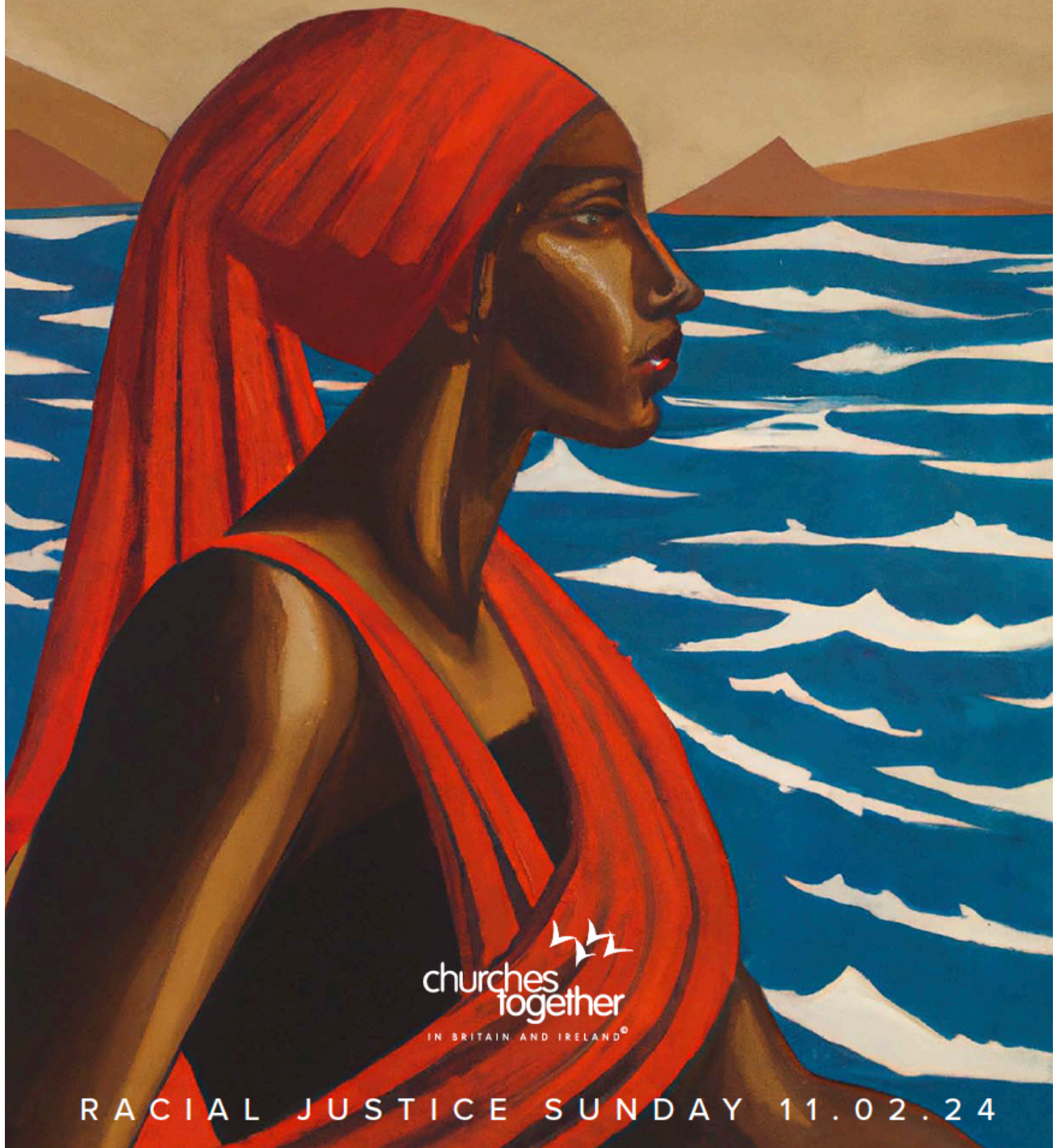


EXODUS!

JUSTICE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE ON THE MOVE




churches
together
IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND®

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 11.02.24

Welcome and Call to worship

We gather here to mark this Racial Justice Sunday.
Remind us that even as we gather here today,
Many arrive on our shores, bereft,
Fleeing oppression and war,
Seeking safety, security and sanctuary.

God of justice and peace,
May we see Your beauty in each one of Your dear children,
Recognising the fingerprints of a loving God
Who made all of us in the image of the Divine.
Knowing deeply that it was You, O God,
Who breathed life and beauty into us all.
May we welcome one another here today, and
May we welcome Your children into our communities
With the same passion and zeal that we welcome Your presence with us.

Unite us as the family of God,
Called to love and transform the world,
That Your dream may come true for all people.

Amen

Breathe on me, Breath of God,

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you love,
and do what you would do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.

The Collect (Special prayer for the day)

Holy God,
you know the disorder of our sinful lives:
set straight our crooked hearts,
and bend our wills to love your goodness and your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

CONFESSION

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our groans and cries.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Sense our despair and our hope.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

When we say we will strive to make a difference,

But falter at the first hurdle, misstep or trespass,

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Guide our steps.

When we seek to challenge practices and systems that oppress,
But end up wounding ourselves or others,
God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Tend our wounds.

When we seek to defend the honour and dignity of others,
But instead protect our privilege or reputation,
God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Forgive our sins.

When we cling to ideals and/or old habits that sow seeds of racism,
Or cling to wrong thinking and ways of being that hold us to ignorance
and arrogance,
God of all compassion,

Deliver us from evil.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayers.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our groans and cries.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Sense our despair and our hope.

God of all compassion, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

Amen

- or -

Untamed God,
You are the Wind and the Wisdom.
When we try to domesticate Your Holy Spirit,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

When we ignore Your invitation or block access to Your table of grace,

CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

When we let fear bind us and misguide us,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

Generous God,

You open Yourself in love to all people.

When we draw limits around this to exclude or control access,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

When we speak to diminish another's dignity,

CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

When we act in fear and obstruct Your way of love,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

Faithful God,

You call us to faith and unity.

When trust is eroded and we sow division,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

When abundance is replaced by austerity,

CHRIST HAVE MERCY.

When we allow despair to cut us off from hope,

LORD HAVE MERCY.

We Hold space for reflection

May the Trinity of Love

Bind up our wounds,

Challenge our complacency,

Lead us to freedom and abundance,

For the sake of peace and harmony,

**Saving God,
You persevere with us,
You dare to hope extravagantly for us,
You were willing to die and rise for us,
Help us to do the same for each other**

Amen

I will tell the wondrous story

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
How He left the realms of glory
For the cross of Calvary
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

I was lost, but Jesus found me
Found the sheep that went astray
Raised me up and gently led me
Back into the narrow way

Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

He will keep me 'til the river
Rolls its waters at my feet
Then at last He'll bring me over
Saved by grace and victory
Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me
Sing it with the saints in glory
Gathered by the crystal sea

Our readings from the Bible

Exodus 23:1-9

Laws of Justice and Mercy

23 “Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness.

2 “Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, **3** and do not show favoritism to a poor person in a lawsuit.

4 “If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to return it. **5** If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help them with it.

6 “Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. **7** Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.

8 “Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the innocent.

9 “Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves know how it feels to be foreigners, because you were foreigners in Egypt.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Matthew 22: 34 - 40

The Greatest Commandment

34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. **35** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: **36** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” **37** Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’^[c] **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’^[d] **40** All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you o Christ.

Sermon and Stories

Our prayers of intercession

The Peace:

The Peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you

Let us offer one another a sign of God's peace.

Were you there when they crucified my Lord

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Oh, were you there when they crucified my Lord?

(Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble) tremble

Were you there when they crucified my Lord?

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

(Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble) tremble

Were you there when they nailed him to the cross?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble) tremble

Were you there when they laid him in the tomb?

Well, were you there when the stone was rolled away?

Were you there when the stone was rolled away?

(Oh, sometimes it causes me to tremble) tremble
Were you there when the stone was rolled away?

Our Communion Celebration

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;
in your love you made us for yourself.

When we turned away
you did not reject us,
but came to meet us in your Son.
You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.

In Christ you shared our life
that we might live in him and he in us.
He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.

On the night he was betrayed,
at supper with his friends
he took bread, and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.
Father, we do this in remembrance of him:

his body is the bread of life.

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;
do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,
send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine
may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world
we offer you this sacrifice of praise
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

[we pause for a moment]

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.
**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

We receive Communion

The Blessing (please watch the screen)

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace

The Lord bless you and keep you

Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen

Amen, amen, amen

The Lord bless you and keep you
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you
The Lord turn His face toward you
And give you peace

Amen, amen, amen.....

May His favor be upon you
And a thousand generations
And your family and your children
And their children, and their children

May His presence go before you
And behind you, and beside you
All around you, and within you

He is with you, he is with you

In the morning, in the evening

In your coming, and your going

In your weeping, and rejoicing

He is for you, he is for you

(Amen, amen)

Lord of all Hopefulness

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy:
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe:
Be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace:
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm:
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

A prayer of Thankfulness:

Threefold One, Holy Community of Love,

We give You thanks and praise for all that You have done for us.

For the joy of family and friends, and the refreshing we find in the company of others.

For the beauty and nourishment that revives us in our interaction with creation.

For the inspiration and challenge brought to us by the arts and culture.

For the continuing service of those who have a vision for a better future.

For the beauty and diversity that enrich us when we open ourselves to the gift of difference.

God, we raise our voices in thanks to You.

How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.

Be thou my Vision

Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

Naught be all else to me, save that thou art

Thou my best thought, by day or by night

Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light

Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word

I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord

Thou my great Father, and I thy true child

Thou in me dwelling and I with thee one

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art

High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

BLESSING AND SENDING

SENDING PRAYER

Journeying God,
Be with us as we continue to journey through life each day.
In each step we take, may we walk ever closer with You.
In the light of day and in the darkness of night,
Where the ground is sure or uneven,
May we walk with faith and hope and love.
Let each step today be sure, humble and just.

Amen

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you.

May the Lord keep you upright and dignified.

May the Lord provoke you to walk in the shoes of others.

May the image of God be made whole by your beautiful being living fully into its calling.

May we all journey towards justice and the Kingdom of God made real,
For all our sakes.

Amen

The Dismissal:

Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord!

In the name of Christ, AMEN!

A thought to take away from Churches Together:

By FATHER PHIL SUMNER

There's no doubt that there's so much desperation in our world. Many people are on the move, fleeing wars, famine or oppressive situations. Why would people risk their lives trying to cross the Mediterranean or the English Channel in such flimsy and overcrowded boats if the vast majority were not desperate?

In September 2022, in the space of 24 hours, more than 6,000 people landed on the Italian island of Lampedusa. Such a statistic will, no doubt, arouse concern in the minds of many. But it's important, as was suggested in the document published by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales in 2023, called 'Love the Stranger', not to reduce people to statistics. So many have human stories that would move most hearts, if only they had the chance to be heard.

The Pope describes the dynamics of some worrying tendencies of our days. He mentions specifically the growth in different parts of the world of individualism, populism and nationalism, all having a negative impact on people's attitudes towards migration. It's important to question how these tendencies have affected our own ideas because they are now metaphorically part of the air we breathe.

The Pope bases his encyclical on several pieces of Scripture. He quotes the Book of Exodus, where it says, 'You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt' (Exodus 22:21). A similar but more positive quote is used by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. They cite the Book of Deuteronomy where we read, 'You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt' (Deuteronomy 10:19).

Pope Francis refers, at length, to the parable of the Good Samaritan, where no limits are put on who is seen to be a neighbour, and he cites

the passage in Matthew's Gospel describing the Last Judgement. There we read, 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me' (Matthew 25:35). Perhaps many people would argue that they want to be welcoming but there are limits. And, of course, the Pope, too, recognises that there must be control of borders for the sake of the common good. But that control can all too easily become too restrictive or even 'hostile'.

In September 2022, a British Government inquiry on Brook House Detention Centre near Gatwick Airport was published. The inquiry acknowledged that, in the space of five months, 19 incidents were uncovered that would contravene Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Convention states, 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.' The inquiry describes the story of Brook House as being one of stress and distress, and says that the issues discovered were likely to be found elsewhere in the asylum system. But don't governments have the right to claim ownership of their territories and to deny entry to others? An important longstanding principle of Catholic theology, referred to again by the Pope, is what is called 'the universal destination of goods' (page 124 of *Fratelli Tutti*). This is a principle that does not deny the right to private property but recognises that the original gift of the earth was made to all humankind.

The Pope quotes St John Chrysostom in this regard, saying, 'Not to share our wealth with the poor is to rob them and take away their livelihood.' 'Every human being,' he says, 'has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally' (page 107). Sadly, the story of too many who make those desperate journeys is one of being further deprived of dignity, leaving some to become suicidal. On the other hand, many parishes that have received refugees into their communities have reported a real enrichment. Hearing the cry of desperation and responding to it appropriately is not easy, but it gives life both to the refugee and to those who give refuge!

Notices:

- Sunday evening worship this evening - 6:30 - 8 in the West End.
- WestEnd's Monday Market is open 10am-12:30.
- Tuesday morning Stay and play in partnership with All Saints School, 9-10:30am.
- Wednesday morning quiet communion service 10:30 for 11am start in All Saints. This will be our formal and traditional Ash Wednesday service
- Wednesday afternoon youth group in the back room at All Saints in partnership with One in a Million. 4:15-5:15.
- Bible Course session Three with optional Ash Wednesday Ashing from 7pm in the back room at All Saints.
- Pop-Up Pantry Thursday 12:30 in All Saints.

Keep in touch:

- <https://littlehorton.ukchurches.org>
- <https://www.facebook.com/StOswaldsandAllSaints>
- <https://mailchi.mp/e3520c502445/midweek-message-sign-up-page>
(sign up for weekly emails from church)



CCLI licence: 2327955

Liturgy and reflection taken from Churches together in Great Britain and Ireland's resource for Racial Justice Sunday 2024 - 'Exodus', <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/rjs-2024.pdf>

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