

# ***Living into God's Dream: Dismantling Racism in America* by Dr. Catherine Meeks**

**Guest Book  
Discussion Leader**

**Introduction and  
Chapter 1:**

**The Rev. David  
Deaderick**

**Live: 10/8 @ 2-3 PM**

**Online: 10/11 @ 7:30-8:30 PM**



*For 6 weeks in October and November leaders from the community will guide both a live and online book discussion on “**Living into God’s Dream: Dismantling Racism in America**,” a collection of essays edited by Dr. Catherine Meeks. Each guest leader will post a reflection on a chapter(s) that can be found on the Middleham and St. Peters website and the weekly Sunday bulletin.*

*The reflection for the Introduction and Chapter 1 comes from the Rev. David Deaderick (see a brief bio below his reflection).*

## **Reflection**

**Reflection on the Forward, Introduction, and Chapter 1 by David Deaderick**

Forward: Jim Wallis labels racism “America’s original sin.” His thoughts about this book lead me to think it’s the synagogue and church that are better equipped to challenge racism than the body politic and the courts.

Introduction: Editor Catherine Meeks asks “How can our faith and spiritual journeys inform the work of dismantling racism?” Later she answers that question and suggests that the work “requires patience along with skill and a willingness to move beyond one’s zones of comfort.”

My thought: That pretty much characterizes what this Big Conversation is all about. *Dear God, please grant us the patience and skill to listen with empathy and enfold us with your Spirit that we may feel your warmth, your comfort, and your wisdom.*

Luther E. Smith, Jr., the author of Chapter 1, says racism needs to be met without denial or embarrassment. My thought: Easier said than done! He says we should understand the “why” of racism before getting to the “what we can do.” Smith’s WHY is on pages 2 – 4. My thought: This is intense reading requiring patience. Rinse, repeat prayer above.

In America the ideal of equality is in the Declaration of Independence: “... all men [*sic*] are created equal.” America’s history, however, reflects less than this ideal: enslavement of Africans, broken treaties with Native Americans, etc. Racism is imbedded in institutions and systems from the founding of the country. Question: In what institutions and systems is racism apparent?

The persistence of racism is vexing given the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the election of the first Black president. Why? To put it bluntly, racism has benefits for many, and we struggle with the terms “White privilege,” “Affirmative Action,” and “Whiteness as a ‘wage.’”

The Good Samaritan parable (Luke 10.25-37) turns racism on its ear as it answers “who is my neighbor.” We learn of Howard Thurman (ever heard of him?), who learned from Ghandi and was mentor to Martin Luther King, Jr. He can teach us the HOW!

Dr. Smith closes with a discomfiting challenge to our individual priorities so that we can develop cross-racial relationships rather than continue to make the Beloved Community a dream deferred.

## Brief Biography

David Deaderick, a native of Chattanooga, Tennessee, is a retired Presbyterian minister and church musician. He and his wife Nancy Bupp, a retired labor educator, moved to St. Mary’s County in 1995. David has served as the director of Three Oaks Center, a member of the St. Mary’s County Ethics Commission, and as chair of an ad hoc committee appointed by the county commissioners to study and make recommendations for emergency services compensation in St. Mary’s County. He has been the guest preacher for Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian Churches in the area as well as interim choir director at St. Mary’s (Episcopal) Parish and minister of music at the Parish of Middleham & St. Peter’s. He is the father of two sons and two (soon to be three) grandchildren. He is a life-long tennis player and was on the 1990 4.0 Men’s USTA National Championship team from Charleston, WV.

