

## SIGN OF THE CROSS AND GATHER

This week we mark the beginning of the international Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, and the theme this year is **Be-longing: Praying for unity amidst injustice**. As we join with other Christians around the world for the Week of Prayer we pray that our hearts will be open to see and hear the many ways in which racism continues to destroy lives, and to discern the steps we can take as individuals and communities to heal the hurts and build a better future for everyone.

### WE LISTEN Genesis 1:26-28

So God  
created mankind in his  
own image,  
in the image of God he  
created them.



### MISSION

- Do you find it easy to recognise the image of God in other people? Or is that sometimes a challenge?
- Take time to learn about a culture/language/nation of which you know nothing, or very little.

### RESPONSE

You made us, God,  
in your own image,  
and then became one of us,  
proud of those you have made.  
Make us proud of being part  
of that worldwide family,  
and eager to discover and  
celebrate your image  
in every person,  
every culture, every nation  
that we are privileged to encounter.  
Amen

## SIGN OF THE CROSS AND GATHER

Learning to do good requires an openness to change. This is the perfect season for us to reflect not just on unity but on the role we can all play together in promoting racial justice. There is joy in doing what is right. There is joy in affirming that "Black Lives Matter" in the pursuit of justice for God's oppressed, dominated, and exploited people.

### WE LISTEN Isaiah 1:16 – 18

Learn to do right;  
seek justice.  
Defend the  
oppressed.  
Take up the cause  
of the fatherless;  
plead the case  
of the widow.



### RESPONSE

God of Unity,  
forgive us when we are  
self-serving  
and help us to grow in  
unity and understanding  
as we extend your love  
and justice to all.  
Amen

### MISSION

What can we do today to do the right thing, with **integrity** to help others?  
What social justice or local outreach projects are active in your area and led by those from a different tradition or background to you? Find out and get involved.



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We are blessed and we are to bless others. We are loved and we are to love others. We are to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God, together. We. Not Me. We can make a difference, in our communities and our **faith** and diversity is a strength, not a thing of division.

### WE LISTEN Amos 5:14-15

Seek good, not evil,  
that you may live.  
Then the Lord God  
Almighty will be with you,  
just as you say he is.  
Hate evil, love good;  
maintain justice in the  
courts.



### MISSION

Discuss: Thinking about our school value of **respect**, how often do we think and act as 'We. Not me'?

How do we recognise and celebrate difference in our school?

What might we do better?

### RESPONSE

Gracious and loving God,  
expand our vision  
that it may be wide enough  
to recognise the  
beautiful complexity  
of the tapestry you  
chose to weave  
with each and every  
one of us.  
Gather our frayed edges,  
our loose ends  
and bind us together  
for your glory.  
Amen

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A young woman looked and saw the tears of the oppressed. The video she shot on her phone of the murder of George Floyd in May 2020 was seen all around the world and unleashed rage as people witnessed, and finally acknowledged, what African Americans have experienced for centuries.

In the UK, black men between 18 and 25 years are five times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police and black women are four times more likely to die during childbirth.

### WE LISTEN

**Martin Luther King**



## BE THE CHANGE



### RESPONSE

God of justice and of grace,  
remove the scales from my  
eyes so

I can truly see the  
oppression around me,  
and give me courage not  
only to name it,  
but to fight it while providing  
authentic presence,  
witness, and compassion to  
the oppressed.  
Amen.

### MISSION

Which of our school values did he mention?

How will you become a witness for change in our world, what can you do?

## SIGN OF THE CROSS AND GATHER

Let us all work together with God in our hope and commitment to shut the mouth of injustice and eradicate oppression in all areas of our society. In prayer we align our hearts with the heart of God, to love what God loves and to love as God loves. Prayer with **integrity** therefore aligns and unites us – beyond our divisions – to love what, who and how God loves, and to express this love in our actions.

### WE LISTEN

**Matt 5:1-8**

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,  
for theirs is the kingdom  
of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,  
for they will inherit the earth.  
Blessed are those who hunger  
and thirst for righteousness,  
for they will be filled.”



### RESPONSE

God of justice,  
Empower us to be agents of  
your grace and mercy.  
Bless us with the courage to  
relinquish our power.  
Bless us with the humility to stand  
with the oppressed.  
Bless us with the **integrity** to love  
our neighbours as we ourselves  
would seek to be loved.  
Amen

### MISSION

Can you think of a time when you felt powerless? How would you have liked others to respond?  
What action will you take today to stand up for those whose voice isn't heard and to stand up for the rights of the BAME community?