

***From Terror to Liberation: The Descent of the Spirit of Love***  
***Freedom Church of the Poor Pride Resource***



**Table of Contents**

<b>Letter from the Planning Team</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Season Graphic</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Reflections</b>	<b>4</b>
Texts of Terror	4
Affirming Texts	7
<b>A Pastoral Letter of Trans-Affirming Faith In These Perilous Time</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Arts &amp; Culture</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Rituals</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Link to Full Service Playlists</b>	<b>13</b>

## ***Letter from the Planning Team***

For our 2025 Pride Season, the Freedom Church of the Poor dedicated the season to examining “texts of terrors” that have long since plagued the queer and trans community, attempting to erase and strip us of our dignity. We are in a moment in time where trans and nonbinary people, along with their families and communities, are constantly navigating a political system that has placed us squarely in the crosshairs of political and religious violence. This year, [937 bills have been introduced at the state and federal level](#), up from the [701 anti-trans bills introduced](#) in 2024, and they threaten to erase our role in this country’s history and threaten our very existence.

So why, in these troubling times, should we take the time to examine these texts of terrors? Though difficult, it was necessary. We are not here to make excuses for the way that people and institutions have abused us as queer and trans people, and we are not here to force or twist people’s arms to reclaim any texts. Instead, we did this studying because as a movement, we strive to be disciplined and rigorous as thinkers and leaders. We do this work because we believe that we – the poor and dispossessed and queer and trans people – have a moral right, a moral responsibility, and a moral authority to study and teach about scripture. We also do this work because we are militant. We are not satisfied that those who don’t have our best interest at heart are who we should be looking to for answers about our problems. We aren’t looking at major faith institutions (both conservative and progressive) that have erased us and our existence for decades as those who hold the answers. Instead, we are looking around at one another for answers and solutions to our problems.

This season has been a practice about taking ourselves seriously as leaders. What we have found studying these texts is that the nationalistic and terrorizing interpretations of these texts quickly fall flat when challenged; these interpretations are often ahistorical and devoid of a deep understanding of the context of where these stories came out of. The Bible is a library of ancient poor people’s movements, and we as contemporary poor people’s movements are in a better position than anyone else to interpret these texts – not any politician, political party, or specific church leader. We read these texts through the lens of our lives, our struggles, our conditions, and our movement in order to find the solutions we are looking for. The leaders who contributed to this season are on the forefront of organizing churches, communities, and organizations across the country, fighting for healthcare, disability rights, queer and trans rights, and more. This resource kit has pulled specific parts of the season to highlight different elements, and a full link to the playlist of each service can be found at the end of the resource.

If you are a congregation using this resource kit, we hope that you will find the interpretations, cultural pieces, and rituals helpful for you and your congregations. Each of the reflections is paired with a set of reflection questions and key themes. We welcome your congregation to use any of these materials in your services or Bible Studies, and would love to hear about how it went. Feel free to be in touch with our colleague Adam Barnes at [adam@kairoscenter.org](mailto:adam@kairoscenter.org).

Finally, if you are an individual that has come upon this resource and is looking for answers about whether or not God loves or accepts you, we hope that this resource kit will make one thing clear:

trans and queer people have always existed, and God's love and abundance extends to each and every one of us. You are wonderfully and magnificently made, and you are loved and welcome here at Freedom Church of the Poor.

In solidarity,

The Freedom Church of the Poor Pride Planning Team

ana lara lópez, Moses Hernandez McGavin, Aaron Scott, Becca Schuchat, Jacob Butterly, Zac White, and Adam Barnes

The logo features a stylized infinity symbol with three small birds flying above it.  
**Freedom Church  
of the Poor**

The logo features a stylized infinity symbol with three small birds flying above it.  
**Freedom Shul  
of the Poor**

The logo features a stylized infinity symbol with three small birds flying above it.  
**La Iglesia  
del Pueblo**



## Season Graphic

*The art for the Pride Series was inspired by our study of Pentecost as we prepared to lead services in June. As a Jew, I had never heard of Pentecost before studying with Freedom Church, so I had to do some research. I looked at paintings of the disciples gathered around each other with tongues of fire above their heads and thought about the poor and dispossessed as the disciples. Many of the paintings I looked at had the disciples standing in a circle, like they were in a meeting. Some of the paintings were more celebratory, with folks' hands up in the air. I wanted to show folks coming together, uplifting each other, talking to each other, singing together, organizing together and I want to show that it's the holy spirit that gives us the power to do all that. There are a few drawings of people in there that are based on real leaders of our movement to abolish poverty. To my (honestly limited) understanding of Pentecost, the tongues of flame represent the ability of the disciples to come together and unite and spread the gospel. Like the disciples who were suddenly able to speak to each other, being part of Freedom Church and Freedom Shul has given me new languages to share the anti-poverty gospel and to organize our class.*

– Becca Schuchat, Freedom Shul of the Poor



## **Reflections**

### **Texts of Terror**

#### **The Pauline Letters: Min Aaron Scott**

Watch: [Reflection: Min. Aaron Scott, The Episcopal Church 6/1/25](#)

Text Used: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11



*"As you can see, political choices are being made here with these translations. We already know this as people who read the Bible and see what it says about poverty, abuses of wealth, immigration, and all kinds of things. We know that in the history of our country, the entire Exodus story was taken out because planters and enslavers of human beings were terrified of what would happen if exploited enslaved Black workers read the Exodus story, so they took it out. This is how Biblical translation goes; it's a hot site of political contest, and this is true for queer and trans people too." -Aaron Scott, Freedom Church of the Poor*

#### **Key Themes of Aaron's reflection:**

- Reflecting on personal experiences and how they inform our understanding of biblical passages and theology
- The History of Paul and the Pauline Letters
- The complexities of biblical translation and in this case, the historical and cultural context of the Greek words "malakoi" and "arsenikoites"

#### **Discussion Questions from Aaron's reflection:**

- Discuss your faith context growing up. How did it inform your interpretations of the Bible, especially these "texts of terror?"
- Have you encountered this passage in the Bible before? How have you understood or related to it before?
- How did the history of Paul and the Pauline letters and different translations of this passage help your understanding of 1 Corinthians 6:9-11?
- What other thoughts or questions are coming up for you with this passage?

## ***Sodom and Gomorrah: Daniel Jones (Freedom Shul of the Poor)***



**Read:** Daniel Jones (Freedom Shul of the Poor) reflection on Sodom & Gomorrah (adapted from Freedom Church of the Poor Bible Study) **READ THE REFLECTION**

**Texts used:** Genesis 18:16-21, Genesis 19, Isaiah 1:10-17, Ezekiel 16:49-51

*“So why did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? As we can see, it had much to do with how the cities treated the poor, the needy, and strangers. Sodom and Gomorrah were also cities of the plain, or flat areas, whether they be the Valley of Jezreel, or the plain leading over to the Mediterranean Sea, and these are the areas where the Temple and Palaces are situated. It is going to be the place where violence against society is organized, such as armies, where tax collections go to, and where you end up being forced to work if you go into debt and*

*become a bond servant. It’s significant to remember that the Israelite movement is a peasant revolution and an agrarian revolt against the power centered and organized in the cities. What is destroyed in these revolts is these cities because they are places where exploitation and violence comes from, and where the fruit of the land and countryside goes and is taken and brought to. This is not anti urbanism – or what you might see today of cities being condemned as the center of immorality, but it’s because this movement was fighting the generals and emperors of exploitation.”*

### **Key Themes of Dan’s Bible Study:**

- Exploring the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, examining the misuse of the story to condemn homosexuality, when its true message is about religious hypocrisy and abuse of power
- Highlighting Abraham's continued hospitality to strangers and God's response to the outcry of the oppressed
- Examining Biblical stories of the suffering of the innocent in unjust societies and what the role of the poor is in seeking justice

### **Discussion Questions from Dan’s Bible Study:**

- What assumptions or understandings did you have about the story of Sodom and Gomorrah? Is there anything about the story that surprised you after reading it again, along with this reflection?
- Why do you think Christian Nationalists misuse this story as a condemnation of homosexuality? Why do Christian Nationalists thwart interpretations of the Bible?
- What are the outcries that we are hearing in our communities and communities around us today? What is our role as organizers and people of faith when we hear these outcries?

## **Genesis & Creation Story: Rev. Alba Onofrio aka Reverend Sex from Soulforce**



**Watch:** Rev. Alba aka. Rev. Sex (Soulforce) Reflection:

▶ Reflection: Rev. Alba Onofrio aka Rev. Sex 6/22/25

**Text Used:** Genesis 2:4-25

*“In verse 18, we have the only thing in both creation stories where God said something isn’t good. What is that thing? It is that the human should be alone, that the earth creature made from the Earth should be alone, isolated, not connected, not in relationship with others...What does it mean for us as queer people or same gender loving people that it is not good for us to be alone? Does that mean that God gives us our way of being, our expression of God’s Divinity, and yet it’s supposed to be a cross to bear, or that celibacy is supposed to be our lot in life? That God would deny us love and demand that we be alone? I don’t think so. I think that this being one of those pivotal moments where it says, God said it’s not good for the human to be alone, but rather to be in community, to be in family, whatever those family structures look like — chosen family, close friends, church community, church home. I don’t believe that God calls queer and trans people to be separate from everyone else and that we should be alone when the only thing that God says that we have is that it’s not good for humans to be alone.” – Rev. Alba aka Reverend Sex, [Soulforce](#)*

### **Key Themes of Rev. Alba (aka Reverend Sex)’s reflection:**

- Examining a feminist and womanist analysis of the Genesis creation stories, exploring the expansiveness and fluidity of creation
- God as a laborer with human beings as co-creators in building out and caring for Earth and its creatures
- Using Hebrew to understand the creation of woman from man is reinterpreted as a split of an undifferentiated earth creature into two **equal** beings, symbolizing the importance of community, equality, and the rejection of shame for queer and marginalized individuals
- God created us to be in community with one another, and never to be in isolation

### **Discussion Questions for Rev. Alba (aka Reverend Sex)’s reflection:**

- What has been your relationship to the creation stories in Genesis?
- Rev. Alba’s exegesis of the Creation story uplifts the importance of Hebrew words such as “adamah” and “tsela” in the story. How does the original language of Creation story help deepen your understanding of creation?
- Have you ever felt isolated in your struggles or within your community? Where are other folks struggling with isolation, and how can we commit to building community?
- How are we co-creators of creation with God? What responsibilities do we have to care for creation and those around us?

## ***Affirming Texts***

### ***The Ethiopian Eunuch: Shun Tucker-Allen from New Disabled South***

Watch or read:

▶ Reflection: Shun Tucker Allen, New Disabled South 6/8/25

#### **READ THE REFLECTION**

**Texts Used: Acts 8:26-40**

*“And yet, in Acts 8, we do find ourselves. The story of the Ethiopian eunuch—a Black, disabled, gender-nonconforming person—speaks directly to us. This is someone who also lived at the margins, who dared to ask, “What is to prevent me from being baptized?” A question many of us have carried, fearing answers rooted in racism, homophobia, transphobia, or ableism. But Phillip’s response is simple and revolutionary: Nothing. No caveats. No prerequisites. No need to assimilate or be “fixed.” Just full, divine affirmation.*

*That encounter wasn’t about pity—it was about dignity. The eunuch didn’t have to change to be worthy of God’s love. And neither do we. The Spirit met them just as they were. That baptism is proof that God’s love makes no exceptions. It’s abundant, intentional, and liberating.” -Shun Tucker Allen, [New Disabled South](#)*




#### **Key Themes of Shun’s reflection:**

- The story of the Ethiopian Eunuch and how it speaks to many of us who find ourselves on the margins of the church
- God’s want for us to show up fully as we are – no questions asked
- Liberation comes in many forms, and the Good News of God doesn’t have to look the same for all of us

#### **Discussion Questions for Shun’s reflection:**

- Have you encountered this passage in the Bible before? How have you understood or related to it before?
- Are there parts of your experience that you feel you couldn’t live fully into in sacred/or church spaces? What made you feel that way?
- What is the difference between dignity and pity in organizing faith communities?
- What does the church need to do to provide full, divine affirmation to all?
- How can those of us on the margins continue to be in the forefront of change and justice?

## ***A Name Better Than Sons and Daughters: Micah Melody Taberner and Min Zac White***

Watch:  Reflection: Micah Melody Taberner, Transmission: Ministry Collective 6/29/25 and ***READ THE REFLECTION***

Texts Used: Isaiah 56:1-8



*“...There is something so powerful about the promise that God gives us a new monument and a name, and that piece in the “shalom” or the wholeness and that experience of embracing who we are and the resurrection life that that we then get to show to the world, is part of the joy and the blessing that trans people are given by God in this world. I want to encourage those of you that are queer and trans to know that you have a monument and a name and that God is embracing you. For those of you who are in who are cis and straight allies, I encourage you to to see the joy and see the new life in your queer and trans siblings. There's so much that God has, and that God is doing through them, and we need to continue to empower more queer and trans leaders in the world.”* - Micah Melody Taberner, [Transmission Ministry Collective](#)

*“As a queer nonbinary Christian, it makes me emotional thinking about the Teacher from Nazareth, in his most revolutionary moment, overturning the tables of merchants in the Temple—it was in this moment that he quoted Isaiah 56:*

*“For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”  
(Mark 11:15-18, Isaiah 56:7)*

*I feel Jesus's heartbreak and anger with the Jewish religious establishment of his day, not understanding that God's house is big enough for everyone. I imagine what Jesus would feel now, as Christians hate and exclude in his name.”* -Zac White, Multnomah Friends Meeting (Quakers) and [Next Up](#)



### **Key Themes of Micah Melody and Zac's Reflections:**

- God's love and care extends to everyone, even “gathering the outcasts” who have historically been pushed out of church spaces or leadership
- God understands the importance of how we see ourselves, our gender identity, and our names

- It is powerful for queer and trans individuals to embrace themselves fully, and it is the responsibility of all of us to support and empower queer and trans leaders to lean into the joy and liberation of living authentically

**Discussion Questions for Micah Melody and Zac's reflections:**

- As organizers and faith leaders, how can our communities reflect the fullness and beauty of all of their members?
- As queer and trans people, what gifts do you bring into organizations and faith leadership?
- How can our communities be more like God in Isaiah 56, who is always “gathering the outcasts”?

## ***A Pastoral Letter of Trans-Affirming Faith In These Perilous Time***

**[Read and share our Pastoral Letter of Trans-Affirming Faith In These Perilous Times](#)**

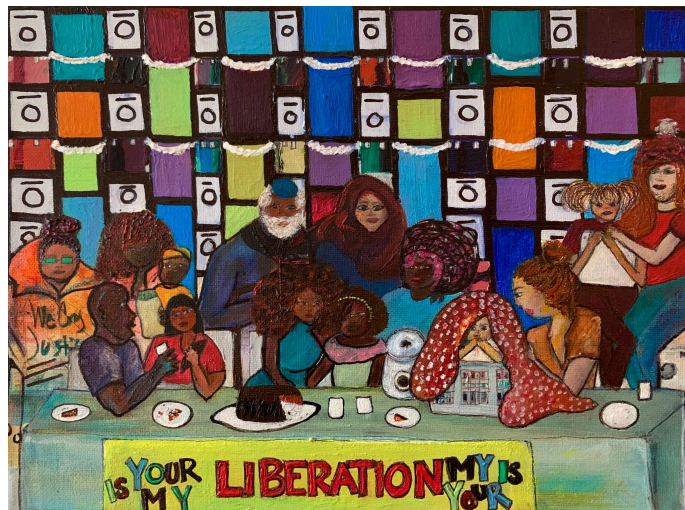
*The organizations, individuals, and congregations, who have signed onto this letter affirm the existence, livelihood, and leadership of transgender and nonbinary people. They reject the heretical and sacrilegious teachings and policies of any churches, religious leaders, or policy makers who seek to deny the rights of transgender and nonbinary people. We commit to care for our people, celebrating the divine image in every queer and trans body, and commit to building a movement that transcends division and takes aim at the real forces of oppression.*

*We declare liberation not just for ourselves, but for all!*



***Lift Up Welfare Rights by Anni Brink***

## ***Arts & Culture***



***Your Liberation is My Liberation by Ciara Taylor***

### **We Were Made for These Times |**

#### **WE WERE MADE FOR THESE TIMES v1 .mp4**

*We Were Made For These Times* has music from Angela Gabriel, with text from Clarissa Pink Estés' "Letter to a Young Activist During Troubled Times." In these troubling times, where hope may seem lost, we chose this as our prelude because we found hope in our Freedom Church Community, as well as the courageous organizing happening across the country.

*The lyrics:*

*Call: Don't lose heart,*

*Response: Do not lose heart,*

*Call: We were made for these times.*

*Response: We were made for this.*

*Together: Show your soul, it shines like gold in these dark times.*

### **B'tzelem Elohim |**

#### **Reflection: Becca Schuchat, Freedom Shul of the Poor Genesis B'tzelem Elohi...**

"[The Genesis creation story] has been used as a text of terror against our trans loved ones and community to negate the existence of many different genders. It also holds one of the most profound passages in the whole Torah: "B'tzelem Elohim" or, in the image of God, I love this phrase. When I was a kid, the song leader at my Jewish summer camp and temple introduced a new song to us, and it was instantly a hit. It was catchy, and it had a part where you could yell and shout, which was perfect for my age group. The song, which was called B'tzelemElohim, went like this:

*'We all got a life to live.  
 We all got a gift to give.  
 So open your heart and let it out.  
 We all got a piece to bring.  
 We all got a song to sing, just open your heart and let it out.  
 When I reach out to you and you to me, we become that B'tzelem Elohim.  
 When we share our hopes and our dreams, each one of us, B'tzelem Elohim.'*

I love that song because it was catchy and fun, and as I grow older, it has gained more and more meaning to me when I hear it. Now, I think about door knocking with the Nonviolent Medicaid Army. I think about how scary and difficult it is to go up to a stranger's door and ask them about their health care. Sometimes people don't want to talk to us. Sometimes they just aren't home, but sometimes they welcome us into their homes and tell us how this unjust system has been hurting them and their loved ones. It's in those moments where we're connecting with people, sharing stories and building politically grounded relationships, where I can feel us becoming B'tzelem Elohim. When we talk about the world, we want to build one of justice and equality, where everyone lives in dignity, we become B'tzelem Elohim." – Becca Schuchat, Freedom Shul of the Poor



### TQIA |

▶ TQIA by Rev. Chris Wylie AKA DJ Pasto...

*This song was written by Rev. Chris Wylie AKA DJ Pastor Rock as a direct response to the erasure of members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ family from government websites. It is a call for justice, equity, and inclusion for all people no matter the body in which they live. Check out more from DJ Pastor Rock here: <https://linktr.ee/DJPastorRock>*

### Courage |

▶ "Courage", Rev. West McNeill, Labor-Religion C..

*Courage is a song that comes out of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa. In these times, deep courage is needed for the fight ahead – but we also need to remember that we are never walking alone!*



## Rituals

### **Communion Ritual (by ana g. lara lopez) –**

#### **GET THE PRIDE COMMUNION**

*This communion ritual is an invitation to all, especially the poor, queer, trans, and marginalized to gather in resistance and hope, break bread together, remembering the struggles of the past while organizing for collective liberation today. It offers a sacred space of belonging, dignity, and revolutionary love. Use this resource to nourish your spirit and empower your community for the work ahead.*

### **Pentecost Ritual (by ana g. lara lopez)**

#### **GET THE PRIDE PENTECOST RITUAL**

*This Pentecost ritual is a vibrant celebration of Spirit as fire, love, and liberation, especially honoring queer, trans, and nonbinary holiness. Rooted in sacred resistance and collective power, it invites communities to breathe together, come together across the lines that divide us, and organize toward a world where everyone belongs. Use this resource to ignite your gathering with fierce joy, unity, and Spirit-led action.*

## Prayers

### **We Are Tired by Rev. Dr. Mark Vorenkamp from [Revolution Church](#)**

Watch:  Prayers of the People: Rev. Mark Vorenkamp, Revolution Church 6/29/25



“This is a prayer that I wrote for my own church, Revolution Church, just a couple of weeks ago that really feels poignant at this time in history. Revolution Church is a made-for-online, asynchronous, Open and Affirming Church. We celebrate the diversity of the human condition: age, gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, neurodiversity, disability, etc. and are a safe place for community no matter where they are.

*Holy God, we come to you tired, tired of watching evil win, tired of seeing the margins suffer, tired of watching justice be sold off in the name of ego and power. Lord, there's so much to do we sometimes don't even know where to start. There's so much pain we cannot possibly address it all. Help us to see our place in this movement where our efforts can be best utilized. Help us to trust that where we cannot help others can remind us this is collective action, and we all play a small part in this battle. And by our actions, together, may justice win and mercy rule. It's in your name we pray, Amen.” -Rev. Dr. Mark Vorenkamp, Revolution Church*

***Link to Full Service Playlists***

FROM TERROR TO LIBERATION: THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT OF LOVE!

# Pride Month 2025

WITH FREEDOM CHURCH OF THE POOR

SUNDAY, JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup> AT 6:00PM ET  
SACRED TEXT: I CORINTHIANS 6:9-11



RSVP: [KAIROSCENTER.ORG/FREEDOMCHURCH](https://kairoscenter.org/freedomchurch)  
\*SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED FOR FIRST 30 MINUTES ONLY. PLEASE RSVP FOR ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AFTER THE SERMON.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: REBECCA SCHUCHAT

***The Pauline Letters: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11***

FROM TERROR TO LIBERATION: THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT OF LOVE!

# Pride Month 2025

WITH FREEDOM CHURCH OF THE POOR

SUNDAY, JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:00PM ET  
SACRED TEXT: ACTS 2:1-18 AND 43-45



RSVP: [KAIROSCENTER.ORG/FREEDOMCHURCH](https://kairoscenter.org/freedomchurch)  
\*SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED FOR FIRST 30 MINUTES ONLY. PLEASE RSVP FOR ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AFTER THE SERMON.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: REBECCA SCHUCHAT

***Pentecost Service***

FROM TERROR TO LIBERATION: THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT OF LOVE!

# Pride Month 2025

WITH FREEDOM CHURCH OF THE POOR

SUNDAY, JUNE 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:00PM ET  
EXAMINING THE SODOM & GOMORRAH STORY WITH GENESIS 19 AND EZEKIEL 16:49



RSVP: [KAIROSCENTER.ORG/FREEDOMCHURCH](https://kairoscenter.org/freedomchurch)  
\*SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED FOR FIRST 30 MINUTES ONLY. PLEASE RSVP FOR ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AFTER THE SERMON.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: REBECCA SCHUCHAT

***Sodom & Gomorrah Service***

FROM TERROR TO LIBERATION: THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT OF LOVE!

# Pride Month 2025

WITH FREEDOM CHURCH OF THE POOR

SUNDAY, JUNE 22<sup>ND</sup> AT 6:00PM ET  
EXPLORING THE STORY OF GENESIS WITH GENESIS 1



RSVP: [KAIROSCENTER.ORG/FREEDOMCHURCH](https://kairoscenter.org/freedomchurch)  
\*SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED FOR FIRST 30 MINUTES ONLY. PLEASE RSVP FOR ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AFTER THE SERMON.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: REBECCA SCHUCHAT

***Genesis Creation Story Service***

FROM TERROR TO LIBERATION: THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT OF LOVE!

# Pride Month 2025

WITH FREEDOM CHURCH OF THE POOR

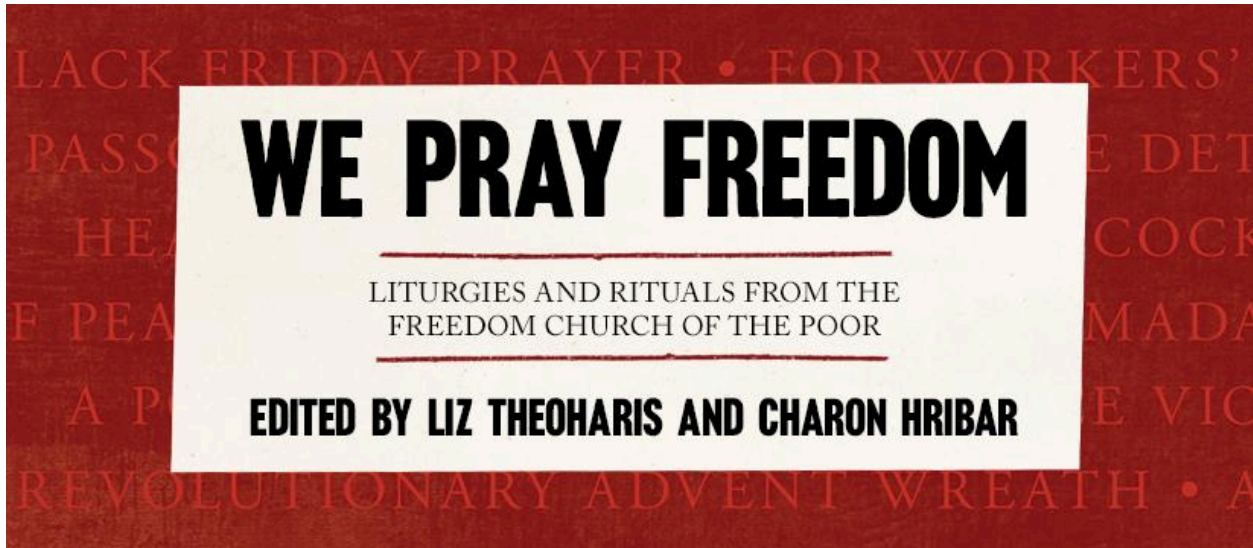
SUNDAY, JUNE 29<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:00PM ET  
PRIDE SERVICE & COMMUNION



RSVP: [KAIROSCENTER.ORG/FREEDOMCHURCH](https://kairoscenter.org/freedomchurch)  
\*SERVICE IS LIVE-STREAMED FOR FIRST 30 MINUTES ONLY. PLEASE RSVP FOR ZOOM LINK TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY CONVERSATION AFTER THE SERMON.

ORIGINAL ARTWORK: REBECCA SCHUCHAT

***Pride Service & Communion***



Want to learn more about the liturgies and rituals from Freedom Church of the Poor?  
Pre-order We Pray Freedom [bit.ly/WePrayFreedomPreOrder](https://bit.ly/WePrayFreedomPreOrder)