

We've Come This Far by Faith

The International Decade for People of African Descent JANUARY 2021 Prayer Cycle

We have come to the beginning of a New Year. The year that has passed has been challenging for many reasons, and particularly because of the global pandemic. We could come into this new year singing, with those who have gone ahead of us, "[We've come this far by faith, leaning on the Lord...](#)" (Note: This song uses male imagery for God. You may want to adapt the language to speak to your context.)

As we sing, we offer prayers based on **Praise, Promise, Providence, Persistence, and Progress**. You are encouraged at the end of each day's prayer to sing, hum, or remember the words of the spiritual, "We've come this far by faith."

PRAISE: Let us give thanks and praise for

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| 1-Jan | The blessings for the start of another year, and the possibilities this New Year may bring |
| 2-Jan | The ongoing advocacy against anti-Black racism and work towards justice last year |
| 3-Jan | The many medical professionals who have worked tirelessly in the midst of a pandemic |
| 4-Jan | The protection given to Black youth and children over the past year |
| 5-Jan | The work of organizations to help alleviate the threat of HIV and AIDS in Black communities |
| 6-Jan | The ways in which families were protected, provided for and blessed last year |
| 7-Jan | A greater awareness of the need to provide a world free of gender-based violence |

PROMISE: Let us pray and advocate for

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| 8-Jan | Black people to receive equal pay for equal work done by other workers |
| 9-Jan | Police services to become intentionally aware of systemic racism and work to become anti-racist |
| 10-Jan | The anti-racism movements in churches, and that they will be guided and led in righteousness and justice |
| 11-Jan | Black young people to realize the promise of possibilities as they grow |

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| 12-Jan | People to continue to fight against homophobia and transphobia, recognizing that Black LGBTQ+ people also live with racism and other oppressions |
| 13-Jan | Systemic changes to enable more opportunities and equity for Black, Indigenous and Persons of Colour to flourish in our country |
| 14-Jan | Black women to be able to work and live without fear of violence or harm |

PROVIDENCE: Let us pray that

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| 15-Jan | Black families, who live with disproportionate realities of poverty, will have their needs be met |
| 16-Jan | Persons will better understand the impact of microaggressions against Black and racialized people, and then work to change their behaviours |
| 17-Jan | There is health and safety for those who are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the COVID-19 virus, including racialized and lower-income communities |
| 18-Jan | There are role models, mentors, and trusted persons who can support Black children and youth as they grow |
| 19-Jan | Black LGBTQ+ persons are affirmed, accompanied, advocated for, and supported |
| 20-Jan | The intrinsic value and worth of all Black peoples be named and affirmed |
| 21-Jan | There is an end to the sexualization and exploitation of Black women and girls |

PERSISTENCE: Let us pray for strength to continue to work for

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| 22-Jan | Economic justice for Black families |
| 23-Jan | A world free of systemic racism and oppression |
| 24-Jan | An end to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the world |
| 25-Jan | Safe and wholesome environments for all children to live, play and grow |
| 26-Jan | Respect and validation of all Black LGBTQ+ persons |
| 27-Jan | An end of the violence against Black trans people and Black people of all gender identities |
| 28-Jan | Systemic change in the criminal justice system, where Black and Indigenous people are overrepresented in prisons |

PROGRESS: Let us pray for

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| 29-Jan | More families to have the food they need for each day |
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| 30-Jan | Hate crimes and violence based on race to be no more |
| 31-Jan | Churches to become anti-racist churches in their worship, ministry, policies, and practices |

Background on the Decade

The United Nations has declared 2015–2024 to be the International Decade for People of African Descent. In proclaiming this Decade, the international community is recognizing “that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected.” As people of faith, we know every part of humanity is a reflection, an embodiment of the wisdom and power of God. Yet all of our collective humanity has been diminished and ruptured through the enslavement of African peoples and the colonization and exploitation of those same peoples’ land.

One of the ways the church is engaging with the Decade is by doing targeted work towards combating racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances faced by people of African descent. We know that prayer has the power to transform and amplify our actions. We therefore invite people to pray during this midway point in the Decade for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of people of African descent. For more information on how The United Church of Canada is engaging in this decade, visit the AntiRacism webpage or watch the introductory video created in conjunction with our full communion partner the United Church of Christ (USA).

Consider sharing your prayers on social media (use the hashtags #AfricanDescent, #UCCan, #UCC). A daily schedule of intercessions is suggested in this resource.