Gathering Hymn
Gather Us In

Opening Prayer:
*Written by the Pax Christi Anti-Racism Team.*

Dear God, in our efforts to dismantle racism, we understand that we struggle not merely against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities – those institutions and systems that keep racism alive by perpetuating the lie that some members of the family are inferior and others superior.

Create in us a new mind and heart that will enable us to see brothers and sisters in the faces of those divided by racial categories.

Give us the grace and strength to rid ourselves of racial stereotypes that oppress some of us while providing entitlements to others.

Help us to create a Church and nation and today in particular, a community that embraces the hopes and fears of oppressed People of Color where we live, as well as those around the world.

Heal your family God, and make us one with you, in union with our brother Jesus, and empowered by your Holy Spirit.
Amen

Reading:

A Rabbi once asked his students how they could tell
When the night had ended and the day was on its way back.
“Is it when you can see an animal in the distance and know whether it is a dog or a sheep?”
“No,” replied the Rabbi
“Is it when you can see a tree at a distance and tell whether it is a peach or an apple tree?”
“No,” replied the Rabbi.
“Well then,” demanded the students, “when is it?”
“It is when you look into the face of another human being and see that he or she is your brother or your sister. Because if you cannot do that, then no matter what time it is, it is still night!”
Author unknown

Quiet reflection

**Reading:** *On the Pulse of Morning* by Maya Angelou

Lift up your eyes upon The day breaking for you.
Give birth again To the dream.
Lift up your hearts.
Each new hour holds new chances For new beginnings.
Do not be webbed forever to fear The horizon leans forward, Offering you space to place new steps of change.
Here on the pulse of this new day You may have the grace to look up and out And into your sister’s eyes, Into your brother’s face, your country
And say simply Very simply With hope Good morning.

**Reflection**
Leader: As we embark on a journey to explore privilege and racism, we reflect on the invitation of Maya Angelou to lift up our hearts as each new day holds new chances for new beginnings. Let us take a few moments of quiet to consider: *What lifts up my heart as I envision my religious community overcoming racism?*

(pause)

Optional sharing

Closing Prayer
All: Creator God, we thank you for the gift of this day. With your grace and hearts full of hope we are here to give birth again to your dream that we all be one. Amen.

Prayer adapted from: Pax Christi USA; Maya Angelou et al