

## **2020 Charter for Racial Justice Program Wisconsin Conference United Methodist Women**

- Who: For all units/local organizations/circles in Wisconsin Conference.
- What: A program geared to Wisconsin about issues of race. Duration 30-45 minutes.
- Where: At any place that United Methodist Women meet.
- When: Any time in 2020 and after.
- Why:
  - \*To become aware of what is happening in our own communities.
  - \*To become more aware of people hurting around us.
  - \*To be able to live peacefully in our neighborhoods, both local and extended.
  - \*To get credit for Mission Tasks.
- How: By using this prepared program in your local unit/organization/circle. Feel free to adapt this program in order to make it useful for your particular situation and time constraints.

### **“Acknowledging and Confronting Racist Symbolism”**

Focus statement from the Charter for Racial Justice: (read together as directed)

**Left side:** (Because we believe #5) We must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sisters and brothers of other races in thought, word and deed.

**Right side:** (We will #2) Create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together.

#### Worship

OPENING HYMN (choose one)

FWS# 2228 Sacred the Body

FWS#2104 An Outcast among Outcasts

UMH#548 In Christ there is no east or west

UMH#560 Help Us Accept Each Other

#### SCRIPTURE (Reader)

Galatians 3:26-28: You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves in Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 5:22-25: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

Popcorn Reflections: What does it mean to be “one in Christ Jesus”? How do we “crucify our sinful nature”? What does this mean for Christians engaged in Racial Justice work?

### Prayer (Unison)

**God of justice, in your wisdom you create all people in your image, without exception. Through your goodness, open our eyes to see the dignity, beauty, and worth of every human being. Open our minds to understand that all your children are brothers and sisters in the same human family. Open our hearts to repent of racist attitudes, behaviors, and speech which demean others. Open our ears to hear the cries of those wounded by racial discrimination, and their passionate appeals for change. Strengthen our resolve to make amends for past injustices and to right the wrongs of history. And fill us with courage that we might seek to heal wounds, build bridges, forgive and be forgiven, and establish peace and equality for all in our communities. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen**

(Catholic Charities, USA)

### RACIST SYMBOLISM

Instructions: Enter a time of learning and discussion. (15 minutes)

What is racist symbolism?

Racist symbolism can be any word, symbol or act intended as a negative portrayal, negative stereotype or denigrating action towards individuals or groups due to their racial or ethnic heritage. Racial symbolism is connected to hate crimes, extremist groups and racist propaganda. Hate crimes are on the rise in the Midwest and across the US.

#### FBI Hate crimes in the Midwest (2018)

Wisconsin Up 14 %

Illinois Up 30 %

Indiana Up 38 %

#### FBI Hate Crimes Data 2018

Key Nationwide Trends

Up 42 % on Gender-identity based crimes

Up 14 % on Anti-Latinx crimes

Up 6 % on Anti – LGBTQ+ crimes

27 % of **all** hate crimes are anti-Black

58 % of religion-based crimes are anti-Jewish

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Program (2018)

#### **Domestic Extremism in 2018**

- At least 50 people were killed by extremist
- Fourth-deadliest year for domestic extremist- related killings since 1970
- **Every** perpetrator had ties to at least one right-wing extremist movement
- Firearms responsible for 42 of 50 deaths

#### **Cyberhate and Online Harassment**

Percentage of U.S. Adults who have experienced online harassment

Any harassment	53 %
Name-calling	41 %
Purposeful embarrassment	33 %
Any form of severe harassment	37 %
Physical threats	22 %
Sexual harassment	18 %
Stalking	18 %
Sustained harassment	17 %

Source: Online Hate and Harassment: The American Experience (ADL)

**Annual Propaganda Distribution Counts (Source is White Supremacists Step Up Off-Campus Propaganda Efforts in 2018 (ADL))**

	On Campus	Off Campus	All Propaganda
2017	292	129	421
2018	319	868	1187

From 2017 to 2018  
 Up 182 % All Propaganda  
 Up 10 % On Campus

DISCUSSION: What racist symbols do you remember or are you most familiar with? (For more examples see the document ADL Hate on Display on the Wisconsin UMW website). How do you deal with or consider racist symbols which are present in popular culture from the past or the present? What incidents of racism, hate crimes or stereotyping are you familiar with?

EXPERIENCES IN WISCONSIN (Choose to read one or more of the following stories to discuss experiences with racial symbolism. If someone in your group has an experience, they are willing to share, you can also substitute their personal testimony for a story.) (10 minutes)

African-American (from Muriel Smith-Gross)

It seems odd that a group of people who have been such an integral part of this country since its founding, who have been so instrumental in building the physical structures of this country – including many, if not all of the hallowed buildings in the nation’s capital. These people helped build many of the earliest states’ cities. These people provided free labor that fed half the country and ran its Southern economy. These same people have fought in every war this country has had, even though we did **NOT** reap any of the benefits these wars brought- like freedom, equal treatment under the law, etc. That we should **STILL** be dealing with overt symbols of racism is astounding! It all boils down to one simple factor – *“skin color.”*

The contributions of African Americans to the country are widely known, but not as widely acknowledged, publicized or appreciated. Indeed, immense efforts are often made

to erase these contributions or at least to reduce them. A part of that effort is the campaign to denigrate not only the contributions, but the people who made them.

One of the methods of denigration and degradation is the use of racist symbols and language. Several of the most common symbols are mentioned here.

Several dictionaries define the word “**nigger**” as someone who is lazy, stingy and miserly. In this country “**nigger**” has a completely different meaning. It is a derogatory term used to identify Black people. Some young people have tried to remove the hate and denigration from the word by re-defining it to mean someone close to them, but that strategy has **NOT** worked. Nigger is probably the first thing African Americans think of when asked about racist symbols because of its prevalent use in so many levels of society and the hatred behind it.

**Nooses** and **burning crosses** are also racist symbols. They signify intent to do bodily harm to the people who were sent the symbol. Burning crosses on people’s lawns was a very popular and powerful way of saying “We (white people) do not want you in our neighborhood and it would be much healthier for you if you leave and leave now.” Often financial offers from the “Neighborhood Association” would be made to the Black home owners to hasten their departure. If the Black family decided to stay in the white neighborhood, they had rough times and their safety was not guaranteed. Often the law turned a blind eye to such behavior and did not try to protect the families, instead they sided with their white neighbors.

Between the years 1917 and 1919, a Black person was hanged in the United States about every day and a half. In the summer of 1919, known as the “*Red Summer*,” at least one Black person was hanged every day. Hangings and lynchings have not totally been erased from our society. Periodically, someone of African American lineage gets hanged – often mysteriously. Leaving nooses on people’s desks, on their cars and in their lockers has become very popular lately – especially in police stations with a minority of African American officers.

Because he escaped from being lynched in Indiana for a crime he did not commit, Mr. James Cameron started the Black Holocaust Museum in Milwaukee. It covers his personal story and shows various exhibits. The museum has since been expanded and renamed America’s Black Holocaust Museum. Presently you can take a virtual tour of the museum, but in the late spring it will reopen to the public with expanded services.

Another often used symbol of racist belief and behavior is the **confederate flag**. This flag was the symbol of the states who seceded from the United States of America because they did not want to grant freedom and equality to the enslaved Black people who provided the free labor which afforded and maintained their lifestyle. This flag is a blatant symbol of inequality and racism.

**Blackface** is another symbol that has been in the news several times in the past few years. It seems to be or have been a popular way for college educated white males to

entertain themselves and their friends. It was also convenient because with the use of some soap and water and a little elbow grease, their whiteness was quickly restored.

**Night Riders or the Knights of the Camelia or the Ku Klux Klan** are another racist symbol. These days, however the action takes place during daylight, in public with uncovered faces. The names have changed to Skin Heads or Nordic Knights or the Alt Right or Aryan Brotherhood or similar names, but the intent is still the same – the harassment and possibly the elimination of African American people.

There is a saying that you can't legislate love, acceptance or tolerance, but some things have to change or we will find ourselves in another civil war or a more organized form of genocide. This time there will be guns and weapons on both sides and no good will come of it.

#### Youth (from Chelsey Henry)

Whether it be a flag for a country, or two hands joined together to form a heart, symbolism has an impact on us daily. How can we determine whether a symbol is representing something racially wrong or not? Symbols are like the letters in the alphabet they don't have any meaning until you start using them to describe words and thoughts, but when they are linked with history then they have historic value. To many people some symbols could mean something completely different to someone who has lived in a different country or in a different time period. The most common symbol linked with history is the Swastika. We know of this symbol to have been used to represent the Nazi party who tried to eliminate many different races of people. The Swastika has been found in many other cultures and has many other meanings than what it was used by the German army for.

When we look at the school in Baraboo WI and we see a picture of young men holding their arms up it is represented as they are conveying the symbol of the Hail Hitler. Another gentleman is making an "okay" symbol upside down in representation of white power. The questions arise is what was the intent of these young men, and what message are they trying to convey? Younger generations who did not live through World War II don't know how big of an impact these symbols have now. They probably thought they were being cool or going with a trend on social media when these symbols really hit hard to many people who have suffered through that time period, or who have loved ones that did. I know that when I was in Germany Oma who was a young girl in World War II didn't share much about what it was like during that time, because the shame she feels for how her family acted not really knowing what was happening until it was too late.

How we as society use symbols can have different effects on many people sometimes being positive and sometimes negatively. How can we control the negative from being spread? Especially in this time where social media plays a huge role in how young adults view symbols. Now a days young adults are desensitized to a lot of things around them with the games they play, and the shows and movies they watch. It leads to how can we make sure that something like this photo being taken doesn't happen again? How can we educate this generation that doing something like that can have a negative effect on the community and themselves, and can being very hurtful to the people around

them? Symbols do play a large part in our daily lives, so next time you do or look at something really think of the meaning behind the symbol.

### Hispanic – (Written by Martha Boyer)

In my years of serving as an interpreter to the Hispanic community in my area, I have watched a new generation of children grow up. They are amazing, completely bi-lingual, they speak Spanish at home, and English in school and with non-Spanish speaking adults. Their goal is to be A students; they work hard, respect and value the advice of their teachers and look forward to the opportunity to be the “first generation” in their family to go to college. In school, they are in a safe environment, they are all treated by the same code.

In the outside world, it is different. Minors are always accompanied by their parents and when children assist the parent in translating a situation, the English-speaking adults treat them in a condescending manner, “you speak real good” they are told, as if this was a great compliment. The young children I know, are polite and just say thank you. However, how do they feel? Embarrassed for their parents and for themselves. They are being viewed as an exception to the rule. The teenagers, prefer to remain silent rather than translate for their parents.

As the “grandmother” of 20+ babies that have been born since I started volunteering, I encourage them to be confident, proud of their accomplishment and assure them that in time, they will speak for themselves and change the way others see them and their parents. Their parents work hard in the local dairy farms and yet when they get home, Mom and Dad still have time to ask about school, sports and to help them, in as much as they can, with their homework. These farm workers are “invisible” in our society but they work hard so their children will have an opportunity for a better future.

### Asian

Recently there has been an increase in hate crimes directed towards Asians in Wisconsin. This has been due to the portrayal of the COVID-19 virus as a “Chinese” virus. Marathon County Sheriff Scott Parks wrote that his department and other local police agencies are investigating verbal and physical attacks and instances of vandalism believed to be motivated by fear amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Marathon County has about 8,000 Asian residents, most of whom are Hmong. Jenna Friedman, assistant director of bias response for UW-Madison, said the university has received 81 total bias incident reports this semester. Out of that total, 47 involve Asian or international individuals. One incident of racist messages in chalk on university sidewalks alone garnered 25 complaints. In central Wisconsin, a series of incidents in the Wausau area led law enforcement leaders to issue statements denouncing xenophobic attacks. Some Wisconsinites of Asian descent say they feel like they have to be on alert when they do go out in public. “Not so much as in fear of contagion, but because they are afraid, again, to be targets of these racist and xenophobic slurs,” said Cindy I-Fen Cheng, director of the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

### DISCUSSION (15-20 minutes)

What disturbs you the most about the story/stories which were shared? How does social media add to the use of racist symbolism and how can it be reported or confronted? If

you have downloaded the “Pyramid of Hate” from the Wisconsin UMW website, discuss the different levels of hate and how different symbols fit into to this hierarchy. How might United Methodist Women and the church confront racial symbolism and its impacts?

ACTIONS- How we can confront racial symbolism (5-10 minutes)

How do we fight hate?

1. Investigate and research
2. Educate and train (use the pyramid of hate – see Wisconsin umw website)
3. Advocate and assist

Read the following strategies

### Six Simple Strategies

1. Assume good intent and explain the impact on you personally.  
Person 1: “You don’t look Jewish.”  
Person 2: “I know you mean well, but that hurts me or can offend others.”
2. Ask a question.  
Person 1: “Well, what do you expect from a foreigner?”  
Person 2: “What do you mean by that?”
3. Interrupt and redirect.  
Person 1: “You have to hear this joke: These two Irish guys are sitting in a bar...”  
Person 2: “Whoa, let’s not go down that path.”
4. Broaden to universal human behavior.  
Person 1: “Well, you know gay men are all drama.”  
Person 2: “I don’t think that’s a gay thing. I think lots of different people have that quality.”
5. Make it individual.  
Person 1: “Religious people are so close-minded.”  
Person 2: “Do you mean everyone who is religious, or are you speaking of someone in particular?”
6. Say ouch.  
Person 1: “Those people are all alike.”  
Person 2: “Ouch.”

Divide up your group (if you have enough people) into groups of 2 or 3. Each group should pick one of the six strategies and role play these strategies. One person of the group should say something which we wish to confront/refute. The other person(s) should engage with the speaker using the strategy. Then the group can switch roles. Continue to role-play as many of these strategies as time allows.

Closing:

CLOSING HYMN (choose one)

FWS#2208 Guide My Feet

FWS#2190 Bring Forth the Kingdom

UMH#519 Lift Every Voice and Sing

UMH#549 Where Charity and Love Prevail

Prayer (Unison):

**Lord, Jesus Christ  
who reached across the ethnic boundaries  
between Samaritan, Roman and Jew  
who offered fresh sight to the blind and freedom to captives,  
help us to break down the barriers in our community,  
enable us to see the reality of racism and bigotry,  
and free us to challenge and uproot it  
from ourselves, our society and our world. Amen.**

*(John Bucki, SJ)*

#### RESOURCES

Additional Resources can be found on the Wisconsin Conference website:

<http://www.wisconsinumw.org/charter-for-racial-justice-programs.html>

Organizations/Resources that address hate:

**ADL (Anti-Defamation League)** [adl.org](http://adl.org)

Jonathan Mintzer is the Regional Director of ADL Midwest ([chicago.adl.org](http://chicago.adl.org))

Rachel Holt is the Regional Operations Assistant - (312) 533-3927

[rholt@adl.org](mailto:rholt@adl.org) [midwest@adl.org](mailto:midwest@adl.org)

**Facing History and Ourselves** [info@facinghistory.org](mailto:info@facinghistory.org)

**“Ethnic Notions”** (1986) <https://www.facinghistory.org/books-borrowing/ethnic-notions>

DVD 56 minutes, color, Source: California Newsreel. This award-winning documentary takes viewers on a disturbing voyage through American social history. It traces the evolution of anti-black racism through popular culture by examining cartoons, feature films, popular songs, household artifacts and children’s rhymes.

**Rethinking Schools** ([rethinkingschools.org](http://rethinkingschools.org))

**Showing up for Racial Justice** (SURJ). They also have a group called White People for Black Lives.

#### **Southern Poverty Law Center**

This organization is based in Montgomery, Alabama. It is a non-profit civil rights organization founded in 1971 and dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society. [splcenter.org](http://splcenter.org)

**Teaching Tolerance** – 400 Washington Avenue, Montgomery, AL 36104

334-956-8200 [tolerance.org](http://tolerance.org) This year, they are introducing the #USvsHate

challenge. First developed and piloted by educators in San Diego, #USvsHate is an educator-and student-led initiative to amplify student voice and push back against the messages of bias, bigotry and hate so common in our public discourse.

**Zinn Education Project** – Teaching People’s History

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