

The Cross and The Lynching Tree: A Requiem for Ahmaud Arbery, from Rev. Otis Moss III at Trinity United Church of Christ can be shared as a focus and even a sermon for Sunday worship or small group ministry. This reflection guide is aimed particularly at white congregations that have begun or involved in anti-racism training and education. For all our congregations, we recognize this video to be essential in the work and support each of us, as members of the Body of Christ, need to be about.

<https://youtu.be/l6985UG0Z3k>

Pre-Work

- Identify people to offer direct pastoral care for any that may be triggered from previous or current traumatic realities in their personal lives. This is not to care towards White Fragility. This is recognizing the pastoral care needed for those closest to the trauma.
- Identify the facilitator for the discussion.
- Have all leadership (pastoral caregivers & facilitators) watch the video ahead of time.

Opening

- Frame the active reflection and discussion time as a **courageous space** rather than naming this time as a safe space. Characteristics of courageous space (as defined by Crossroads Antiracism Organizing and Training) are:
 - Respect for all participants.
 - Listen to understand.
 - Take responsibility: for defensiveness and judgments; your intention and your impact.
 - Make room for diverse voices.
 - Embrace ambiguity. (Nuance matters.)
 - Preserve the integrity of stories you hear and take action.
 - Being uncomfortable is not being unsafe. It is growth during prophetic discussions. Sanctification hurts.
- Note that this content is difficult and may be particularly painful for those **closest to this trauma** in their personal lives. Indicate the pastoral caregivers who are present, if the need arises.
- Name **White Fragility** as something that will show up but is something that is not going to be centered in this conversation. That is not a dismissal of white people or questions but an orientation of this conversation. (See below for definition of White Fragility.)
- This discussion is an invitation to honesty, vulnerability, discomfort, deep listening, lament, and hope.

Personal & Communal Reflection

- This reflection time as a gathered community is intended to be engaged in an embodied or holistic way. Invite participants into a time of personal reflection — to write down, draw, recognize:
 - What do you feel in your body right now and where?
 - What is churning in you right now? Of agitation, anger, frustration.

- What is scaring you right now? Of fear, anger, feeling paralyzed.
- What is at least one new piece of information that caught your attention?
 - Share your responses to these questions in triads or small group.
- Now, take some additional individual time for participants to reflection on: what is the question or statement you are afraid to ask or say?
 - Share responses with triads, small groups, or the whole group
- For discussion among the group:
 - How do you engage with the biblical framing throughout the sermon?
 - What questions arise for you in regard to how the sermon is framed biblically?
 - What other scripture references area called to mind as you hear this? What theological truths come to mind?

Call to Action

- Instead of asking, “what can I do to fix this?” the opportunity is to sit with what is churning in you. What is one action you will take toward this?
- What are the hopes and dreams that need tending to for those who are still oppressed and being hurt with white supremacy? Do not assume you know. What can answering this question look like for you in your personal life and in the life of your congregation? Do NOT burden people of color with teaching you the answer to this question. Find ways to listen without taxing them. What is one action you will take toward this?
- What does **Allyship** look like for you in this moment? (see definition below) What is one action you will take toward allyship this week?
- What have you heard in this conversation that you want to carry with you?

White Fragility: “The smallest amount of racial stress is intolerable — the mere suggestion that being white has meaning often triggers a range of defensive responses. These include emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal from the stress-inducing situation. These responses work to reinstate white equilibrium as they repel the challenge, return our racial comfort, and maintain our dominance within the racial hierarchy. I conceptualize this process as *white fragility*. (from *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo, Beacon Press, 2018.)

Allyship: A way of life that one adopts to actively work towards promoting social justice for all. Become an ally first, then determine what systematic actions you can/should take. (from **Service Never Sleeps**, training at the Racial Awareness Festival 2019)

