



Vermont Conference United Church of Christ

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Press Release

Date: April 30, 2022
To: All Media
From: Racial Justice Task Force of the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ
Re: **Black Lives Matter Choral Workshops April 15 and May 13**

For Immediate Release:

The Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project and the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ's Racial Justice Task Force have teamed up to teach new choral music by black composers, to honor their work, and to share the history of appropriation of black music.

Identical workshops will be held from 9am-4:00 pm on Saturday, April 15 at Guilford Community Church, United Church of Christ and on Saturday, May 13 at Mallet's Bay United Church of Christ. The workshops are open to anyone interested in supporting black composers, but especially to singers and choral directors who can share this music in their communities.

So much black music has been appropriated, bought, and sold with composers and performing artists not receiving proper remuneration and credit over the centuries. The BLM Commissioning Project was established in 2021 and completed a successful grassroots fundraising campaign in 2022 to commission 8 black composers, 4 UK-based/4 US-based, to write 1 song each. The idea for this project came out of discussions taking place within the music community as part of the Black Lives Matter movement. The works by these composers are learnable by ear and designed to be perfect for both community and church choirs to sing.

The workshops will be led by Dr. Kathy Bullock, a renowned choral leader, and Professor Emerita of Music from Berea College. Bullock will introduce the eight award-winning songs from black composers and teach a selection of them over the course of the day in each workshop.

A key component of the workshop will be a panel discussion led by Dr. Bullock. The focus of the discussion will be the issue of appropriation of black music, to raise awareness of the larger implications of this work in the context of the humanities: how composers have been under-acknowledged and often uncompensated in our culture, how popular black anthems like "Kumbaya" have been misunderstood, and how proper acknowledgement of the work of black composers can help rectify the impacts of racism in the field of music. Founders of BLM Commissioning project, and one or two of the composers will be included in the panel discussion via a zoom link.

The cost of the workshops is \$30 per participant. To register go to: <http://vtucc.org/blmchoirworkshop>
For help with registration contact Elise Foster at Vermont Conference email: fostere@vtucc.org

For more information on the Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project: <https://blmcommissioning.com/>
*Note that there is a small licensing fee to perform the music to appropriately compensate and honor the black composers.