

Plymouth Racial Justice Ministry Events

Jun - Sept, 2021 Mens Dresswear Drive for Church of Gethsemane

Racial Justice teamed with Plymouth's Underground Thrift Store in a men's clothing drive to support the prison ministry at Church of Gethsemane in Brooklyn. Members and friends of Plymouth donated suits, shirts, sweaters, ties to support job seekers resettling after release from prison.



Jul 11, 2021 Becoming a More Inclusive Church

We invited Brett Younger to lead a discussion on what it would mean for Plymouth to become a more inclusive church. Is friendliness enough to make everyone feel at home? How does inclusivity help the church, and how is it challenging? How can we, as church and as individuals, work for diverse participation?



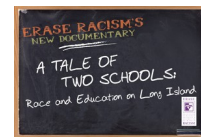
Feb - Apr, 2021 Lenten Small Group on Racial Justice: Doing the Right Thing

For 7 weeks, a diverse group of nine discussed what Christians can do - as individuals and as a church - to confront racial injustice. As jumping off points we used readings from Ta-Nehisi Coates' 'We were Eight Years in Power,' James Baldwin's 'The Fire Next Time' and Isabel Wilkerson's 'Caste', as well as poems by Maya Angelou and Amanda Gorman. Led by Tom Bettridge.



Feb 4, 2021 Film Discussion: 'Tale of Two Schools'

Two African American high school seniors have a lot in common but attend very different schools in Long Island. The film highlights educational inequities and how they affect the life trajectories of the students.



Feb 2, 2021 Panel Discussion: Are We Welcoming to All?

We teamed with the History Ministry to host a discussion on how we present Plymouth's story to visitors. Are our building and displays as welcoming and inclusive to all as we'd like them to be? We were joined by two experts: Lavada Nahon, Interpreter of African American History at NYS Office of Parks, and Dennis Montagna, Manager of History and Preservation at the National Park Service.



Jan 21, 2021 Film Discussion: 'Jim Crow of the North'

The roots of racial disparities are seen in the methods - used by the real estate industry and government - that produced housing segregation in Minneapolis and other cities throughout the North.



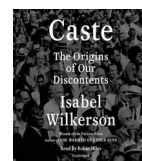
Dec. 16, 2020 Care Mail: Holiday Greetings to Incarcerated Youth

Plymouth families wrote personal letters to teens in juvenile justice facilities to support them during the Christmas season. Organized through the nonprofit BreakFree Education.



Oct 26, 2020 Book Discussion: "Caste"

We teamed with the Plymouth Book Club to discuss Isabel Wilkerson's best-seller, 'Caste: The Origins of our Discontents,' exploring the unseen pattern by which racial hierarchy reproduces itself in America. A follow-up discussion was held 11/16/20.



Oct 21, 2020 Podcast Discussion: 'Nice White Parents'

We discussed this 5-part NY Times podcast. Focusing on one Brooklyn school, it illuminates issues of persistent inequity that arise in many integrating schools.



Aug - Sep, 2020 PS 307 Partnership - Gardens & School Supplies

To support this nearby integrating school, Plymouth families planted and maintained 2 raised flower beds to welcome students after pandemic closures. In September the RJ Ministry teamed with Christian Help Committee & Plymouth Council to raise \$2,750 for school supplies.



Jun - Aug, 2020 Three Conversations on Race: Black Lives Matter

Plymouth staff provided chances to talk freely about ongoing protests, and offered tools and resources for action. Led by Erica Cooper, Sarah Evelyn & Julia Rassmann.

Jun 8

From Reaction to Action - As our nation faces its racism, what are we struggling with, how is faith affected, and what changes do we want to help create? Participants were urged to commit to action steps.

Jul 29

Roadblocks to Anti-Racism - Identifying ideas and habits that keep us from being good anti-racist allies (drawing on work of Jona Olsson).

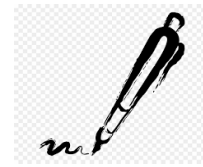
Aug 19

Raising Anti-Racist Kids - How did our own childhoods shape our attitudes on race? Outstanding resources for parents to use with kids.



May - Aug, 2020 Writing for Justice: Praying with our Pens

As acts of racist violence filled the news, we joined with Plymouth's 'Praying with our Pens' small group to write and share meditations on "Lament" (May 31), "Hope" (June 7) and "Justice" (August 30). The essays are being collected in digital magazine format and will be available to the congregation. Led by Carol Younger.



Mar. 3, 2020 Film Night: Racism in the North

We showed the documentary "Traces of the Trade" about descendants of Rhode Island slave traders coming to grips with their family's history. The film was preceded by supper, followed by discussion, and also featured a quiz about slavery in Brooklyn, which was legal for 200 years.



Nov. 17, 2019 Conversation on Race: Reparations

Reflecting on a recent vote by Georgetown University students, we discussed the meaning, history, and impact of reparations. What are the positives and negatives about the idea of reparations? Does it focus too much on the past and ignore ongoing structural racism?



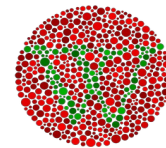
Oct. 30, 2019 Community Meeting: Justice, Dignity & Safety

A conversation with Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzales on how recently passed reforms can make incarceration a last resort and restore faith in the fairness of the criminal justice system. Sponsored by the Brooklyn Justice Advocacy Coalition (including Plymouth's Racial Justice Ministry).



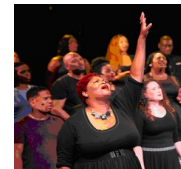
Sep. 22, 2019 Conversation on Race: Color Blindness

A guided discussion on the idea of "color blindness," starting from an excerpt from Robin DiAngelo's book 'White Fragility'. Is a "color-blind" society a helpful goal, or does it blind us to seeing the racial and structural divisions that persist in society?



Jun 13, 2019 Theater Outing: Antigone in Ferguson

Plymouth members attended a reading of Sophocles' Antigone, presented by Theater of War. The performance fused Greek tragedy with stirring gospel music, followed by discussion of race, gender violence and social justice.



May 12, 2019 'Walk With Me': Prison Ministry Video & Rose Sale

We showed a short film about the successful prison ministry at Church of Gethsemane in Brooklyn and heard comments from Gethsemane Elder Nathaniel Wright. We also sold Mothers' Day roses in Coffee Hour to benefit Gethsemane's programs.



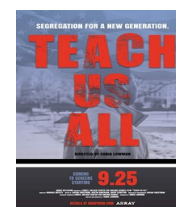
Mar. 24, 2019 Panel Discussion: What's Wrong with our Parole System

Plymouth hosted a discussion of New York's parole system, which reincarcerates blacks for technical parole violations at 12 times the rate of whites, and more than almost any state in the U.S. Our expert panel included Brooklyn DA Eric Gonzalez, Vincent Schiraldi of Columbia Justice Lab, Rob DeLeon of Fortune Society and Donna Hylton of Katal Center. Attendees signed letters to State legislators supporting proposed reforms.



Feb. 24, 2019 Film Discussion: Teach Us All

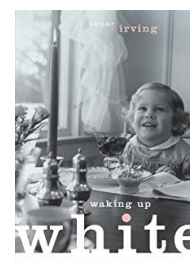
The RJ Ministry teamed with Plymouth's Youth Ministry to view the documentary 'Teach Us All'. Teens and parents discussed school segregation and inequity in the 60 years since the Supreme Court outlawed segregation in public schools.



Oct., 2018 Three Conversations on Race / Faith Ed Classes

What does it mean to be white in America? The RJ Ministry led a 3-part series on the role whiteness plays in perpetuating injustice:

- Oct 14 1) *Waking Up White & Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, Debby Irving's personal account of coming to terms with her own whiteness.
- Oct 21 2) The 'Invisible Knapsack' of White Privilege - A PBS video and Peggy McIntosh's illuminating article help us see the privilege that is often invisible to whites.
- Oct 28 3) Whiteness as Power - Recent news articles help us see how institutional racism plays out in employment, housing, health care, education and the criminal legal system.



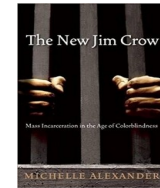
May 13, 2018 Mothers Day 'Bail Out' Event: Discussion & Rose Sale

A presentation by Peter Goldberg, Executive Director of the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, on how current bail practices negatively effect our community, including mothers, and how we can help. During Coffee Hour, the Racial Justice Ministry sold Mother's Day roses, with proceeds donated to the Bail Fund.



Mar. 22, 2018 Book Discussion: The New Jim Crow

Michelle Alexander's book traces how the mass incarceration of the War on Drugs continues to leave millions of black men in a permanent state of social and economic exclusion. Led by Abigail Regier.



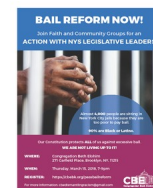
Mar. 18, 2018 Letter Writing: Bail Reform

Plymouth members wrote scores of letters urging the Governor to support bail reform proposals. They were delivered along with hundreds of others from Brooklyn's Interfaith Coalition on Justice Reform.



Mar. 15, 2018 Bail Reform Now!

A Community Forum on proposals to reform bail practices in New York State. We heard from legal experts, faith leaders, elected officials, and formerly incarcerated individuals about why NY laws much change in order to achieve justice in our criminal legal system. Plymouth co-sponsored, as part of an Interfaith Coalition on Justice Reform.



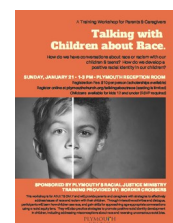
Feb. 27, 2018 Looking at the Whole: Field Theory, Oppression & You

A discussion, led by Carl Hodges, using field theory to gain a broader understanding of race and oppression.



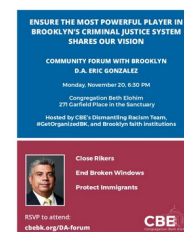
Jan. 21, 2018 Talking with Children About Race: Workshop for Parents

What is racism? How does it differ from prejudice? How does it play out in institutional, interpersonal, and internalized forms? How can parents interrupt the transmission of racist ideas their children may receive? These are questions discussed by 36 Plymouth folks in a workshop organized by the Racial Justice Ministry and led by professional training group Border Crossers.



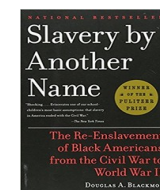
Nov. 20, 2017 Public Meeting with Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez

A chance to hear how the recently elected DA will address policies that have a disparate impact on communities of color. Brooklyn faith groups and community groups met with the DA at Congregation Beth Elohim and asked him to reconsider some of his office's practices (bail requirements, prosecution of minor crimes, age limits for treatment as adults) to address important issues of racial justice.



Nov. 15, 2017 Book Discussion: Slavery by Another Name

Douglas Blackmon's book follows the life of Green Cottonham, a black youth born in the 1880's, and incidentally redefines the meaning of slavery and its sweep and duration into the 1930's. Discussion led by Carl Hodges.



Oct. 8, 2017 Plymouth at Work / Faith Ed Class: Racial Justice Ministry

If you're like us, you might have begun to hope over the past decade that American racism was fading into history. Sadly, news reports tell a different story: racism is still deeply ingrained in our society. Plymouth's RJ Ministry was formed to help members understand this issue more clearly and explore what we can do about it. Through a "gallery walk" of provocative quotes and images, followed by small group discussions, this session began to examine how we see race, how racism affects us and how these issues connect to our faith.

