

Prayers of the People
Canadian Council of Churches
Virtual Ecumenical Emancipation Day Service
August 1, 2021

1. God of Compassion, we remember on this day all those whose bodies were stolen by the Transatlantic Slave Trade, those who suffered lives of hardship, dehumanization, and family separation as a result of the cruel institution of slavery, those whose spirits were broken, and those who engaged in acts of resistance, both small and large, striving to be free.
2. God of Perseverance, we remember the significance of August 1, 1834 when slavery was abolished across the British Empire, including Canada and British colonies in the Caribbean. We give thanks for the bravery and determination of the abolitionists, Black and white, who dedicated themselves to ending the institution of slavery.
3. God of Love, we ask you to deepen our awareness that we are all made in the image of God. We repent of our complicity in the attitudes, actions, and words that lead us to put our concerns before those of our siblings here and around the world. Deliver us from the sins of superiority, greed, exploitation, control, and contempt for others, and grant us the humility to care for those whose experiences are different from our own.
4. God of Mercy, we pray for change. Transform us within so that we may be better equipped to form the beloved community. Change the contentment we feel as people of privilege into discontent that motivates us to overturn systems of oppression.
5. God of Truth, change our tendency to defend ourselves into the freedom that comes from being forgiven and empowered through your love. Change our need to make excuses into the ability to be honest with ourselves and open with one another so that we may all engage in the work of achieving a more just and equitable society.
6. God of Justice, change our inclination to judge others who are different from us into a desire to serve and uplift others. May your Spirit empower us to move from the ways of death and division into the ways of new life and community, living together in justice and peace.
7. God of Liberation, we offer our prayers of thanksgiving and praise. You have heard the cries of the oppressed and given us freedom. May we remember all of the ancestors who longed for liberty and may we have the courage, strength, and fortitude to continue striving for social justice and equity in the present day.

Irene Moore Davis
(Black Anglicans of Canada)