

W O K E L E N T 2 0 2 4

FROM MINNEAPOLIS TO PALESTINE
NOURISHING THE RISING UP JOURNEY:

WELCOME

Thank you for leaning into this Lenten journey toward racial justice. We hope this calendar provides you nourishment as you recommit to and deepen your rising up journey.

Each day of the calendar provides you with different opportunities to explore intersecting movements toward racial justice, through reflection, spiritual practices, and taking action. The calendar includes quotes from our Lenten companion ***The Risk of Being Woke: Sermonic Reflections for Activists* by Curtiss Paul DeYoung** for your reflection, and we encourage you to get the book and read the full chapters from which the quotes are taken. To help us make the connections from Minneapolis to Palestine, we also include quotes from Angela Davis's book *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*, which is also a great source for further reading.

[Click this link to discover more action alerts, statements, news and updates about the Crisis in the Middle East.](#)

So let this be a season for awakening, for staying woke, for encountering the risks that love compels, as we journey ever closer to the new day that rises in, through, and among us.

WEDNESDAY FEB 14

REFLECTION FRAMING

"The word woke dates back at least to the 1930's as a word used in African American community vernacular to warn folks to stay alert and vigilant in the face of ever-present racism...With the uprising in 2020 in Minneapolis following the killing of George Floyd, we need to stay awake, stay woke, so we do not sleep through, and miss, what God is doing."

Chapter 1: The Risk of Being Woke, 6-7.

THURSDAY FEB 15

PRACTICE ALTARING

Set aside a sacred place or create an altar in your space where you can focus your times of prayer and reflection and collect your insights throughout the season. It can be as simple as a candle and a bowl on a side table or as elaborate as you can imagine. Where and how can you tend this journey of action, community and mysticism?

FRIDAY FEB 16

REFLECTION FRAMING

"We are at risk when we are awake, when we are woke, when we work for racial and social justice, and when we align ourselves with Jesus. We are at risk when we pose a threat to the status quo by disrupting the myth of white supremacy. We are at risk when we challenge the empire, because the empire will strike back...We are at risk from the power of injustice itself. There is a risk to being woke, to being awake."

Chapter 1: The Risk of Being Woke, 11.

SATURDAY FEB 17

ACTION

Send a thank you card or email to an organization or person you know who has taken the "risk of being woke." Let them know how their work has had a transformative impact on you and your community.

SUNDAY FEB 18

INTENTION

Our wilderness wandering this Lent invites us to take stock, deepen our commitment, and find sustenance for our work of racial justice. Take a moment at the start of your week to set an intention for your journey in the coming days. What do you want to do or be this week as you risk being woke? If it's helpful, use the prompt "This week/Lent, I am a commitment to..."

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MONDAY FEB 19

REFLECTION FRAMING

“If Jesus has woke us up and called us, then Jesus will sustain us and empower us when folks try to kill our commitment, when the naysayers challenge our sincerity or intellect, or even when racial justice work itself becomes exhausting...Where there is risk, Jesus offers holy resolve.”

Chapter 1: The Risk of Being Woke, 11.

TUESDAY FEB 20

PRACTICE LECTIO DIVINA

Read over one of the gospel stories of Jesus’ journey in the wilderness (Mark 1:9-13, Matthew 4:1-11, Luke 4:1-13) with the “risk of being woke” in your mind. What words or phrases stand out to you? What invitation or sustenance are those words offering you?

WEDNESDAY FEB 21

REFLECTION CALLED TO ACTION

“The Gospel writer claimed that God did not join the human family as a prosperous person of privilege, power, and political connections...the Divine took on the flesh of a colonized, oppressed, marginalized [person] living under the occupation of the first century Roman empire...The same God who took on human flesh in Jesus to declare that [oppressed] lives matter is calling out to us today: Black Lives Matter...”

Chapter 2: Oppressed Lives Matter, 15, 19.

THURSDAY FEB 22

ACTION

Go to the Equal Justice Initiative’s website and sign up to receive daily emails from the History of Racial Injustice calendar or follow them on Facebook or X (formerly Twitter) for daily postings. The calendar offers a set of tools for learning more about people and events in America’s racial history that are critically important but not well known.

FRIDAY FEB 23

REFLECTION CALLED TO ACTION

“...we constantly have to make connections. So that when we are engaged in the struggle against racist violence, in relation to Ferguson, Michael Brown, and New York, Eric Garner, we can’t forget the connections with Palestine...foregrounding those connections so that people remember nothing happens in isolation. That when we see police repressing protests in Ferguson, we also have to think about...the Israeli army...in occupied Palestine.”

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 45.

SATURDAY FEB 24

PRACTICE INTERDEPENDENCE BREATH PRACTICE

Grounded in your space and breathing as freely and deeply as you can, notice the living and inanimate things around you. Then focus your attention on your breath, and how your breathing is interdependent on other life forms, and other life forms are dependent on your breath. As you keep breathing, expand your focus to other people and the life forms they are connected to. With each breath, keep expanding. Finish this practice with a few exhales of gratitude for all the ways that our interdependence, our solidarity, sustains life.

SUNDAY FEB 25

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MONDAY FEB 26

REFLECTION CALLED TO ACTION

“White Christians must invest in repairing race-based economic inequities in the church. Many churches in Black, Indigenous, Asian and Latine communities need additional resources for their ministries to thrive. Present-day white Christianity needs a spiritual investment from BIPOC churches to be healed from the genetic imprint of racism. The church needs relationally reciprocal equity like that initiated in the first century by the apostle Paul. This is the economics of racial equity.”

Chapter 5: The Economics of Racial Equity, 42-43.

TUESDAY FEB 27

PRACTICE RECIPROCITY AUDIT

Do an individual and/or community/church reciprocity audit. Make a list for yourself/your community: who do you lean on/support? Make another list for yourself/ your community: who leans on/supports you? Explore the places where those lists overlap and where they don't. Notice if and how race and ethnicity (and class, gender, sexuality, ability etc.) play a role in these dynamics. Where and how can you increase mutual relationships (more overlap between your lists)?

WEDNESDAY FEB 28

REFLECTION

“I think that solidarity always implies a kind of mutuality...we share our experiences. Just as I think the development of [movements for Black Lives] can offer ideas, experiences, and analyses to Palestinians, so can [these movements] learn from the struggle of the Palestinian people...There is a whole range of issues that Palestinians, or people in the Palestinian struggle, have given expression to that have actually helped people in the US imagine broader notions of liberation.”

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 41-42.

THURSDAY FEB 29

ACTION

Take some time to learn about and discover how the member of the House of Representatives that represents you has voted on H.R. 40: Commission to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans Act. Pray for them. Discern what your next steps might be, including contacting them to discuss their position and let them know how your faith connects you to this issue.

FRIDAY MAR 1

REFLECTION CALLED TO ACTION

“[With the Syrophenician woman] Jesus did not depart from or diminish his [oppressed] identity while in a [dominant] space. Jesus challenged her sensibilities, her parochialism, and her privilege. Could she understand what is needed to liberate oppressed people? ...The woman's response was, “Yes Lord...” She persisted! She did not leave the conversation, nor did she get defensive...She did not argue that as a person of privilege she deserved his attention – or that he was being unfair... She said in essence, while the oppressed must be your priority, we... also need liberation and healing...Even those benefiting from systems of oppression need reconciliation.”

Chapter 4: Discussing Race in Dominant Spaces, 30-31.

SATURDAY MAR 2

PRACTICE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

In a posture and attitude of prayer:

- (1) Acknowledge an awareness of the Divine.
- (2) Review the day in a posture of gratitude.
- (3) Recognize a moment where you were acting/living in full alignment with your values. Recognize a moment where you were not acting/living in full alignment with your values.
- (4) Choose a moment of misalignment to pray into.
- (5) Look with hope for a new tomorrow.

SUNDAY MAR 3

INTENTION

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MONDAY MAR 4

REFLECTION CALL TO COMMUNITY

“Mary Magdalene did not have the obligation of family and kinship [to be present at the cross]...Mary had a deep commitment that was not dependent on external factors. We don't have to be family to be faithful. But if we are faithful, we become family. Mary Magdalene models for us the central notion of community. The site of the killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis... hosted the first rally and protest the day after his death. From that first day on May 26, 2020, people have shown up and tended to memories, rage, and grief and stood up against racial injustice...Many unrelated by blood, have become family through faithfulness.”

Introduction to Section 2: The Call to Community, 67.

TUESDAY MAR 5

PRACTICE WALKING/ROLLING MEDITATION

Take a walk or roll around your neighborhood. Use your senses to notice stories of hurt and harm, pain and suffering, injustice and oppression that live in this place you call home. Pause and take time to be present to those stories. Offer a prayer of caring attention.

WEDNESDAY MAR 6

REFLECTION

“We are still faced with the challenge of understanding the complex ways race, class, gender, sexuality, nation, and ability are intertwined – but also how we move beyond these categories to understand the interrelationships of ideas and processes that seem to be separate and unrelated. Insisting on the connections between struggles and racism in the US and struggles against Israeli repression of Palestinians, in this sense, is an [intersectional] process.”

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 4.

THURSDAY MAR 7

ACTION

Urge your elected officials (from the President and administration to senators and representatives) to call for a ceasefire in the war in Palestine and Israel and encourage the flow of humanitarian aid and basic resources to Gaza. Take action with one click through UCC Global Ministries at: <https://p2a.co/kVxUHJV>

FRIDAY MAR 8

REFLECTION CALL TO COMMUNITY

“Our text [Acts 1] describes an in-between time: after Jesus ascended and before Pentecost...The community founded by Jesus faced the departure of its leader. Their desire to hold onto the past limited their ability to step into the future. They needed healing due to the unaddressed damage done by Judas' betrayal. In times of transition, faith communities and activist organizations can face unexamined leadership issues, dysfunctional or toxic culture, disappointment at the failure to fully achieve goals. [We need to create] space to address these very real challenges to the health of a community before embracing new opportunities.”

Chapter 8: The In-between Time, 71.

SATURDAY MAR 9

PRACTICE DAYDREAMING

The Nap Bishop, Tricia Hersey reminds us that “Daydreaming is a form of rest.” Find a moment to let yourself enter in-between time, to let yourself daydream. As Hersey suggests, “Sit or lie comfortably. Follow your mind wherever it leads you. Accept the invitation to go into a portal of care and invention. During a daydream you tap into a deep imagination space. You can dream yourself free. Trust your daydreams.” (from The Rest Deck: 50 Practices to Resist Grind Culture).

SUNDAY MAR 10

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MONDAY MAR 11

REFLECTION CALL TO COMMUNITY

[In the Babel story] God called out and exposed the fatal flaw of unity built on sameness...The fatal attraction of sameness can produce the toxic consequences of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, white nationalism, apartheid, slavery, genocide, and ethnic cleansing...So God mixed their language. God's scattering of the human family was an act of grace! God blocked tower building and name making. God blocked a cultural context that could lead to imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism. God blocked sameness. While scattering might have appeared as punishment, it was a redirection toward God's will. It was living into God's purpose for humanity. God's desire was diversity."

Chapter 9: Sameness Meets Creolenss, 81.

TUESDAY MAR 12

PRACTICE VISUAL CONTEMPLATION

On your phone, computer, or tablet, do an image search for ethnically diverse images of Jesus or Jesus in different cultures. Choose a few of the images to pray with and spend some time taking them in. Notice what it's like to encounter and pray with a Jesus who looks different from or similar to you.

WEDNESDAY MAR 13

REFLECTION

"One of the things I've been thinking about in relation to the need to diversify movements in solidarity with Palestine is the tendency to approach issues about which one is passionate within a narrow framework. People do this whatever their concerns are...The question is how to create windows and doors for people who believe in racial justice to enter and join the Palestine solidarity movement...how to bring movements together...to insist on the intersectionality of movements."

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 21.

THURSDAY MAR 14

ACTION

Practice intersectional solidarity by donating your time, talent, or treasure to an organization doing racial justice and/or liberation movement work in/with/for a community that is different from your own.

FRIDAY MAR 15

REFLECTION CALL TO COMMUNITY

"The early followers of Jesus took that tool of repression - crucifixion - and turned it into a symbol of resistance. Every time early followers of Jesus preached about his crucifixion, they proclaimed that their loyalties were with the reign of God, not the empire of Rome...When we persevere through the tribulation and troubles that come from placing our primary focus on Jesus and racial justice we bond together. The heavenly vision tells us that we must come together in community and help each other persevere in the face of tribulation...We are better together when we go through troubles together."

Chapter 10: We are Better Together, 96-97.

SATURDAY MAR 16

PRACTICE INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Intercessory prayer is offering a prayer to God on behalf of someone else. It's praying for the needs of the world around us. Try taking some time to pray for the perseverance, the resilience, the flourishing of someone else. As Frederick Buechner says, whatever else it may or may not be, prayer is at least talking to yourself about what matters to you.

Remind yourself who and what matters to you in this moment.

SUNDAY MAR 17

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MONDAY MAR 18

REFLECTION CALL TO MYSTIC MOMENTS

“If we are to demand radical reconciliation – that is, a reconciliation that addresses the roots of racial injustice; a reconciliation that reverses the categories of powerful and powerless, colonizer and colonized; a reconciliation that questions the foundations of our modern empires – then we need to prepare for the moment when the empire strikes back...What must we do when the empire strikes back? We must take care of our physical health...We must attend to our mental and spiritual needs...We need to surround ourselves with healthy relationships...and we can count on the fact that Jesus is always standing beside us.”

Chapter 13: When the Empire Strikes Back, 122, 126-128.

TUESDAY MAR 19

PRACTICE SYMBOLIC REMINDER

Find a simple object that can remind you of how you want to respond “when the empire strikes back,” that is, when we find ourselves in a season of discouragement and struggle with regards to our calling to justice-making. Maybe it’s a postage stamp that can remind you to stick to it until you get there. Or maybe it’s a small plant that requires watering that can remind you to attend to your physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Keep it close by and revisit it often to remember your intentions in the midst of difficult moments.

WEDNESDAY MAR 20

REFLECTION

“We have to look at the way in which anti-Muslim racism has really thrived on the foundation of anti-Black racism, and anchors our responses to the Palestinian liberation struggle, [for Palestinians of any religion, including Palestinian Christians]...The Black radical tradition has to embrace the struggles against anti-Muslim racism, which is perhaps the most virulent form of racism today. It makes no sense to imagine eradicating anti-Black racism without also eradicating anti-Muslim racism.”

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 39, 48.

THURSDAY MAR 21

ACTION

Take a bystander intervention training as an individual or community (check out Right to Be for free online trainings) to help you increase your capacity for engaging appropriately and effectively to counter moments of racial/cultural harm.

FRIDAY MAR 22

REFLECTION CALL TO MYSTIC MOMENTS

“Paul and the early followers of a crucified and resurrected Jesus... established embryonic congregations as laboratories of healing for oppressed [people] to decolonize and recover from the harmful effects of colonialism. This was particularly important where oppression had been internalized... Paul was, in effect, building an international anti-imperial movement of an alternative society based in local communities.”

Chapter 13: When the Empire Strikes Back, 120-121.

SATURDAY MAR 23

PRACTICE POD MAPPING

Pod Mapping can help you discern what healing and holding communities surround you. Draw a circle in the middle of your paper and put your name in it. Now draw circles around you and put in the names of people who you can count on for both support and accountability. Draw more circles further out and put in names of people who could potentially be part of supporting you and encouraging accountability. Draw a few large circles in the corners of your paper and put in the names of networks, organizations, communities that could be resources for you. Consider what steps you might take next to draw on and cultivate these relationships of support and accountability? (Do a web search for “Mia Mingus” and “Pod Mapping” to find out more, including a printable worksheet).

SUNDAY MAR 24

INTENTION

On Palm Sunday, amidst the parades, protests, and passions, take a moment at the start of this sacred week to set an intention for your journey through the complexities of the coming days. What do you want to do or be this week as you risk being woke? If it’s helpful, use the prompt “This Holy Week, I am a commitment to...”

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MONDAY MAR 25

REFLECTION CALL TO MYSTIC MOMENTS

“At the cross, the crowds and the soldiers watched Jesus die in the darkness. What if this was all there was? What if the story of Jesus ended? What if there was something beyond death? ...Racial justice activists face the what-ifs of life’s journey. What if our protests lead to no change? ...What if injustice entrenches and reoccurs? What if little change or no change is all there is? At such moments – and they will come, often – we need to peer into the metaphorical darkness. We need to put on the lens of eternity. We need to see a vision of transformed reality. We need to embrace the day of preparation for a racially just future yet unseen.”

Chapter 12: God’s Preparation for a Future Yet Unseen, 116-117.

TUESDAY MAR 26

PRACTICE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Throughout the ages, Christians have used the sign of the cross to embody our commitment to a cruciform calling, our calling to follow in the way of the radical love and justice of Jesus. Trace a cross on your forehead or heart, your hands or feet. Or move your hands in a cross pattern over your body or space around you. As you do, consider the unique contours of your calling to risk being woke, to racial justice, to the Jesus life.

WEDNESDAY MAR 27

REFLECTION

“In the United States when we have described the segregation in occupied Palestine that so clearly mirrors the historical apartheid of racism in the southern United States of America...the response often is: ‘Why hasn’t anyone told us about this before? Why hasn’t anyone told us about the segregated highways leading from one settlement to another, about pedestrian segregation regulated by signs in Hebron – not entirely dissimilar from the signs associated with the Jim Crow South’...Just as we say ‘never again’ to the fascism that produced the Holocaust, we should also say ‘never again’ with respect to apartheid in South Africa, and in the southern US. That means, first and foremost, that we will have to expand and deepen our solidarity with the people of Palestine.”

Angela Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle, 60.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

ACTION

Invest in ending racism by joining the movement toward racial justice. Contribute to a legacy of racial justice by donating to the UCC’s Join the Movement Capital Campaign or another antiracism initiative in your community.

GOOD FRIDAY

REFLECTION CALL TO MYSTIC MOMENTS

“From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon’ (Matthew 27:45). Time stood still. The lights turned off. Everything stopped...When tragedy occurs, life pauses. In moments of crisis, all of our attention is required.”

Chapter 11: God’s Time Zone, 107.

HOLY SATURDAY

PRACTICE VIGIL

The word vigil originates from a Latin word that means both to keep watch and to stay awake. Light a candle and spend time holding vigil today in prayer, song, or silence. From Minneapolis to Palestine, how are you being called to stay woke?