

# CROSS-RACIAL/CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY TOOLKIT



**RELIGION & RACE**

General Commission on Religion and Race

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Worship Liturgy</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Transforming Communion.....	3
Liturgy for Cross-Racial/ Cross-Cultural Ministry .....	4
Great Thanksgiving (Black Lives Matter).....	4
Great Thanksgiving for Epiphany (Through Other Eyes).....	8
A Service of Holy Communion (The Gift of Diversity).....	12
Great Thanksgiving (Gift of a New Pastor).....	16
Communion Liturgy (Imago Dei).....	20
<b>Resources for Pastors &amp; Congregations</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Do's & Don'ts for Incoming Cross-Racial & Cross-Cultural Pastors.....	24
Self-Care for Clergy in Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Ministry.....	25
Imago Dei Bible Study.....	28
This is Our Story, This is Our Song: A small group study of cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry for congregations .....	29
Investing Well in CRCC Ministry: Laity and Clergy.....	30
Centering Yourself in Your CRCC Appointment.....	33
Do's & Don'ts for Outgoing Pastor.....	36

# WORSHIP LITURGY

## TRANSFORMING COMMUNION

### **Transforming Communion by Rev. Mary Johnson**

[www.transformingcommunion.com](http://www.transformingcommunion.com)

This web site offers alternative communion services written by the Rev. Mary C. Johnson. Some contain only the Great Thanksgiving liturgy, while others include the Confession. Some are partially or fully sung. The services listed on the website are available in either Doc (Microsoft Word) or PDF (Adobe Acrobat) formats.

# LITURGY FOR CROSS-RACIAL/ CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY

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## Great Thanksgiving *(Black Lives Matter)*

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The Lord be with you.

**And Also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Black lives matter to You, and always have.

Black lives matter.

Black male lives matter.

Black female lives matter.

Black female trans lives matter.

Black female trafficked lives matter.

Black gay lives matter.

Black uneducated as well as educated lives matter.

Black poor as well as rich lives matter.

Black homeless lives matter.

Black Christians and non-Christians matter.

Black lives with disabilities matter.

Black immigrants and refugees matter.

Black children matter.

Black teens matter.

Their lives are sacred.

Their lives are valuable.

Their lives are precious.

Their lives are important.

Their lives are necessary.

Their lives are integral to Your magnificent beloved family.

So we join with them and all the others who are just as sacred, valuable, precious, important, necessary and integral to Your plan of salvation to sing Your praises.

We join with all the angels and archangels, the great choir of saints before Your throne, from every nation, from every culture, who speak every language, worshiping endlessly before Your throne of grace saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes to the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are holy, and so is your presence with us in Jesus Christ.  
Jesus was not white.  
Jesus did not speak English.  
Jesus was not a Christian.  
Jesus lived as the citizen of an occupied nation.  
Jesus was part of an oppressed people.  
Jesus was a refugee who found protection on the Continent of Africa.  
Jesus experienced mob violence.  
Jesus experienced police brutality.  
Jesus was lynched.

Jesus gave up his own divine privilege,  
and chose to live as a slave and to live a life of service.  
These acts defined his greatness,  
and defines our discipleship.

Giving up his own divine privilege,  
Jesus took the bread used as a call to compassion for the oppressed.  
Gave thanks for it, broke it and shared it with the whole community, saying:  
"Take and eat, this is my body broken and given freely for you."  
Remember how this act defined his greatness and defines our discipleship.

Giving up his own divine privilege,  
Jesus took the cup used as a call to hope for Divine deliverance.  
Gave thanks for it, and shared it with the whole community, saying:  
"Drink from my cup, each of you;  
this is my blood that I shed to testify to God's eternal covenant,  
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Remember how this act defined his greatness and defines our discipleship.

Christ's life mattered.  
Christ's abuse by religious authorities mattered.  
Christ's murder mattered.  
Christ's resurrection mattered.  
And so do our lives, and so we choose to follow Christ  
and choose to live according to this divine mystery, we now declare:

**Christ has died;  
Christ is risen;  
Christ will come again.**

Life, Meaning, Giver of Sacred Worth,  
cause these gifts of bread and wine  
to become for us the body and blood of Christ,  
the reason our lives matter.

Life, Meaning, Giver of Sacred Worth,  
cause the gift of our lives  
to become for our neighbors, Your church,  
the living presence and beloved bride of Christ,  
a reason for their lives matter.

Life, Meaning, Giver of Sacred Worth,  
touch the lives of any who feel that their lives don't matter;  
who feel they are not valued,  
who are treated with disrespect  
and fear that their precious lives will be thrown away.

Change us, so others might have hope.  
Change us, so other might be valued.  
Change us, so that no one will have to stand before their oppressors alone.  
Change us, so Christ's life will matter.  
Change us, so the Holy Spirit's life will matter.  
Change us, so our Creator's life will matter,  
and that we might more fully give Them the honor, glory, and praise, due Their holy  
name,  
today, tomorrow, and always.

Amen.

Now as those who recognize the value of the oppressed and abused, let us pray  
with Christ who walks this path with them and us.

**Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against him.  
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

*Prayer after Communion:*

Thank you for sharing with us this holy mystery found in Jesus Christ. It has changed us: the way we think, the way we feel, what we understand, how we desire to live, and the value we see in the lives of others whom we have harmed through our sin of racism. Now send us out to demand that others be treated with the value they hold within Your heart. May Your love become more visible in us, that we not bring shame upon the name of Jesus, now or ever. Amen.

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## Great Thanksgiving for Epiphany *(Through Other Eyes)*

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*Invitation:* Come and follow the star that arose in the east.  
A star that had profound meaning to strangers, to foreigners, to unbelievers.  
Learn from their curiosity, humility, and reverence as you come to this table of the Lord which is open to all.

*Confession:* Forgive us for discounting your epiphany given to those who are not like us.  
Forgive us for not receiving their experience of You as authentic.  
We have missed so much that You have wanted to share with us.  
We have ignored Your good news, spoken in languages that were not our own.  
Our pride has blinded us. Our exclusiveness has limited us. We have not just closed our hearts to them, but to You. Forgive us. Open our eyes to the rich experiences You have given others. Open our minds and make us teachable. Open our hearts that we might fall on our knees and worship the Christ child beside them. Amen.

*Assurance of Pardon:*

*One:* God is faithful and just and willing to forgive our sins. A contrite heart will never be turned away. By the authority of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Your sins are washed away and you have been made whole.

**All: By the authority of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Your sins are washed away and you have been made whole. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*Thanksgiving:*

*One:* God's presence is not hidden from others.

**All: It is as clear as a star shining in the night sky for all to see.**

*One:* God's prevenient grace touches every life.

**All: God wants none to perish but all to enjoy the joys of eternal life.**

*One:* Lets bring before the Holy One our humble worship.

**All: We lay down our gold, our frankincense, and myrrh.**

*One:* We almost missed it.  
The natal star was shining but we didn't notice.  
It held no meaning for us.  
But it did for them, the strangers, those from a distant land,



worshippers with a very different understanding of the divine.  
 Yet You, O Lord, spoke to them in a language they understood,  
 showed them signs that held meaning for their eyes,  
 and inspired their hearts to take a long and dangerous journey to a  
 foreign land.

Thank you, because they helped us to notice,  
 when they shared your Gospel with us.

Yet still we did not rush to worship you,  
 instead we thought of You as a threat,  
 so we prepared an army to come against You,  
 while they rejoiced in the star.

They brought You precious gifts,  
 while we brought a sword, fear, and death.

Thank You for the eyes of others,  
 who saw You when we could not.

Thank You for the hearts of others so filled with joy and wonder  
 when ours, were not.

Today may we be different and be open to see through the eyes of  
 others.

May we rejoice when we hear that ten thousand tongues are able to  
 sing your praises.

May we learn from what You have taught others even when they  
 understand the world differently than we do, so we might share in  
 their blessings.

Allow us to join with them in their worship around Your throne as we  
 proclaim together:

**All:**           **Holy, holy, holy Wisdom shared throughout the world.**  
                   **Your glory shines forth through every language and culture.**  
                   **You are transforming us all.**  
                   **Blessed are all who come in your holy name.**  
                   **You are transforming us all.**

One:           In You all things are being made new and Jesus was always open to  
 what was next.  
 Jesus shut no one out.  
 Jesus took the time to listen to what demons had to say.  
 Jesus was not even opposed to discussing scripture with the Devil.  
 To gain wisdom Jesus took the time to talk with children.  
 Jesus was open to allowing women to be heard, devout women,  
 Samaritan women, even Syrophenician women.  
 Jesus listened to the words of Romans, and tax collectors,

holy men schooled in the law and was willing to ask questions.  
 Jesus was open to hear the word of God from anyone.  
 And Jesus felt blessed.

Jesus listened to his disciples boasting of their greatness,  
 In silence Jesus took the towel and basin  
 and knelt down before them as a slave  
 revealing the love of God for the world.

During the telling of the Passover story,  
 with reverence and prayer, Jesus took the bread.  
 This bread that was so full of spiritual significance and meaning.  
 As he broke it he said:

"Take and eat, this is my body broken and given for you."

Hold this sacred moment in your heart.

After supper with reverence and prayer, Jesus took the cup.

This cup of wine was so full of spiritual significance and meaning.

As he presented it he said:

"Drink with me all of you, this is the cup of my blood,

poured out freely as an offering of praise for God's eternal covenant  
 of grace, forgiving not just our sins, but the sins of the entire world."

Hold this sacred moment in your heart.

We do hold this moment of grace  
 and our lives are being transformed  
 causing us to see our lives and the world beyond us  
 in the light of this holy mystery that we proclaim:

**All:**                    **Christ died for everyone.**  
                               **Christ lives for everyone.**  
                               **When Christ comes again it will be for everyone.**

**One:**                    Star Dust, Distant Light  
 shine upon these sacred symbols of bread and wine,  
 allow them to become for us the body and blood of Christ  
 Your gift to the whole world.

Star Dust, Distant Light  
 shine upon the sacred gift of our lives,  
 our questions, our discoveries, our dreams,  
 allow them to become for the world, Your church,  
 the renewed body and attentive bride of Christ  
 Your gift to the whole world.

Star Dust, Distant Light  
 shine upon all the people of the Choptank Charge.  
 Make them welcoming to all the wise ones you send their way.  
 Help them to listen to their message of great joy for all people.  
 Use them to echo Your good news to every culture and language.

**All:**           **This is our pray of joy  
 to Jesus who has brought salvation to the whole world.  
 This is our prayer of peace  
 to the Holy Spirit who is at work in every life moving us all towards  
 full salvation.  
 This is our prayer of grace  
 to the Love who cares for us all, making us all one family  
 throughout the earth.  
 This is our prayer of consecration  
 as we commit our lives to be the worship due your name that is  
 praised all around our globe. Amen.**

One:           Now join me in praying according to the pattern Jesus taught us:

**All:**           **God of many names, spoken in many languages, understood by a  
 multitude of cultures, sacred are these names.  
 May Your great love embrace us all, as You strive to leave none  
 behind.  
 Give us daily what we need for physical, emotional, and spiritual  
 health.  
 Forgive us all the times we have reject Your children,  
 just as we forgive all of those in our family who may reject us.  
 Help us fight the temptation to exclude anyone,  
 Instead help us see Your presence in every life.  
 For Your worship arises from all people, in every language, and  
 culture, today and always. Amen.**

*Prayer after Communion:*

Thank You for sharing with us the epiphany found in this holy mystery in Jesus Christ. We thank You for the strangers who pointed out Your presence to us and helped lead us to Christ. We thank You for how you can take bread, wine and even stars to speak to our hearts. Now send us out, so we might be like the Magi making real Your signs of grace to a waiting world. May all come to bow before you with their worship forever more. Amen.

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## A Service of Holy Communion

*(The Gift of Diversity)*

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*Invitation:* Christ invites to this table those from every place on earth. Those who are not worthy, people from every station in every culture. Therefore we come to express our gratitude to the One who will forgive our sins and restore a right spirit within us.

*Confession:* **Compassionate Lover of our Souls, we confess that we have loved ourselves more than we have loved You. We have loved the riches of this world more than the children You have sent us to serve. We have worked hard to make sure our will was done, even before Yours. We have not lived up to Your generous expectations for our lives and ministries. Have mercy upon us, and hear our humble cries for forgiveness. Turn our hearts of stone into hearts of flesh, allow us this opportunity to repent and allow us to live new lives of humility and grace, through the merits of Christ alone. Amen.**

This saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance: that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. Rejoice, for in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!

**Rejoice, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!  
Thanks be to God! Amen and amen!**

*The Great Thanksgiving:*  
The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them up to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

You are the One and the Only, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.  
You are worshiped in every land,  
proclaimed in every language,  
and Your divine grace is working in every life.

No one people holds exclusive claim upon Your mercy.  
 No one language can express the fullness of Your praise.  
 For You envision every knee bowing and every tongue proclaiming  
 that You alone are God.  
 You claim every soul as Your child  
 and You desire not even one to perish but for all to experience Your  
 gift of eternal life.  
 Our imaginations are too small to grasp the magnitude of this Your  
 generosity.  
 Our minds are too simple to fully comprehend the fullness of Your  
 grace,  
 we can only stand in awe at the glorious reaction that we experience  
 from Your creation and how all of heaven is moved to continually  
 express their gratitude to You around Your throne proclaiming:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.  
 Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
 Hosanna in the highest.  
 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
 Hosanna in the highest.**

You are so holy and we are blessed by the veery presence of Your  
 son, Jesus in our lives.  
 You sent Jesus into the margins of human life, into the very heart of  
 our struggles.  
 He was not born to riches and wealth, but born into shame and  
 poverty.  
 Jesus worked as a common laborer, and was rejected by the religious  
 scholars, and those of means.  
 Jesus embraced the neglected of society,  
 gathering around him: women, children, traitors, scoundrels, and  
 thieves.  
 Jesus made Himself unclean, by touching and allowing Himself to be  
 touched by the untouchable:  
 the diseased of body, mind and spirit.  
 Jesus turned no one away, even eating with those who hated him.

To teach us how to love as God loves,  
 Jesus with thanksgiving,  
 took the position of the lowest servant  
 and washed the feet of those who thought they were important.  
 We are invited to remember Christ's example.

To teach us how to love as God loves,  
 Jesus with thanksgiving,  
 took the bread that recalls the needs of the dispossessed.  
 He broke the bread and shared it saying:  
 "Take, eat this is my body, given for you."  
 We are invited to remember Christ's example.

To teach us how to love a God loves,  
 Jesus with thanksgiving,  
 took the cup that recalls the consequences of sin.  
 He shared the cup saying:  
 "Each of you, drink with me.  
 In this cup is my blood, poured out joyfully to proclaim  
 God's eternal covenant of forgiveness with you and with all who  
 believe."  
 We are invited to remember Christ's example.

We do remember with humility all that You have done for us through  
 the faithfulness of Jesus Christ.  
 We are inspired to follow that example set before us,  
 and embrace this holy mystery of our faith with all our hearts as we  
 say:

**Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again.**

Terrible Tempest, Whispering Breeze  
 allow these gifts of bread and wine to move our hearts  
 let them become for us the very body and blood of Christ  
 and transform our souls.

Terrible Tempest, Whispering Breeze  
 allow these gifts of our lives: our differences and our similarities, move  
 hearts  
 let them become for the world Your church, the living body and  
 spotless bride of Christ  
 for the transformation of the world.

Terrible Tempest, Whispering Breeze  
 respond through us to the cries of the needy,  
 sacrifice us to extend Your salvation further into Your world,  
 use us as instruments of Your grace, mercy and peace in the lives of  
 those around us.

All glory, honor and praise to You most holy God, perfect Trinity, all encompassing Love, now and forever more.

**Amen.**

Now as the humble servants of Almighty God, let us join in the prayer taught by Jesus in the language of our souls:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.  
Amen.**

*A prayer for After Communion:*

**Thank you, O God, for extending to us Your grace through this holy mystery.  
We have felt the touch of Your mercy upon our lives and experienced the transformation of our hearts. We want the joy we feel to be experienced by others. Please use our lives to extend this grace to those who have not yet experienced it, so Your joy may be completed in them. We ask this with gratitude for all we have gained in Jesus Christ. Amen**

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## Great Thanksgiving

*(Gift of a New Pastor)*

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You are God's gracious gift to me.

**And you are to us.**

Let us be open to all of God's gifts.

**We are open to receive all of God's richest blessings.**

Let us rejoice and give thanks.

**Yes! For we are expecting God to do great signs and wonders.**

Giver of every good and perfect gift,

You have brought into our lives a new pastor.

Your gifts and Your call are irrevocably good.

You are addressing our needs that only You may see  
with a wisdom only You can have.

You know the lives You are seeking to touch in new ways through us.

You are the One who gives to us the gifts we need to fulfill Your  
mission in the world.

You are the One who is seeking to prepare us for the spiritual journey  
ahead.

Each of us is a gifted part of Your plan of salvation, and as You add the  
giftedness of others,

You empower us to evolve in our own discipleship, going from glory  
to glory.

You are inspiring in our lives acts of worship and service we have not  
even dreamed of.

You are bringing together new lives, in new ways, with different  
accents, and a new cultural perspective, bringing forth fresh ministries  
that will bring salvation to those whom You have longed to save.

Behold, You are doing something new, and we are joining with heaven  
and earth to sing a new song of praise:

**Transforming, creative, imaginative Love, God of compassion and  
grace.**

**Every life is important to Your ever expanding vision.**

**You are amazing!**

**We are all blessed to be part of this saving work.**

**We are amazed how You use everyone!**



You are amazing! And so was and is, and will always be the life of Jesus Christ.  
 Jesus never turned anyone away, but sought to use all the gifts God brought into his life.  
 Jesus was blessed by faithful parents.  
 Jesus was blessed by faithful teachers.  
 Jesus was blessed even by those who disagreed and by those who worked to support the work.  
 Jesus knew that God uses us all:  
 Those who understand and those who don't.  
 Strangers who cast out demons in the name of Jesus,  
 as well as those who were trained as apostles.  
 Jesus ministered to all: strangers seen as unclean, strangers seen as unacceptable,  
 strangers seen as foreign oppressors and strangers who spoke a language hard to understand.  
 We are amazed by Christ's acts of inclusion.

When the disciples were acting like strangers.  
 Arguing about their own greatness.  
 Jesus responded with humility.  
 Leaving a place of privilege,  
 removed his robes of honor,  
 and knelt before all with towel and basin:  
 thief and betrayer,  
 cowards and deniers.  
 Now embrace your full acceptance.

At the table where none were strangers,  
 Jesus received the Passover bread with thanksgiving;  
 the bread memorializing those who were, are, and will be caught in oppression.  
 Breaking the bread and sharing it with all, Jesus said:  
 "Take and eat, this is my body given for you."  
 Now embrace your full acceptance.

At the table where none were strangers,  
 Jesus received the Passover cup with thanksgiving;  
 the cup memorializing the hope that was, is, and is to come.  
 Sharing this cup with all, Jesus said:  
 "Drink now all of you, for this is the cup of my blood  
 poured out for all in testimony to God's everlasting covenant of grace,  
 promising you forgiveness for your sins, and for the sins of all who

believe.”

Now embrace your full acceptance.

We do embrace this full acceptance,

we have found in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

We want no one to feel that they do not belong.

This is why we boldly proclaim this holy mystery we have found in Christ:

**When we were yet strangers, Christ died for us.**

**When we were not his people, Christ was raised for us.**

**When Christ comes again, none will be strangers for we shall all be like him.**

Ever New, Always Becoming,

embrace these gifts of bread and wine,

allow them to become for us the body and blood of Christ,  
who alone makes us one.

Ever New, Always Becoming,

embrace the gift of our hearts, our souls, our minds, and our strength,  
allow them to become for the world, Your church,  
the inclusive body and the diverse bride of Christ,  
who alone makes us one.

**Ever New, Always Becoming,**

**open our hearts to the thrill of new beginnings,**

**open our minds to understand the opportunities You have set  
before us,**

**open our imaginations so we might dream new dreams, and  
embrace new visions.**

**We want our church to bring even more glory to Christ.**

**We want our church to bring even more glory to the Holy Spirit.**

**We want our church to bring even more glory to our Creative God,  
as we embody Their sacrifice, generosity, and provision, today and  
every day,**

**now and forever. Amen.**

Now as strangers enfolded by the love of God, let us join with Christ to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed be Thy name.**

**Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever.**

**Amen.**

*Prayer after communion:*

We thank you for all the many gifts we have received through this Holy Mystery centered in Jesus Christ. You have given us the gifts of assurance and hope. You have given us the gifts of joy and peace. You have given us a gift of a call that is to reach out to all people, of every nation, from every culture, from every language group and to help them feel at home within the one family of God. Now send us out with Your good news of great joy that is for all people. Give us new opportunities to reach more people with Your love and kindness through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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## Communion Liturgy

*(Imago Dei)*

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*Invitation:*

One: Come just as you are for our God relishes diversity.  
 Come and be embraced as a joint heir with Christ Jesus.  
 Come and become one with the God who loves you.  
 Come to this table where you belong.

*Confession:*

One: You have gifted us with diversity, yet we have rejected Your gift.  
 We have whitewashed Your creativity and toned down the sparkle of  
 Your joy.

**All: To show our repentance, we will deepen our appreciation of all the wondrous diversity in this world.**

One: We have rejected Your generous expression of equity, as You invite all  
 to live as joint heirs with Jesus. We have built walls to exclude others.  
 We have bore false witness against Your generous invitation to all.

**All: To show our repentance we will seek to embrace all people as Your beloved family.**

One: You choose to include everyone, to open wide the gates of Your  
 kingdom, while we have worked against You. We have turned Your  
 beloved children away, viewing them as unworthy to be with us in  
 Your presence.

**All: To show our repentance we will welcome everyone in Your name with joy and celebration.**

*Words of Assurance:*

One: You are created in the diverse, equitable, inclusive image of God.  
 Continue being perfected in love, for in the name of the Holy Trinity  
 you are forgiven.

**All: You are created in the diverse, equitable, inclusive image of God.  
 Continue being perfected in love, for in the name of the Holy Trinity  
 you are forgiven. Thanks be to God. Amen.**

*Great Thanksgiving:*

One: God is with everyone.

**All: We are included.**

One: God delights in who we are.

**All: We are wonderfully and awesomely made.**

One: Our full acceptance feels glorious,  
**All: Filling our hearts with peace and gratitude.**

One: We are the sparkle of joy in Your eye.  
 We are the sound of Your laughter throughout the land.  
 You have created us all in many unique ways,  
 so that we might fit together seamlessly with all of Your creation.  
 We are all part of a masterpiece filled with theme and variation.  
 We are all part of Your song of rejoicing  
 filled with syncopated rhythms and intricate harmonies.  
 Each of us is but a single pixel, all of us necessary, equally important,  
 to the fullness of Your vast creation, stretching throughout all of time  
 and space.  
 Together we form the fullest expression of the Imago Dei  
 worshipping God through the divine attributes of diversity, equity, and  
 inclusion.

Become quiet and listen as heaven and earth proclaim:  
**All: Praise the Creator of all diversity.**  
**Praise the Savior of all with equity.**  
**Praise the Spirit with the inclusion of all.**  
**Let everything that breaths praise the Lord!**  
**Praise the Lord!**

One: Holy Trinity, You are diverse, equitable and inclusive,  
 and You lived those divine traits through the life of Jesus.  
 Jesus called a diverse array of disciples:  
 They were gender diverse;  
 They were from diverse classes of people;  
 with differing beliefs and attitudes.  
 Jesus treated all people with equity,  
 showing concern for woman and children;  
 believers and unbelievers;  
 the oppressed and oppressors;  
 the un-clean and the clean.  
 Jesus included everyone in his love,  
 and was saddened when some excluded themselves needlessly.

Jesus saw others as being equal with himself,  
 so when a servant was needed to show hospitality  
 Jesus took a towel and basin to wash everyone's feet, himself.  
 Jesus saw others as being equal with himself,  
 so when he took the bread of Passover to bless and break it,  
 He gave it to all, saying: "Take and eat,

this is my body broken and given for you."

Jesus saw others as equal with himself,  
 so when he took the Passover wine to bless it,  
 He shared it with all, saying: "Drink with me,  
 each of you, for this is the cup of my blood,  
 an offering poured out in acknowledgment of  
 God's covenant of grace promising salvation to all."

Jesus was able to see us, with the eyes of the Trinity.  
 Jesus embraces our diverse creation.  
 Jesus, with humility, saw the importance every life.  
 Jesus with love, seeks to save every soul.  
 We want to live like this too,  
 embracing this sacred mystery of our faith, we now proclaim:

**All:** **Christ has died, a sacrifice for all.**  
**Christ has risen, so that all can rise.**  
**Christ will come again, leaving no one behind.**

One: Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive Spirit  
 reveal for us in these gifts of bread and wine  
 the tangible body and blood of Christ  
 sacrificed for all.

Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive Spirit  
 reveal for others through the way we live our lives  
 Your church, the tangible body and bride of Christ  
 sacrificed for all.

Diverse, Equitable, Inclusive Spirit  
 reveal Your presence through our lives.  
 Open our hearts to the gift of human diversity in all its forms.  
 Humble our lives to better treat everyone with equity.  
 Break down our walls so that no one is excluded by us from Your  
 presence.  
 We ask this in the powerful name of the Trinity,  
 expressed in diverse ways, equitable in every relationship, with an  
 expansive inclusion.  
 May They be praised continually in heaven and on earth. Amen.

**All:** Now let us pray after the example given by Jesus Christ:  
**Imago Dei, diversity, equity, inclusion, holy are all Your ways.**  
**May we reflect Your glory in the living of our days.**

**Provide for us as You meet the needs of all.  
Forgive the multitude of sins we have committed against others,  
as we forgive the few sins that others have committed against us.  
Keep us open, questioning, and humble,  
leading us away from close minded pride and arrogance.  
For You invite us to be come one with You, one with all others,  
and one with the whole of creation. Amen.**

*Prayer after Communion:*

We are grateful to be invited to share in the holy Mystery celebrated around this table. You have included us, coming from many diverse realities. You treat us all with equity. You invited all of us to become one with You as part of the Sacred dance of the Trinity. This is the good news we feel compelled to share with others. We know of Your burning desire to add their distinctiveness along with our own. May we all become one in You and You in us, joined together in Your great love shared with all through Jesus Christ. Amen

# RESOURCES FOR PASTORS & CONGREGATIONS

## Do's & Don'ts for Incoming Cross-Racial & Cross-Cultural Pastors

Do	Don't
✓ Honor your predecessor and the history of the church.	✗ Speak poorly about your predecessor and their decisions.
✓ Acknowledge the congregation's feelings about the pastoral transition.	✗ Act as if the past and the transition are not relevant.
✓ Be intentional in forming relationships. Spend time with key leaders and members.	✗ Make quick changes before building relationships with members and key leaders.
✓ Act with openness and flexibility.	✗ Shut down different ways of doing things.
✓ Create brave space for honest conversation and feedback.	✗ Make drastic assumptions.
✓ Spend time with other clergy serving in cross-racial/cross-cultural appointments.	✗ Neglect your personal need for intentional community and clergy support systems.
✓ Be mindful and respectful of cultural* differences in church and community conversations.	✗ Blame everything on racist intent when disagreements arise.
✓ Invite the congregation to get to know you and your background.	✗ Assume that your members are not culturally competent and are unaware of cultural humility.*
✓ Test your suspicions about "racist" behavior with humility and grace.	✗ Assume that questions or criticisms are based on racist beliefs.
✓ Listen and observe.	✗ Jump to immediate conclusions.
✓ Share your vision and your strengths for ministry.	✗ Feel you cannot be your authentic self.
✓ Practice self-care and the Sabbath.	✗ Assume you can jump right into a day-to-day grind trying to prove your worth.
✓ Stay connected with family, friends, cultural groups, and support systems.	✗ Ignore your need for connection to your cultural roots, spiritual practices, and traditions.



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## Self-Care for Clergy in Cross-Racial/Cross-Cultural Ministry

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At our best, pastors are caring people who are good at taking care of others; however, we often fail to treat ourselves with the same level of care. Particularly for those pastors serving congregations, self-care is neither selfish nor an indulgent luxury. Rather, caring for one's mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual well-being allows pastors to give our best to God and the church through our gifts and graces. You are unable to do that if you are not restored.

Along with the inevitable pressures and demands of shepherding a parish, campus ministry, or other group, clergy of color and those who come from another ethnicity, nation/cultural context than the one you are serving, may need to practice additional self-care. (This may also be true for clergy from marginalized groups, such as women, LGBTQI persons, and young adults.) We must be intentional in ensuring we do just that!

Along with spiritual retreats, time apart with friends and family, and practices that promote physical and emotional health, clergy in cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments may also seek more:

- Support from and quality time with mentors and friends from their own cultural/identity groups.
- Access to culturally relevant and knowledgeable pastoral counselors and therapists as needed by themselves and/or their family.
- Reliable support from supervisors who are interculturally competent and sensitive to the realities of racism.
- Support from and training for the congregation's staff-parish relations committee, trustees, and/or directors.

If you are beginning your first—or a new—cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry assignment, make an honest inventory of how well you take care of yourself. Use the lists below to assess how well you practice self-care now and what you might need more of in the future. Choose one or two ideas on which to focus. Ask a trusted friend or colleague (or therapist) to serve as an accountability partner, who will encourage you to meet your self-care goals. Once you feel that you have integrated your practice into your daily routine, come back to the list and try a new approach for yourself.

**Take care of your body:**

- **Move your body.** Do light to moderate physical exercise as your body permits (e.g. a dance class, a 30-minute walk, water aerobics, or chair yoga) at least three times per week.
- **Rest well.** Develop a regular sleep routine and practice a daily wind-down, including no meals or caffeine after a certain hour, and turning off electronics at least an hour before bedtime.
- **Rediscover leisure time.** Make time to watch your favorite movie or TV show each week. Listen to music. Take up a hobby such as painting, hiking or baking.

**Take care of your spirit:**

- **Pray**—and not just on the job. Research reported in 2019 by Psychology Today found that adults who pray daily report having better self-esteem and an easier time handling depressive episodes. Find a prayer partner and pray regularly.
- **Keep Sabbath.** Sunday is a workday for many clergy. However, good pastors take a day of rest and renewal at least one day a week, because it allows you needed time alone with God. Set that day for yourself or with your spouse or family and keep it.
- **Try meditation.** Whether you use an app, attend a class, or develop your own method, deep breathing, mindfulness, meditation, and visualization may help you connect more intensely with God.

**Take care of your relationships:**

- **Make time for family.** Whether you live with a spouse and other family members or have a circle of friends who are like family, they are a source of love and encouragement that you cannot find elsewhere.
- **Be there for your besties.** Again, your best friends—those who know you, love you, and cheer you on—are especially precious when you find yourself in challenging situations. Be sure to stay in touch with them and call on them when you need a safe place to vent.
- **Let the children come.** If you're a person who gets energized around children and youth, you'll want to spend leisure time with your own children, cousins, siblings' children, and those of your close friends. They remind us that serving God includes shepherding (and learning from) young disciples.

**Taking care of your mind:**

- **Dive into books.** Read or listen to genres that you enjoy. Set a goal to finish at least one book a month.
- **Exercise your intellect.** Crossword puzzles, Sudoku, learning a new language, taking up a musical instrument, or attending lectures/art exhibits can flex your mental muscles.
- **Honor your cultural heritage.** Especially if you serve a parish from a racial/cultural/identity group different than your own, celebrate special days, family traditions, and community events. Stay connected.
- **Find a therapist or counselor.** If needed, seek out professionals who demonstrate intercultural competence and understand the particulars of serving people who are quite different from you.
- **Keep a journal.** Whether electronic or handwritten, keep a journal of your celebrations, challenges, frustrations, conversations with God. Write it out.

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## Imago Dei Bible Study

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# *Imago Dei*

**A Bible Study of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**



5 Week Bible Study Using Lectio Divina



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## This is Our Story, This is Our Song

*A small group study of cross-racial/cross-cultural ministry for congregations*

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Cross-racial and cross-cultural (CR/CC) appointments are appointments of clergypersons to congregations in which the majority of their constituents are different from the clergyperson's own racial/ethnic and cultural background. There are a countless number of faithful persons throughout the Bible who responded to God's call to go across the racial and cultural boundaries in ministry. The pastors appointed to serve in CR/CC appointments are continuing the legacy of faith to advance God's work in the world today.

THIS IS OUR STORY, THIS IS OUR SONG includes their theological reflections and personal stories, offered to the church as a gift to build up the faith community and its ministry. However, these stories do not only belong to those telling them; rather, they are "our" stories and "our" songs, lifting up the Holy Spirit working in our midst to build up the realm of God where "there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!" (Colossians 3:11)

This series is designed for congregations, for either small group study or individual reading and reflection, to help raise awareness about the benefits and challenges of serving in or being part of a cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry. There are six sessions with theological reflections on cross-racial and cross-cultural ministry, the writer's personal experiences in such ministry, and a set of questions at the end of the reading to guide reflective conversations.

This resource is recommended for laity-led teams in your congregation, including the Staff-Parish Relations Committee (SPRC), Administrative Council, Trustees, Worship Committee, or other groups. The learning engagements are instructive for both congregations who already have a pastor in a cross-racial or cross-cultural appointment, or for church experiencing cross-racial and cross-cultural clergy assignments for the first time. Additionally, this resource may also be used in congregations who are contemplating cross-racial/cross-cultural ministries in the future.

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## Investing Well in CRCC Ministry: *Laity and Clergy*

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### PREPARATION

When preparing for the appointment to begin, the core leadership team of the congregation must make concerted efforts to speak frankly about the social norms of the congregation sharing that change may be necessary for all. The assumption or the unrealistic expectation that the clergy person will just “fit in” is self-centered and does not equate to being faithful Christ-followers. Discussing and documenting these concerns will be helpful in the information provided below to the incoming clergy person for their further discernment and inquiry when arriving. Core leadership team should convene honest conversations, within the congregation using the questions below, to identify to prepare for the success of the appointment:

- What are our sacred rhythms?
- What are our annual events and projects?
- What traditions do we hold in high regard?
- What will cause major conflict in our congregation if \_\_\_\_ was changed?

Additional insights include:

- What will occur if there are any barriers to understanding language?
- How will members of the committee hold honest conversations about those potential challenges? Please know that the clergy person is aware and should not be reminded of this matter.
- What would it take for members of the congregation - especially leaders of the core leadership team - to begin finding resources in the new clergy persons' native language to begin training the listening ear for a new dialect?
- What would it take to prepare to receive the Proclamation of the Gospel Message in different ways (i.e. through a translator, an outline of the sermon, or the distribution of the sermon manuscript)?

The core leadership team and incoming pastor must have an honest conversation about the above questions to celebrate the diverse gifts and culture of the incoming pastor and think about any challenges that may arise. The core leadership team can begin sharing resources to the members of the congregation for how they can begin opening their hearts and minds to the new possibilities that will emerge from the cross racial or cross-cultural appointment. Resource examples can include:

- Vital Conversations Series (<https://www.r2hub.org/vital-conversations-series-home>)

- Implicit Bias Workbook (<https://www.r2hub.org/premium-resources/p/implicit-bias-workbook>)

## CELEBRATION

When the appointment begins, it is suggested that within the first thirty days of the appointment, there should be the coordination of a Celebration of Appointment. This celebration is a public acknowledgment for the commitment of receiving a CRCC appointment. The celebration should be done during a regularly scheduled worship experience.

The Celebration of Appointment services can be found here: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/an-order-for-the-celebration-of-an-appointment>

You may also use the Great Thanksgiving liturgy below celebrating the gift of a new pastor if the celebration is scheduled for the first Sunday:

Gift of a New Pastor.pdf ([transformingcommunion.com](http://www.transformingcommunion.com)) - <http://www.transformingcommunion.com/Docs/Gift%20of%20a%20New%20Pastor.pdf>

## CONNECTION

When the appointment begins, it is imperative that the core leadership team of the congregation coordinate means for relationship-building to begin for the incoming CRCC pastor and their family, if applicable. The coordination of introductions at small groups, Sunday Schools, community gatherings, and informal settings with influencers will be important. Additionally, if in a smaller community, the congregation can begin broadly sharing information with others in the community about the new cross-racial, cross-cultural appointment, and what it means to "welcome the stranger."

The responsibility for relationship-building rests with the leaders of the congregations as the facilitators - not the incoming CRCC pastor who may not know the cultural norms or processes in the community. Maintain a standard set of questions to ask the incoming pastor to get to know them. Please refrain from asking about "their vision for the church", as these are not helpful during initial meetings and conversations. Example questions could include:

- What is your "call" story?
- What have been your past vocational experiences?
- What brings you joy and sadness in ministry?
- What are your celebrations, or reservations about this cross-racial or cross-cultural appointment?

## MEETINGS

When the core leadership team, along with the clergy person, curate a brave space for leaders to address their fears and biases. This practice sets an expectation that the congregation is committed to discussing these in healthy ways.

When the appointment begins, it is imperative during the first ninety (90) days that a Leadership Covenant is created and executed, as means for how the core leadership, congregational leaders and the incoming pastor will lead together in this new appointment.

The core leadership team of the congregation must ensure the Leadership Covenant is recited and referenced at each meeting as a reminder for how to be in relationship and service with one another.

## COMMUNICATION

When the appointment begins, the core leadership team and incoming pastor need to consider processes for establishing consistent communication with the congregation.

One example: In an initial meeting, someone asked the pastor how they would like to be addressed.

Some might assume that calling a person by their first name is normal. However, to truly celebrate the full humanity and culture of the incoming pastor, inviting them to share their response and respecting their answer is necessary. It is the responsibility of the core leadership team or staff-pastor parish committee will need to communicate this information. with the entire congregation. Communication channels decided on by the incoming pastor and core leadership can be engaged such as the worship bulletin, a newsletter announcement, or the church website. An announcement or insert example could be: "We have met with our new pastor and these are some of the things you should know about him/her/them..."



## Centering Yourself in Your CRCC Appointment

Transitions are also periods of acute vulnerability because new pastors lack established working relationships in a new appointment setting. Opinions of your effectiveness begin to form quickly. Once formed, they are surprisingly hard to change. These opinions can form quicker and be even harder to change for CRCC pastors appointed to congregations different from their race, ethnicity, and culture. An intentional strategic plan for your first 90 days can better position you and the congregation for fruitful ministry together. This worksheet serves as a reference tool to resource you toward this endeavor. Consider answering the questions below to help guide you in your first 90 days and, ultimately, create a plan for intentional engagement with your congregation.

### I. **THE FIRST 30 DAYS** (after your first day/first Sunday/first week)

- **MEET WITH WORSHIP PLANNING TEAM**

Learn about the worship rhythms and any cultural or traditional worship practices you should be aware of by asking the following questions:

- Are there significant special services I need to know about?
- What holidays and Holy Days are traditionally observed in worship?
- Is everything done by an order of worship, or is the congregation familiar with extemporaneous prayers and speech?
- Who is involved in the worship service other than the pastor?
- How diverse is worship leadership?

- **RESEARCH OF THE COMMUNITY**

Along with your leaders, study the demographics of the community surrounding the church. This will give you the opportunity to get to know the church's neighbors, while allowing leaders to become acquainted with any community changes.

Consider going into the community with trusted church leaders and talking with the people. While this knowledge isn't always immediately accessible, consider the following questions when seeking to understand your community context:

- Who are our neighbors?
- Do we know our neighbors, and do they know us?
- What do they know (or believe) about us?
- Are we still the people they believe us to be?
- Do we have a relationship with our neighbors? If not, are we open to forming relationships?
- What would need to change or happen for us to form better relationships with the community?

Research the church's social media accounts and church website. Consider using the below questions to guide you.

- Is there old information that needs to be cleaned up?
- Is there a social media presence? Does it reflect the stated values of the church? Does it accurately reflect the congregation? Is it welcoming to other races/ethnicities in the community? Does it reflect the partnership between the pastor and congregation (who may differ ethnically/culturally)?
- Is there a social media presence? If so, what process does the church have to capture its social media engagement?

## II. 31-60 DAYS

### • MEETING WITH LEADERS

Schedule intentional time to meet with the leaders to learn about the church ministries and past partnership with the pastor. Consider using the below questions as a guide for intentional relationship building with leaders:

- How long have they been members/in their current leadership role?
- How are authorities and responsibilities shared between the pastor and lay leadership?
- What support/leadership do they need from you?
- What expectations do they have of you as their pastor?
- Share your call story and what led you to this place at this time.
- Share hopes for kingdom partnership with the leaders.
- Talk about the roles and celebrations of various ministries and anything you should know about their involvement and participation.

### • SMALL GROUP LISTENING SESSIONS

Invite church members to host small group gatherings in their homes (or at the church if people aren't comfortable) for the pastor and membership to get to know each other. Possible discussion questions are below:

- What led them to the church? How many years have they been members?
- What about the church brings them joy?
- How has this church helped them grow spiritually?
- What about the community surrounding the church brings God joy?
- What about the community breaks God's heart?
- If resources were not an issue, what would you love to see our church do?
- The pastor can share their call story, information about their family/background and other pertinent information to help connect with members.

### III. 61-90 DAYS

The focus during this time needs to be on translating the insights from the previous 60 days into action. Consider engaging some of the actions below in concert with church leaders:

- Continue researching, observing, and learning. This process will be ongoing work in the ministry.
- Begin lifting insights from gatherings with leaders and small groups. Quotes from the leadership team and congregants allow them to hear from each other and let them know you are listening and their voices matter to you.
- Work with leaders to set goals and celebrate quick wins to help gain trust and build excitement.
- Make sure to empower and equip laity showing them you are a team player, and you all are in this together.
- Schedule monthly meetings with SPRC, and/or your core leadership team to pray, plan, evaluate, address concerns, and keep the lines of communication open.
- Take some time to listen to difficult people. Listen with a discerning ear to hear beyond their presenting issue. What they present may not be the actual problem. Also be careful not to take things too personally. A comment or critique may feel personal toward the pastor but may reflect the parishioner's own brokenness/wounds. How can you be their pastor at this moment, no matter how difficult they may be? (This does not mean a pastor should allow themselves to be verbally or emotionally abused.)
- Meet key community stakeholders.
- Continue visiting church ministries.
- Find ways to communicate success to the congregation.
- Celebrate the first 90 days of your ministry and cast vision with church leaders for the next few months based on your continued learning and observing.
- Meet with and build relationships with other clergy serving cross-racial/cross cultural appointments.
- Meet or check-in with your district superintendent. Share any major concerns asking for input on challenging issues.

## Do's & Don'ts for Outgoing Pastor

As outgoing pastor, your role is to leave well, bridging the transition between the incoming pastor and yourself. If you are from the dominant culture, your role is to intentionally welcome the cross-racial/cross-cultural pastor in the specific following ways:

DO	DON'T
✓ Publicly honor the incoming pastor showing support of their ministry.	✗ Speak ill of the incoming pastor.
✓ Disclose any unresolved or unfinished projects and concerns.	✗ Cast doubt on the incoming pastor's ministry.
✓ Remind and/or teach the congregation the Methodist of open itineracy.	✗ Joke about the incoming pastor's ethnicity, accent, their name, or anything regarding their identity.
✓ Invite incoming pastor to coffee, lunch, or the church office for a visit.	✗ Create anxiety around your departure and the incoming pastor's arrival.
✓ Learn how to pronounce their name correctly and call them by their preferred title.	✗ Make the church resent the incoming pastor's request for a title if you didn't use one.
✓ Assist with culturally appropriate education that may be helpful.	✗ Promote information that perpetuates stereotypes about the race, ethnicity, and culture of the incoming pastor.
✓ Encourage others to see the incoming pastor as a child of God made in the image of God whose life experiences and pastoral training will benefit them.	✗ Other the ethnicity or culture of the incoming pastor and devalue their experiences and worth.
✓ Foster spaces and experiences for people to speak their fears and concerns respectfully and honestly about the pastoral transition. Offer a responsive litany or prayer for the incoming pastor and congregation's transition.	✗ Add to the fears and concerns people might hold about the pastoral transition.
✓ Connect the incoming pastor to key stakeholders in the congregation and community.	✗ Fail to disclose any safety concerns or community and congregational taboos.