

Ways to Respond to Racism

Prepared by the WPAUMC Anti-Racism Team after events in Charlottesville VA August 11-13, 2017

Many people have felt sorrow, helplessness or anger since the racially charged events in Charlottesville, VA in mid-August, 2017. The Anti-Racism Team encourages you to allow that frustration to motivate you to do something!

- Be a witness to God's love: Find ways to let others know that you stand against hate and exclusion and are promoting love and inclusion.
- Respond quickly and strongly to hate group activity, hate crimes or incidents of discrimination that you see around you. It is especially important for those who are white to speak up when persons of color are harassed or threatened.
- Commit to disrupting racism and intolerance at home, at school, in your workplace and your church by identifying it and condemning it, and by providing an example of love and acceptance.

Use some of the suggestions below to help create a climate of understanding and a spirit of welcome in your church and community that will help to prevent racist incidents.

Suggestions for individuals or churches

Learn more about racism, hate groups and how to respond in Western PA

- Investigate resources listed below
- Host or attend an Implicit Bias workshop sponsored by the WPAUMC Anti-Racism Team
- Attend Crossroads Antiracism Training in WPA in the coming year
- Use the website of the Southern Poverty Law Center (splcenter.org) to investigate hate groups
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper
- Write a letter to both state and federal lawmakers
- Participate actively in the political process
- Post articles about racial justice on social media

Suggestions for your church community

- Write your own covenant or vision that affirms love, inclusion, diversity and challenges racism; publicize it in your church and with local media
- Create a bulletin board that focuses on race and racism: feature current events related to individuals, articles about racism or diversity, accomplishments of people of color, stories that honor victims of hate crimes, inspiring quotes, examples of people working cross-racially together, etc.
- Use liturgies and worship resources that focus on race, racism, diversity, and social justice
 - UM Hymnal – Hymns of Justice, Peace and Social Concerns, #886 World Methodist Social Affirmation, #639 Bread and Justice
- United Methodist Women resources on racial justice.
www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/downloads/racial-justice-tools-for-leaders.pdf
- Start a book study or Bible study to help deepen your understanding of racism and its consequences
 - *Vital Conversations: Realities of Race and Racism* (General Commission on Religion and Race of UMC – gcorr.org)
 - United Methodist Church website, www.umc.org/topics/topic-united-methodists-address-racism
 - United Methodist Women Bible Studies
www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/downloads/racial-justice-tools-for-leaders.pdf
 - Other books listed under “Resources”
- Offer sermons on this topic
- Consult with the Anti-Racism Team on issues related to diversity, inclusion, and race relations
- Plan congregational outings to visit museum exhibits, cultural events or movies that reflect diverse cultural traditions or raise questions about racism
 - View the documentary *13th* about the 13th Amendment (to be shown on September 30 at 4 p.m. at Warren UMC in Pittsburgh)
 - Attend feature film *Detroit*

- Go to Heinz Galleries in Pittsburgh – an exhibition of works of African-American artists that offer a metaphoric picture of America today; 20/20: The Studio Museum of Harlem and Carnegie Museum of Art (until 12/31/17)
- Include notes in your bulletin or newsletter on issues of diversity and racism (for example: Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi's letter in response to events in Charlottesville; UMC statement from the Social Principles – see “Resources”)
- Develop an ongoing relationship with a church made up primarily of persons of color
- Try 25 things Your Church Can do to Affirm Diversity, Challenge Racism at gcorr.org/affirm-diversity-challenge-racism
- Explore 25 Traits of the Beloved Community gcorr.org/25-traits-of-the-beloved-community

Reaching out into the larger community

- Attend meetings of local human rights or civil rights organizations and explore issues of common concern
- Work ecumenically; partner with other denominations who share these concerns and are already doing this work
- Partner with allies in your community and work together to understand and address issues of systemic racism and work for change (potential allies – civic groups, other churches, schools and teachers, leaders, police, YWCA, etc.)
- Investigate issues of equality and diversity in your community (housing patterns, education, hiring policies, etc.) and work for solutions

Resources

Books

- *Dismantling Racism: The Continuing Challenge to White America* by Joseph Barndt
- *America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege and the Bridges to a New America* by Jim Wallis
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander
- *Power, Privilege and Difference* by Allan G. Johnson
- *Vital Conversations on Race, Culture and Justice; Videos and Study Guide, Series 1 and 2* (General Commission on Religion and Race of UMC)
- *Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk About Race and How to Do It* by Shelly Tochluk
- *The Africana Worship Book Vols. 1,2, & 3* by Valerie Bridgeman Davis (Cokesbury)
- *Songs of Zion Hymnal* (Cokesbury)
- *Race and Prayer: Collected Voices, Many Dreams* by Malcolm Boyd and Chester Talton

Videos

- On Implicit Bias - Immaculate Perception: Jerry Kang at Tedx San Diego 2013 www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VGbwNI6Ssk
- How to Overcome our Biases? Ted talk by Verna Meyers <https://youtu.be/uYyvbglNZkQ>
- Slavery to Mass Incarceration video, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4e_djVSag4

Websites

- General Commission on Religion and Race, www.gcorr.org
- Office of Diversity Development and Inclusion at Western PA Conference www.wpaumc.org/diversity
- The King Center www.thekingcenter.org/king-philosophy

¶ 162. III. THE SOCIAL COMMUNITY

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons. We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person's value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation. Our respect for the inherent dignity of all persons leads us to call for the recognition, protection, and implementation of the principles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible, and inalienable rights.

A) Rights of Racial and Ethnic Persons—Racism is the combination of the power to dominate by one race over other races and a value system that assumes that the dominant race is innately superior to the others. Racism includes both personal and institutional racism. Personal racism is manifested through the individual expressions, attitudes, and/or behaviors that accept the assumptions of a racist value system and that maintain the benefits of this system. Institutional racism is the established social pattern that supports implicitly or explicitly the racist value system. Racism, manifested as sin, plagues and hinders our relationship with Christ, inasmuch as it is antithetical to the gospel itself. In many cultures white persons are granted unearned privileges and benefits that are denied to persons of color. We oppose the creation of a racial hierarchy in any culture. Racism breeds racial discrimination. We define racial discrimination as the disparate treatment and lack of full access and equity in resources, opportunities, and participation in the Church and in society based on race or ethnicity.

Therefore, we recognize racism as sin and affirm the ultimate and temporal worth of all persons. We rejoice in the gifts that particular ethnic histories and cultures bring to our total life. We commit as the Church to move beyond symbolic expressions and representative models that do not challenge unjust systems of power and access.

We commend and encourage the self-awareness of all racial and ethnic groups and oppressed people that leads them to demand their just and equal rights as members of society. We assert the obligation of society and people within the society to implement compensatory programs that redress long-standing, systemic social deprivation of racial and ethnic persons. We further assert the right of members of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic persons to equal and equitable opportunities in employment and promotion; to education and training of the highest quality; to nondiscrimination in voting, access to public accommodations, and housing purchase or rental; to credit, financial loans, venture capital, and insurance policies; to positions of leadership and power in all elements of our life together; and to full participation in the Church and society. We support affirmative action as one method of addressing the inequalities and discriminatory practices within the Church and society.