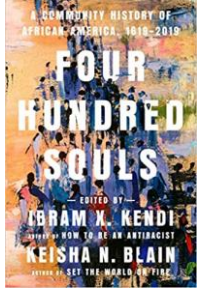


*Let justice roll down like a river  
and righteousness like a mighty stream.*

~ Amos 5:24

## **Activity Report for June 2021 - May 2022**

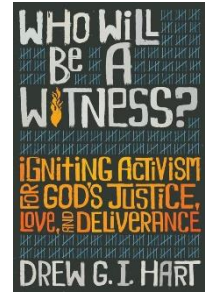
### **2021**

- June 1<sup>st</sup> through July 6<sup>th</sup> we facilitated a six-week **book discussion on *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019***, edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain via Zoom. It was very informative and well received. The audio book has 90 writers each narrating their own segments – a choir of voices reflecting on history in the United States. The book study was offered at two times each week and there were 15 participants and 6 volunteer co-facilitators from the RJI team.
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- On August 13, 2021 we held a **Service of Remembrance and Healing to mark the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the brutal lynching of Zachariah Walker**. It was held on the site in Coatesville, PA, where the historical marker commemorating the event was placed. In attendance at the service were members of the Coatesville community who shared with us that on the day of the lynching 110 years ago, people enthusiastically left their Sunday worship in order to participate in the horrifying event.
  - October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> marked our **first Zachariah Walker Racial Justice Symposium!** Keynote speakers were [Rev. Dr. Drew Hart](#) and [Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer](#). The speakers highlighted the deep systemic roots of white supremacy in the white Christian church and in the overall culture of the United States. The embrace and defense of “Euro-centric whiteness” as the norm is foundational to the cultures of anti-Blackness, white supremacy, racial violence and the oppression of people of color. We were given impactful illustrations and historical facts to help illustrate these realities.

Dr. Hart provided us with a biblical perspective on Jesus’ role in the act of liberation, and as a liberator who viewed his ministry and mission through the lens of the least of these, from the bottom up, vs. from the top down. Dr. Dorhauer provided tools to help recognize white privilege and tools to help dismantle systemic racism. Both emphasized God’s call to the church to work for racial justice through reshaping the culture within the church and to engage in movements, non-violent actions, and civil disobedience to create changes in public policy.

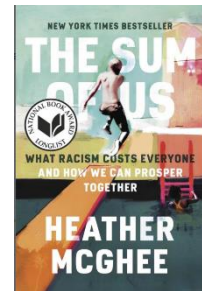
There were 69 registered attendees and the post-event evaluations were overwhelmingly positive, with the category of “the overall opportunity to learn more about the topic of faith, justice, and anti-racism” scoring a 4.8 out of 5. The symposium was approved for diversity training credits and video recordings of the presentations are available for viewing on the [Racial Justice webpage of the PSEC](#). Day 1 with Rev. Dr. Drew Hart can be viewed [here](#), and Day 2 with Rev. Dr. John Dorhauer can be viewed [here](#).

- From November 30<sup>th</sup> – December 21<sup>st</sup> we facilitated **an Advent book study** featuring Dr. Hart’s book, *Who Will Be A Witness? Igniting Activism for God’s Justice, Love, and Deliverance*. Participation was great and discussion was meaningful and enriching. In addition, the book study was approved for diversity training credits through the Church and Ministry Council. These sessions were offered at two times each week. There were 25 participants led by five co-facilitators from the RJI team.

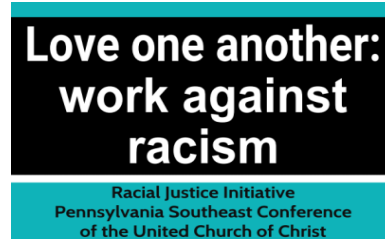


## 2022

- From March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 5<sup>th</sup> we facilitated a Lenten book study, also approved for diversity training credits, featuring Heather McGhee’s, *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*. In this book, McGhee finds proof of what she calls the “solidarity dividend” in unlikely places of worship and work. Conversation around this and other themes was lively and powerful. Sessions were offered at two times each week. There were 15 participants and 3 co-facilitators from the RJI team.



- Racial justice yard signs and banners continue to be available for churches and individuals who would like to show support and solidarity. Suggested donations for yard signs is \$7; donation for church banners is \$70. If cost is a barrier, we will gladly provide assistance.



Please give witness to you or your church’s commitment to racial justice and sign up for your yard sign today. Contact an RJI team member for more information.

### **Racial Justice Initiative Team Members:**

**Co-Chairs:** Rev. Ann-Therese Ortíz and Rev. Anne Cormier; **Members:** Rev. Leslie Mamas, Beth Walker, Rev. Dr. Stephen Ohnsman, Susan Wargo, and Rev. Cean James. We are a growing team and in 2021, we welcomed Ernest Glover, Rev. Suzanne Schwarz-Green, Rev. Geneva Butz, Rev. Dwayne Mosier, and Liz Brunton to the team.

We welcome all who have the dedication and a heart for racial justice to become a part of this work! If you are interested in joining our efforts, please contact:

Anne Cormier [annecormier@comcast.net](mailto:annecormier@comcast.net) or  
Ann-Therese Ortíz [ortizat@hotmail.com](mailto:ortizat@hotmail.com)