 | John 14:15-31

Petition the Lord for schools, teachers, and administrators.

SONG

Hear O Israel | Urban Doxology

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 14

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 30:4-5

*Sing praises to the Lord, O you his saints,
and give thanks to his holy name.*

*For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.*

*Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done Your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against Your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Read Genesis 45:16-28 | John 15:1-17

Petition the Lord for the call to follow Christ in your home, neighborhood, and workplace.

SONG

We Abide We Abide in You | The Porter's Gate

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 15

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:14-18

He is the Lord our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Remember his covenant forever, the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan, as your portion for an inheritance."

CONFESSION OF SIN

Father in heaven, we need to be forgiven. We have tried to heal ourselves. Instead of trusting in the death of Jesus Christ, we have tried to work off our guilt. We have tried so hard to pile up good deeds that outweigh our sins. When this doesn't work, we quickly turn to denial and distraction. Instead of trusting in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have tried to change through our own efforts. We have tried to change our hearts through sheer willpower.

This has left some of us arrogant. This has left most of us anxious and depressed. Forgive us for trying to heal ourselves. Forgive us for neglecting your grace. Forgive us and heal us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

1 John 2:1-2

My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Read Genesis 46:1-34 | John 15:18-16:4

Petition the Lord for victims of sex trafficking and those trapped in the sex industry.

SONG

This Little Light of Mine | Sam Cooke

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;

FEBRUARY 16

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:23-27

Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place.

CONFESSIO N OF SIN

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Joel 2:12-13

"Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

Read Genesis 47:1-12 | John 16:5-16

Petition the Lord for lobbyists and advocates for justice and peace.

SONG

O Come to the Altar | Elevation Collective, Chris Brown, Israel Houghton

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 17

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalms 99:1-3

The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble!

He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

The Lord is great in Zion; he is exalted over all the peoples.

Let them praise your great and awesome name!

Holy is he!

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Read Genesis 47:13-31 | John 16:17-33

Petition the Lord for those living in poverty and suffering injustice.

SONG

All the Poor and Powerless | All Sons and Daughters

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 18

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:28-31

*Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength!
Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him!
Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the
world is established; it shall never be moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth
rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"*

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of everlasting love, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our covenant with you and with one another. We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and comfort. We have served our own self-interest instead of serving only you and your people. We have not loved our neighbor as you have commanded nor have we rightly loved ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

John 3:16

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him
should not perish but have eternal life.*

Read Genesis 48:1-22 | John 17:1-5

Petition the Lord for God to equip us to serve in uniquely Christian ways in the public arena.

SONG

Pass Me Not | Fernando Ortega

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 19

CALL TO WORSHIP

Jeremiah 20:13

*Sing to the Lord;
praise the Lord!
For he has delivered the life of the needy
from the hand of evildoers.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when we are stained, and great when we are small. We have failed in love, neglected injustice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy on us, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalms 103:8-12

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

Read Isaiah Genesis 49:1-33 | John 17:6-19

Petition the Lord for unity and holiness in the church community.

SONG

God Will Take Care of You | Aretha Franklin

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 20

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:35-36

*"Save us, O God of our salvation,
and gather and deliver us from among the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.
Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting!"*

CONFESSIO N OF SIN

Lord God, You require us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before You.
We confess that we have not loved You or our neighbor in this way. We repent of
this. Grant that Your Holy Spirit drives us to seek these things through Christ. Amen.

A S S U R A N C E O F P A R D O N

Ephesians 1:7-10

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, accord-
ing to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight
making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth
in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven
and things on earth.*

Read Genesis 50:1-26 | John 17:20-25

Petition the Lord the Love of Jesus to flow from me to others.

S O N G

Wood and Nails | The Porter's Gate

B L E S S I N G

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 21

CALL TO WORSHIP

Hosea 2:18-19

I will make for them a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the creeping things of the ground. And I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land, and I will make you lie down in safety. And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love and in mercy.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done Your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against Your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 3:23-25

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

Read Exodus 1:1-22 | John 18:1-11

Petition the Lord for areas of war and strife, that divisions and conflicts may cease.

SONG

Wasteland | Urban Doxology

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 22

CALL TO WORSHIP

1 Chronicles 16:31-34

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!" Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

CONFESSION OF SIN

Father in heaven, we need to be forgiven. We have tried to heal ourselves. Instead of trusting in the death of Jesus Christ, we have tried to work off our guilt. We have tried so hard to pile up good deeds that outweigh our sins. When this doesn't work, we quickly turn to denial and distraction. Instead of trusting in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have tried to change through our own efforts. We have tried to change our hearts through sheer willpower.

This has left some of us arrogant. This has left most of us anxious and depressed. Forgive us for trying to heal ourselves. Forgive us for neglecting your grace. Forgive us and heal us, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalms 145:8-9

*The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made.*

Read Exodus 2:1-25 | John 18:12-26

Petition the Lord for those who are victims of crime, and those who support them.

SONG

Reckless Love | Israel Houghton

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 23

CALL TO WORSHIP

Revelation 19:1

"Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for true and just are his judgments.

CONFESSION OF SIN

Gracious God, our sins are too heavy to carry, too real to hide, and too deep to undo. Forgive what our lips tremble to name, what our hearts can no longer bear, and what has become for us a consuming fire of judgment. Set us free from a past that we cannot change; open to us a future in which we can be changed; and grant us grace to grow more and more in your likeness and image, through Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Zephaniah 3:17

*The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.*

Read Exodus 3:1-22 | John 18:25-40

Petition the Lord for effective courts and judges.

SONG

Your Spirit | Tasha Cobbs Leonard, Kierra Sheard

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 24

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 30:1-2

*I will extol you, O Lord, for you have drawn me up
and have not let my foes rejoice over me.*

*O Lord my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Colossians 1:13-14

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Read Exodus 4:1-17 | John 19:1-27

Petition the Lord for those persecuted for their faith.

SONG

Have Mercy on Me | Porter's Gate, David Gungor

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 25

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalms 62:1-2

*For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly shaken.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of everlasting love, we confess that we have been unfaithful to our covenant with you and with one another. We have worshiped other gods: money, power, greed, and comfort. We have served our own self-interest instead of serving only you and your people. We have not loved our neighbor as you have commanded nor have we rightly loved ourselves. Forgive us, gracious God, and bring us back into the fullness of our covenant with you and one another. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 40:1-2

*Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.*

Read Exodus 4:18-31 | John 19:28-37

Petition the Lord for those who mourn a death, and those who minister to them.

SONG

Take My Hand, Precious Lord | Mahalia Jackson

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 26

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 47:1-4

*Clap your hands, all peoples!
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.
He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.
He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

God of mercy, you sent Jesus Christ to seek and to save the lost. We confess that we have strayed from you and turned aside from your way. We are misled by pride, for we see ourselves pure when we are stained, and great when we are small. We have failed in love, neglected injustice, and ignored your truth. Have mercy on us, O God, and forgive our sin. Return us to paths of righteousness through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Romans 4:24-25

Righteousness will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Read Exodus 5:1-21 | John 19:38-20:9

Petition the Lord for the joy of salvation to be experienced.

SONG

Raised to Life | Elevation Collective, The Walls Group

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 27

CALL TO WORSHIP

Isaiah 61:8-9

*For I the Lord love justice;
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Lord God, You require us to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before You. We confess that we have not loved You or our neighbor in this way. We repent of this. Grant that Your Holy Spirit drives us to seek these things through Christ. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Psalms 40:11

*As for you, O Lord, you will not restrain
your mercy from me;
your steadfast love and your faithfulness will
ever preserve me!*

Read Exodus 5:22-6:27 | John 20:10-31

Petition the Lord for forgiveness and for the readiness to extend it to others.

SONG

Spirit Send Your Fire | Urban Doxology, Shade

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

FEBRUARY 28

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 25:8-10

*Good and upright is the Lord;
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.
He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.
All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness,
for those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.*

CONFESSIO N OF SIN

Merciful God, we confess that we have not loved You with our whole heart. We have failed to be an obedient church. We have not done Your will, we have broken your law, we have rebelled against Your love, we have not loved our neighbors, and we have not heard the cry of the needy. Forgive us, we pray. Free us for joyful obedience, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

Isaiah 62:11-12

*Behold, the Lord has proclaimed to the end of the earth:
Say to the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your salvation comes;
behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him."
And they shall be called The Holy People, The Redeemed of the Lord;
and you shall be called Sought Out, A City Not Forsaken.*

Read Exodus 12:31-50 | John 21:1-25

Petition the Lord for a rich understanding of the gospel.

SONG

Passover Song | I Am Son

BLESSING

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you: wherever he may send you;
May he guide you through the wilderness: protect you through the storm;
May he bring you home rejoicing: at the wonders he has shown you;
May he bring you home rejoicing: once again into our doors.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- **BLOODLINES: RACE, CROSS, AND THE CHRISTIAN**

by John Piper

- **DIVIDED BY FAITH: EVANGELICAL RELIGION & THE PROBLEM OF RACE IN AMERICA**

by Christian Smith & Michael Emerson

- **DOCTRINE & RACE: AFRICAN AMERICAN EVANGELICALS AND FUNDAMENTALISM BETWEEN THE WARS**

by Mary Beth Swetnam Mathews

- **DREAM WITH ME: RACE, LOVE, & THE STRUGGLE WE MUST WIN**

by John M. Perkins

- **LETTER FROM BIRMINGHAM JAIL**

by Martin Luther King, Jr.

- **MAY WE MEET IN THE HEAVENLY WORLD: THE PIETY OF LEMUEL HAYNES**

by Thabiti M. Anyabwile & Lemuel Haynes

- **REVIVAL: CREATING BLACK CHRISTIANITY IN THE ATLANTIC WORLD**

by Rebecca Proppen

- **THROUGH THE STORM, THROUGH THE NIGHT: A HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY**

by Paul Harvey

SUGGESTED EVENTS IN DURHAM

• A CREATIVE PROTEST: MLK COMES TO DURHAM EXHIBIT

All month long | Free
Museum of Durham History | 500 W. Main Street

• NC MLK BLACK HISTORY MONTH PARADE AND BLOCK PARTY

February 1 | 11:00 am - 4:00 pm | Free
3501 Fayetteville Street, from W.G. Pearson Elementary School to NCCU

• RACIAL EQUITY TRAINING

February 6-7 | 8:30 am - 5:15 pm | Tickets available at [racialequityinstitute.com](https://www.racialequityinstitute.com)
St. Luke's Episcopal Church | 1737 Hillandale Road

• BLACK EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE

February 8 | 10:00 am - 3:00 pm | Included with museum admission
Museum of Life and Science | 433 W. Murray Avenue

• SWEET CHARIOT

February 11 | 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm | Free
Hayti Heritage Center | 804 Old Fayetteville Street

• HAYTI HERITAGE FILM FESTIVAL

February 13-15 | Schedule and ticketing available at [haytifilmfest.org](https://www.haytifilmfest.org)
Hayti Heritage Center | 804 Old Fayetteville Street

• STAGVILLE UNDER THE STARS

February 28 | 6:00pm - 8:00 pm
Stagville State Historic Site | 5828 Old Oxford Highway



CHRIST CENTRAL CHURCH

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SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP
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