

**Honoring Michael Brown Jr.'s 10th Angelversary: Global Initiative to Affirm the Youth in Our Congregations & Communities to Encourage Their Faith & Healing, And Answering a Call to Action**

[The Michael Brown Sr. Chosen For Change Organization](#) (CFC) partners with [Metropolitan Congregations United of St. Louis](#) (MCU) and [St. John's Church UCC - The Beloved Community](#) to call for faith and community leaders to launch the First Annual Michael Brown Jr. Youth Affirmation Worship Service and Youth Justice Action during the weekend of August 9th-12th.

**Brief History:**

**Friday, August 9, 2024** marks the 10th Angelversary of Michael Brown Jr. His untimely death and the Ferguson Uprising shook America to its core, causing pivotal shifts within communities around the world. A new generation of community leaders, change agents, and people of faith were ignited to fight injustice and demand their voices & values to be heard. Mr. Michael Brown Sr. and Mrs. Calvinia Mays-Brown have transformed their pain into purpose by forming CFC, which provides holistic grief support and outreach programs to families who have experienced a traumatic loss.



In 2013, the US Justice Department began investigating the St. Louis County Family Courts after reports of violating constitutional rights of children and routinely discriminating against African-American children. MCU's Education Task Force found that the same powers that influenced disparities in our state's education system also influenced the over-policing of African-American communities which would lead to more youth having harsher encounters with police and higher rates of suspension and incarceration. In response to the Ferguson Uprising,



organizations and faith leaders joined MCU to "break the school-to-prison pipeline and to build pathways" after organizing a public meeting titled "[Mike Brown vs. Board of Education](#)", which led to multiple demonstrations. The efforts of MCU, community organizations, and elected leaders led to the DOJ ending its oversight in 2019 after the Court became compliant with a [2016 Federal Agreement](#).

St. John's Church is known as the spiritual home to several STL activists, organizers, & elected leaders and a familiar place for "worship & strategizing" after hosting over 600 activists from 18 cities from the orchestrated Black Lives Matters Freedom Rides in August 2014. Led by senior pastor Rev. Michelle Higgins, St. John's continues to be a catalyst for neighborhood wholeness & growth, along with being a partner for one of the region's biggest Juneteenth Celebrations.

### Invitation:

In honor of the 10th Angelversary of Michael Brown Jr., CFC, MCU, & St. John's Church are calling all people of faith to attend two events:

1. The First Annual **Michael Brown Jr. Youth Affirmation Worship Service** on Sunday, August 11th at 11:00 AM at St. John's Church (4136 N. Grand Blvd, 63107). To worship in-person, register at [bit.ly/YAWS24](https://bit.ly/YAWS24). Space is limited.



2. The **Youth Justice Day of Action** on Monday, August 12th at 11:00 AM at the Deaconess Foundation (1000 N. Vandeventer, 63108). Mr. Michael Brown Sr, MCU's Parent Organizer, will lead a press conference highlighting major concerns of parents of children impacted by school suspensions and detention centers. Immediately following the press conference, a community defense training for faith leaders will be provided. We're requesting only two members/leaders per congregation for training. For the press conference and training, register at [bit.ly/YJDA8-12](https://bit.ly/YJDA8-12).

### Details:

#### The Michael Brown Jr. Youth Affirmation Worship Service:

We are aware that everyone cannot attend worship at St. John's Church. We strongly encourage communities of faith to host their own Youth Affirmation Worship Service, in solidarity, during the weekend of August 9th.

This worship service is designed to recognize and honor the God-given gifts, talents, and contributions of youth in our congregations and communities. It is an opportunity to encourage & empower them, acknowledging their importance in the life of the congregation and the wider community. The challenges that the youth have voiced should be directly addressed. This is not a time to condemn or judge them. Rather, this is a time for the entire congregation to re-commit to

supporting the youth in attendance, affirming that the congregation will be supportive during moments of celebration, as well as in times of trouble, including if youth become involved with school disciplinary issues or the juvenile court system, when support is needed the most.

By participating in this initiative, congregations will:

1. **Strengthen the Faith of Youth:** Encourage young people in their spiritual journey and reinforce their sense of belonging within your congregation.
2. **Celebrate Diversity & Talent:** Showcase the diverse talents of youth through music ministry, poetry, art exhibits, dance, etc.
3. **Build Community:** Foster a sense of unity and support among the youth across diverse demographics.
4. **Inspire Leadership:** Encourage youth to take on leadership roles during worship and actively participate in congregation activities.
5. **Promote Justice:** Reflect on the life of Michael Brown Jr. and advocate for a world where every young person can thrive free from discrimination and violence.

**Hosting your own service:** Faith leaders and community members should invite ALL youth they regularly interact with so Parents, Guardians, and Family members have the opportunity to worship with their children. During your worship service, we ask that youth be centered at the front of the congregation to be affirmed and receive a word of prayer.

To assist in planning a Michael Brown Jr. Youth Affirmation Worship Service, we will provide a resource guide that includes suggested readings, prayers, activities, and a template for the service. These materials are designed to be adaptable, allowing you to tailor the service to fit the unique character and traditions of your community. Lastly, **to recognize your participation in solidarity with congregations across the globe, please sign up at [bit.ly/HostYAWS24](https://bit.ly/HostYAWS24).**

### Youth Justice Action Day:

If you are not able to join us, your congregation can still take a Youth Justice Action that aligns with the needs of your community's youth. We sincerely hope you will join us in this meaningful celebration. Contact Mr. Demaris Ridgell at [Demaris@mcustl.com](mailto:Demaris@mcustl.com) or [314.541.9239](tel:314.541.9239) for any further information or assistance. We look forward to hearing about the wonderful ways in which your congregation will honor and affirm your youth. May God's blessings be with you as we work together to support and celebrate ALL of God's Children, and to honor the legacy of Mike Brown Jr.

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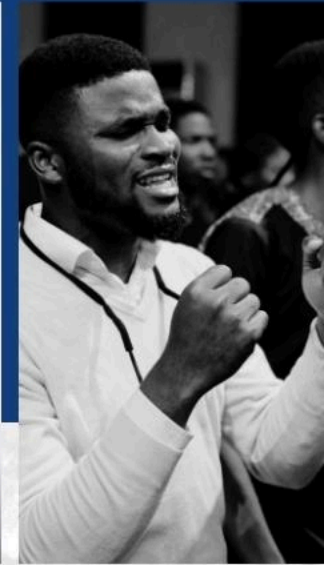
*Metropolitan Congregations United (MCU) is a multi-racial, multi-faith, nonpartisan network of community congregations and faith-based organizations committed to empowering citizens, developing grassroots leaders, and building strong, equitable communities in the St. Louis metro region. Founded in 1991, MCU works collaboratively with diverse stakeholders to address systemic injustices, promote social change, and advocate for policies that advance equity and opportunity for all. MCU's mission aims to develop leaders who move congregations, communities, and organizations to put faith into action to change public policies in ways that promote the common good.*



Flyers w/ Links for Distribution:

Worship Service at St. John's Church:

# CALLING ON ALL FAITH LEADERS TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY YOUTH



## MIKE BROWN JR. YOUTH AFFIRMATION WORSHIP SERVICE



AUG 11

11.00 AM



ST. JOHNS CHURCH  
4136 N. GRAND BLVD.



THE MICHAEL BROWN SR  
CHOSEN FOR CHANGE  
ORGANIZATION

"Helping families cope with the unthinkable."

TO STRENGTHEN THE FAITH OF OUR  
YOUTH, CELEBRATE DIVERSITY & TALENT,  
BUILD COMMUNITY, INSPIRE LEADERSHIP,  
& PROMOTE JUSTICE

REGISTER AT: [BIT.LY/YAWS24](https://bit.ly/YAWS24)



SAINT JOHN'S CHURCH  
*The Beloved Community*

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

Host Your Own Worship Service in Solidarity:

CALLING ON ALL FAITH LEADERS  
TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY YOUTH



HOST YOUR OWN  
**MIKE BROWN JR.**  
YOUTH AFFIRMATION  
WORSHIP SERVICE

THE WEEKEND OF AUG 9-11, 2024

SIGN YOUR COMMITMENT:  
**[bit.ly/HostYAWS24](https://bit.ly/HostYAWS24)**



METROPOLITAN CONGREGATIONS UNITED  
**MCU**  
**ST. LOUIS**

THE MICHAEL BROWN SR  
CHOSEN FOR CHANGE  
ORGANIZATION  
*"Helping families cope with the unthinkable."*

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

AFFIRM & ANNOINT

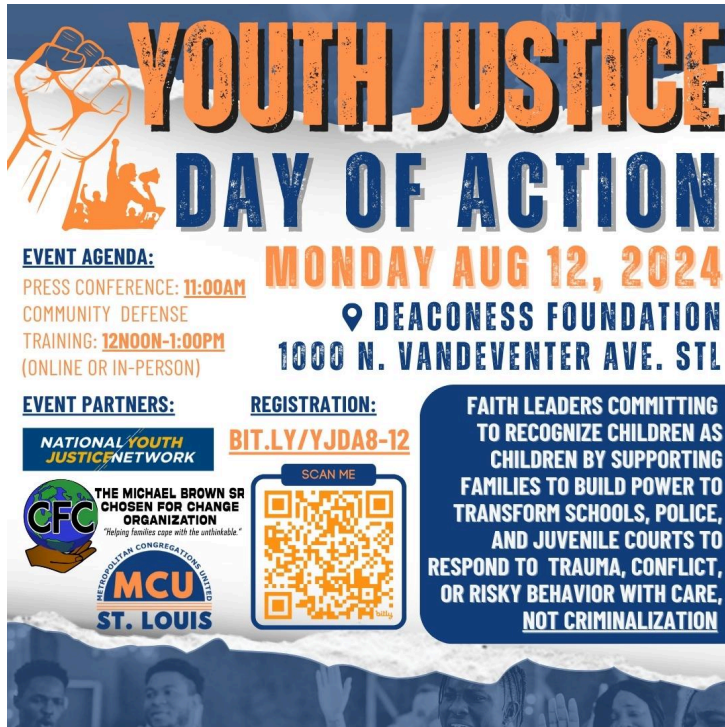
AFFIRM & ANNOINT

AFFIRM & ANNOINT



## Participate in Youth Justice Action:

### Light Version



**YOUTH JUSTICE DAY OF ACTION**

**EVENT AGENDA:**  
PRESS CONFERENCE: **11:00AM**  
COMMUNITY DEFENSE  
TRAINING: **12NOON-1:00PM**  
(ONLINE OR IN-PERSON)

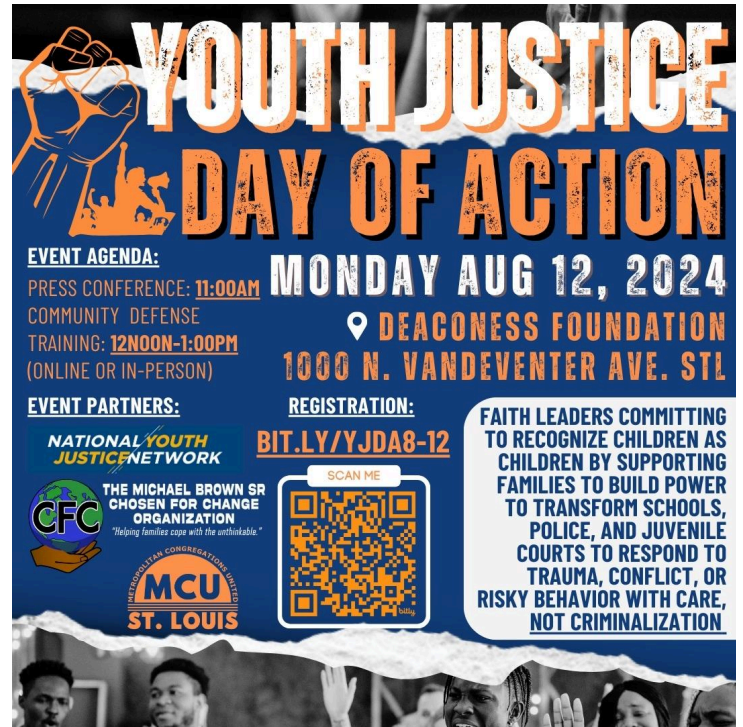
**MONDAY AUG 12, 2024**  
📍 **DEACONESS FOUNDATION**  
**1000 N. VANDEVENTER AVE. STL**

**EVENT PARTNERS:**  
**NATIONAL YOUTH JUSTICE NETWORK**  
**CFC** THE MICHAEL BROWN SR CHOSEN FOR CHANGE ORGANIZATION  
"Helping families cope with the unthinkable."  
**MCU** METROPOLITAN CONGREGATIONS UNITED ST. LOUIS

**REGISTRATION:**  
**BIT.LY/YJDA8-12**  
SCAN ME

**FAITH LEADERS COMMITTING TO RECOGNIZE CHILDREN AS CHILDREN BY SUPPORTING FAMILIES TO BUILD POWER TO TRANSFORM SCHOOLS, POLICE, AND JUVENILE COURTS TO RESPOND TO TRAUMA, CONFLICT, OR RISKY BEHAVIOR WITH CARE, NOT CRIMINALIZATION**

### Blue Version



**YOUTH JUSTICE DAY OF ACTION**

**EVENT AGENDA:**  
PRESS CONFERENCE: **11:00AM**  
COMMUNITY DEFENSE  
TRAINING: **12NOON-1:00PM**  
(ONLINE OR IN-PERSON)

**MONDAY AUG 12, 2024**  
📍 **DEACONESS FOUNDATION**  
**1000 N. VANDEVENTER AVE. STL**

**EVENT PARTNERS:**  
**NATIONAL YOUTH JUSTICE NETWORK**  
**CFC** THE MICHAEL BROWN SR CHOSEN FOR CHANGE ORGANIZATION  
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