

Prayers for justice, reconciliation and healing

More than 200 people attended "A Call to Prayer for Social Justice, Reconciliation and Healing" in Aurora Sunday.

The 90-minute service was held outdoors at St. John AME Church Cathedral of Grace. Speakers represented Christian, Jewish and Muslim faith communities from Aurora and Naperville. Attendees wore face masks and sat in lawn chairs spaced for social distancing. Special music was provided by soloists, a keyboard player and saxophone artist.

In his statement of purpose, keynote speaker Rev. Jesse Hawkins, St. John AME pastor, chronicled 300 years of discrimination against black people. Other speakers included Rev. John Bell, pastor at Wesley United Methodist Church in Aurora, who gave a prayer of repentance and confession. Rev. Jerome Leake, Aurora Police Department chaplain, opened the service with a prayer of invocation.



The ecumenical event was co-sponsored by Fox Valley Christian Ministerial Alliance, Wesley United Methodist Church, Progressive Baptist Church, New England Congregational Church, Temple B'Nai Israel and St. John AME, all Aurora congregations.

PHOTO (top right): Worshippers join in a song Sunday during an outdoor service entitled "A Call to Prayer for Social Justice, Reconciliation and Healing" at St. John AME Church in Aurora. (AI Benson photo)

PHOTO (bottom left): Barbetta Neil sings Sunday during an outdoor service entitled "A Call to Prayer for Social Justice, Reconciliation and Healing" at St. John AME Church in Aurora. (AI Benson photo)

PHOTO: Rev. John Bell, pastor of Wesley United Methodist Church in Aurora, gives a prayer of repentance and confession during an outdoor service entitled "A Call to Prayer for Social Justice, Reconciliation and Healing" Sunday (June 14) at St. John AME Church in Aurora. (AI Benson photo)