

You are invited to join in the

## PC(USA)'s Week of Action

to learn more about justice and to help speak out for justice for all people.

"To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice." —  
Proverbs 21:3

"God sends the Church to work for justice in the world: exercising its power for the common good; dealing honestly in personal and public spheres; seeking dignity and freedom for all people..." — *Book of Order*, W-5.0304

See <https://www.pcusa.org/weekofaction/> for the most recent Schedule of Events:

<b>Monday 8/24:</b> <b>Global Day of Solidarity</b>	Hear from those who have experiences of racism and share support. <i>Watch the above website for information.</i>
<b>Tuesday 8/25:</b> <b>Town Hall</b>	Engage with theologians, community activists, pastors and practitioners on the intersectional work of anti-racism, how the PC(USA) grapples with the legacy of white supremacy and racism in our own history and theology and how we can find ways to do prophetic and renewing work. <i>12:30 CT; register online through the website.</i>
<b>Wednesday 8/26:</b> <b>Liberation Bible Study and Twitterstorm</b>	<p>The Liberation Bible Study led by the Rev. Dr. J Herbert Nelson and other theologians and an intercultural conversation; Noon and 2:00 pm, respectively. <i>Register online through the above website.</i></p> <p>Twitter discussion ("storm") at 11:00 am; follow <a href="#">@Presbyterian</a> for discussion prompts. Use <b>#WeekofActionPCUSA</b> to join the conversation.</p>
<b>Thursday 8/27:</b> <b>BLACKOUT Day and COVID-19 Memorial and Webinar</b>	<p>Wear black in solidarity with the struggle for Black lives.</p> <p>Webinar: Farmworkers in the Pandemic: Essentially Disposable is at 11:00 am; register online or watch at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/presbyhunger">facebook.com/presbyhunger</a>.</p> <p>COVID-19 Memorial as a uniquely sacred moment to pause and remember those we have lost during the pandemic. 4:00 CT.</p> <p>Throughout the day, look for information about ways Presbyterians can support ministries and efforts that benefit Black communities in preparation for Give 828 Day (also known as "Give Black Day") the following day</p>
<b>Friday 8/28:</b> <b>Give 828 / Give Black Day Documentary Premiere and Young Adult Round Table</b>	<p>Watch the premiere of the new documentary series and e-course titled <a href="#">Trouble the Water: Conversations to Disrupt Racism and Dominance</a>. Attendees will watch episode one of the series and then join a round table discussion of racial justice organizers and leaders. <i>Watch website for registration.</i></p> <p>Today is also <b>Give 828 Day</b> (also known as "Give Black Day"): Take this opportunity to provide financial support for Black-led non-profits and other ministries and efforts that benefit Black communities.</p>
<b>Saturday 8/29:</b> <b>Rally/ Public Action</b>	Join a virtual multi-city rally that calls attention and action to the racial injustice happening in our country. This will include various speakers, music, poets, etc. Watch website for registration. Join at <a href="https://www.facebook.com/pcusa/">https://www.facebook.com/pcusa/</a>
<b>Sunday 8/30:</b> <b>Day of Service</b>	Today, encourage congregations and mid-councils to engage in service to their communities following worship. See <a href="https://www.pcusa.org/weekofaction/">https://www.pcusa.org/weekofaction/</a> for opportunities and ideas.

## ***From the Presbyterian Mission Agency:***

The following Q&A has been edited slightly for space; the full version may be read at <https://www.pcusa.org/weekofaction/#2>

### **Why are we saying that “Presbyterians Affirm Black Lives Matter”?**

Simply put: because Black lives do indeed matter. They/we matter to God, which means they/we should matter to God’s people.

### **But don’t all lives matter?**

Saying unequivocally that “Black Lives Matter” in no way means that all lives do not matter. It is rather an acknowledgment that many lives – specifically Black lives – are systemically devalued. As a community that tries to follow Jesus, we proclaim that such a devaluation of our siblings is an affront to the Living God. The Confession of Belhar reminds us “that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged.”

### **I just cannot agree with supporting the Black Lives Matter organization.**

Presbyterians have always been invited to use discernment in matters of faith and practice, understanding that “God alone is Lord of the conscience.”

In our discernment we must be careful that we do not expect that we, a majority-white institution, may determine the path of liberation and equity for Black people, nor should we expect that we may “correct” the goals and methodologies developed by any community we seek to support. In all justice efforts, we must be led by the ones who are impacted. And we need not wait for complete agreement with every position before we act in ways that are loving, bold and (again) directed by the communities with whom we want to align.

In his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. spoke of the tendency of the white moderate who says, “I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action,” and “who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another [person]’s freedom.” This tendency denies justice to the oppressed and slows progress and wholeness for the entire community.

We also note that King and many other justice-seekers of the time were constantly accused of sedition. They were labeled as communists who sought to undermine the United States and were surveilled mercilessly.

Even in the church, they were accused of being anti-Christian for disturbing the peace of the community and the God-ordained order of society. Today we hear similar claims that Black Lives Matter is “violent Marxist” and seeks to undermine the American (and Christian) way of life. While again respecting the discernment of each, we must name that these labels are not only untrue but rooted in anti-Blackness with intent to frustrate the efforts of Black people seeking justice for themselves.

### **I fear that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is getting too political and hopping onto the latest bandwagon.**

Presbyterians have long been “political.” Civic engagement has always been part of the life of the church. The American Revolution and the structure of the U.S. government were heavily informed by Presbyterians. More nefariously, our articulation of the faith has also been used in service to the eradication of Indigenous people and the enslavement of African people on these lands. More recent scholars, prophets and church leaders and prophets have reiterated the gospel’s clarion call for liberation and engagement with the state, even when we would not listen to them. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the antecedent Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, was one of the organizers of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

From the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Scots Confession, to the Theological Declaration of Barmen and the Confession of Belhar, our confessions have always instructed us on our role as Christians in the public square.

But before all these things, Christians were calling Jesus “Lord,” which is a civic designation. Christianity is inherently political. The word “political” has its root in the Greek word for “people.” Jesus commanded us to love God and neighbor. Our faith can never be extricated from our concerns for people.

Affirming that Black Lives Matter is very much in line with who we are as Presbyterians, and while the gospel of Jesus Christ is political, it is not partisan. It is not in service to any one political party or leaning, but challenges all of us to have righteous relationships with one another. We believe that justice for the oppressed is not and should not be a partisan value. Justice is a gospel value, one that all who claim Jesus as Lord should hold. We may have different ideas of how to live into the value, but as Christians we are beholden to it.