

Welcome, dear women of AACRC, to this winter and spring 2021 semester's reading of Latasha Morrison's *Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation*. We acknowledge that this topic is deep, soul, gospel-centered work. Reading and seeking Christ's movement in our lives in the work of confession, lament, forgiveness, reconciliation, reparations, and growth – belongs to us communally, even as we seek to do the personal, individual work to confront our own biases and stories. Whatever place you are in this work of transformation, whether you have read about this topic a lot or a little, we all have work to do.

We affirm that it is by Christ's power that we are enabled to engage in work of racial reconciliation and justice. We are a diverse, multigenerational group of women connected to the ministry of the Ann Arbor Christian Reformed Church and we seek to continue to answer God's invitation to discipleship precisely in this season. This call is both challenging and deeply hopeful as those called by Jesus, our Savior and Reconciler.

This study guide you'll find in the next page opens us up to the work of this book —you'll find that there are a few, focused selected questions to center us for each session. There's a Scripture guide also to aid us as we seek to dwell in the Word this semester. Bring a pen to mark up your book, and plan find a notebook or journal to keep track of your learning. You might find that there's a week where more inner work and reflecting needs to happen. Take the time you need to allow God's Spirit to work within you and your relationships. This work takes courage, time, and grace. Make space for it.

Additionally, are three optional liturgies within the book. You might find that they help you to pray in between sessions. Because we want to deeply mean the words we offer to God in prayer, these are not expected elements of our group time. Talk together about whether you'd like to engage these as a group. You can find them on pages 52, 120, and 210.

Finally, here are our meeting dates. It's good to put them in your calendar now. 😊

- 1st/3rd Wednesday meeting dates: 1/20, 2/3, 2/17, 3/3, 3/17, 4/7, 4/21, +new date 5/5
- 2nd/4th Monday meeting dates: 1/25, 2/8, 2/22, 3/8, 3/22, 4/12, 4/26, +new date 5/10

May our faithful God lead us in the power of the Spirit to live as agents of the Triune God of grace as we do this work of repentance + reconciliation. The Lord bless and keep you!

Be the Bridge: Pursuing God's Heart for Racial Reconciliation

by Latasha Morrison

Part I: The Bridge to Lament

SESSION 1

Scripture: Galatians 3:26-29

Reading: Foreword – Chapter One (*Questions 1, 3 pg.9-10*) – Chapter Two (*Questions 2, 4, 6 pg.33*)

Prayer: A Prayer for Humility, page 11

SESSION 2

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-2

Reading: Chapter Three (*Questions 1, 2, 4, 6 pg.50*)

Prayer: A Prayer of Acknowledgement and Lament, page 51

Part II: The Bridge to Confession and Forgiveness

SESSION 3

Scripture: James 5:16

Reading: Chapter Four (*Questions 1, 5, 6, 9 pg.79-80*) – Chapter 5 (*Questions 1, 6 pg.97-99*)

Prayer: A Prayer to Confess Shame and Guilt, page 81

SESSION 4

Scripture: Ephesians 4:31-32

Reading: Chapter Six (*Questions 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 pg.117-118*)

Prayer: A Prayer of Confession, page 100 + A Prayer of Forgiveness, page 119

Part III: The Bridge to Restorative Reconciliation

SESSION 5

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

Reading: Chapter Seven (*Questions 3, 4, 5, 6 pg.146-147*)

Prayer: Prayers of Repentance, page 148

SESSION 6

Scripture: Luke 19:8

Reading: Chapter Eight (*Questions 1, 2, 4, 5 pg.167-168*)

Prayer: A Prayer for Reparation, page 169

SESSION 7

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:18-19

Reading: Chapter Nine (*Questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 pg.188-189*)

Prayer: Prayers of Restoration and Reconciliation, pages 190-191

SESSION 8

Scripture: Revelation 7:9

Reading: Chapter Ten: (*Questions 2, 4, 5, 6 pg.207-208*)

Prayer: A Prayer for Reproduction of Bridge Builders, page 209

Session Outline

note: before each week's session ends, you might find it helpful to end each meeting circling the next week's questions in your books together so that you can all stay on track.

Gathering in Scripture

leader: In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, welcome to this sacred space as God's beloved ones. Let us all take three deep breaths and remember that God's love is always with us.

Together, we pray: **We welcome your Spirit's work among us, good and gracious God.**

leader: Let's listen now to these good words together: *Choose one or two Scripture passages from the week's readings to read aloud as we settle our hearts to begin together)*

-Pause and make space for the Word to echo in your own heart and between us-

leader: What did you notice? How did you sense God moving as you heard these words?

Discussing the book + Sharing our Lives

[see the questions outlined for each week]

Add as a last question, as time allows...

What moved you in this reading? What convicted you? What are you learning?

Prayer + Preparing for next session

Take some time to gather stories to lift before God both in petition and gratitude together. *This is also a good time to circle the discussion questions you'll be working with for the next session.*

You can choose a different person to lead prayer each week. Begin with the prayer listed from the book and then add what other requests you've gathered during your session.

Scripture Guide

You are invited to use this to dwell in Scripture alongside each session's chapters. Please note that these passages were drawn from the references listed within the footnotes section of the back of the book. You can read these on your own in between sessions for a deeper engagement in Scripture. The passages in bold are suggested for corporate reading at each small group gathering.

Session 1: Esther 4:14, Ephesians 6:14, John 17:7, **Galatians 3:26-29**, 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Luke 23:34, John 8:32

Session 2: 2 Samuel 12:16-17, **Psalm 51:1-2**, Psalm 30:5; from the liturgy of lament: Jeremiah 9:19, Isaiah 1:17, Micah 6:8, Matthew 11:28

Session 3: Ezra 9:6, Daniel 9:8, Proverbs 28:13, 1 John 1:9, **James 5:16**

Session 4: Matthew 18:22, Matthew 6:14-15, Luke 23:34, Roman 3:23, 1 Peter 2:24, Luke 23:34, Matthew 18:21-35, **Ephesians 4:31-32**, Colossians 3:13

Session 5: Matthew 23:27, Romans 3:23, Acts 3:19, **2 Corinthians 7:10-11**, Isaiah 1:15

Session 6: Numbers 5:7, **Luke 19:8**, John 8:11

Session 7: John 21:15-17, John 20:26-28, **2 Corinthians 5:18-19**

Session 8: Matthew 22:37-40, Matt. 28:18-20, Amos 5:24, 2 Corinthians 5:11, **Revelation 7:9**; from the liturgy of Restoration and Reproduction: Isaiah 1:16-18, Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 3:8, Psalm 130:3-4, 1 Corinthians 13:5

Resources

When we begin to intentionally engage the work of racial justice and reconciliation, this work can be overwhelming. This is why we are doing this in community with one another.

Small discussion groups gathered the summer of 2020 at AACRC around three books—*the New Jim Crow*, *Waking Up White*, and *The Hate You Give*. Below are a few other recommendations for some good places to engage. This is by no means an exhaustive list—and we encourage us all to share what your reading list might be in your groups as well.

- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson
- *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown
- *Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope* by Esau McCaulley
- *The Color of Compromise: the Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism and How to Fight Racism* by Jemar Tisby
- *The Very Good Gospel* by Lisa Sharon Harper

Social Media Resources:

- There is a very active Facebook Group under the same title as the book—you can ask to be added (it's a closed group) and then read the protocols and expectations to engagement. If you're active on social media, this is would be a wonderful group to join in parallel with our reading.
- Black Liturgies written by Cole Arthur Riley is an exceptional writer of daily prayers and is an important voice to follow.

Racial Justice resources from our own denomination:

- from the CRC blog, Do Justice, here's a wonderful, short article by Rev. Kate Kooyman, a guest preacher at AACRC a couple years ago: <https://dojustice.crcna.org/article/going-hurt>. You can also search the CRC.org with the title "This is Going to Hurt."
- On January 5, 2021, the CRC recorded an excellent webinar called "Talk is Cheap - Antiracism is WORK" and they made it available through the CRCNA's YouTube page. You can search for it there under the title above.

- CRC's Office of Race Relations: <https://www.crcna.org/race>
their mission statement reads: "We resource Christian Reformed members and congregations as you dismantle the causes and effects of racism within the body of believers and throughout the world. We help you to live as God's diverse and unified family." Here you'll find many workshops, book lists, articles, and resources.
- A statement made in 2020 on racism and a list of resources:
<https://network.crcna.org/racial-reconciliation/crcna-statement-about-deaths-george-floyd-ahmaud-arbery-and-breonna-taylor>
- From the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, more resources
<https://worship.calvin.edu/resources/resource-library/anti-racism-in-the-renewing-of-christian-worship-2020>
- Prayers to guide us, written out of the context of the summer of 2020:
<https://dojustice.crcna.org/article/justice-prayers-june-3-2020>