

## **2013 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 2013 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 #7 on the Mission Today activities list.
- How: By using this prepared program in your local unit/organization/circle.

### **“Finding Our Oneness”**

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

**Left side:** BECAUSE WE BELIEVE (#8) that our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings and new relationships and must be reflected in the law, policies, structures and practices of both church and state;

**Right side:** WE WILL (#2) unite our efforts with all groups in The United Methodist Church to create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to be the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together.

### **Worship**

#### Message in Song

Listen to the words of these hymns. They convey the concept of “oneness” which is the focus of our Charter For Racial Justice theme this year. Let the words settle in our minds and, where needed, may they transform our hearts so that we may truly love and accept one another, regardless of skin tone or cultural background.

*Galations 3:28- There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* [Common English Bible]

In Christ There Is No East or West – United Methodist Hymnal #548

(Read verses 2-4. Then sing verse 1.)

2. In Christ shall true hearts everywhere their high communion find;  
His service is the golden cord close binding humankind.
  3. In Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, and neither slave nor free;  
Both male and female heirs are made, and all are kin to me.
  4. In Christ now meet both east and west, in Him meet south and north;  
All Christly souls are one in him throughout the whole wide earth.
- (Sing) 1. In Christ there is no east or west, in Him no south or north;  
But one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth

John 15:12 –*This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you.*

Help Us Accept Each Other –United Methodist Hymnal #560

(Read verses 1-3. Then sing verse 4.)

1. Help us accept each other as Christ accepted us;  
Teach us as sister, brother, each person to embrace.  
Be present, Lord, among us, and bring us to believe  
We are ourselves accepted and meant to love and live.
2. Teach us, O Lord, your lessons, as in our daily life  
We struggle to be human and search for hope and faith.  
Teach us to care for people, for all, not just for some,  
To love them as we find them, or as they may become.
3. Let your acceptance change us, so that we may be moved  
In living situations to do the truth in love;  
To practice your acceptance, until we know by heart  
The table of forgiveness and laughter's healing art.

(Sing) 4. Lord, for today's encounters with all who are in need;  
Who hunger for acceptance, for righteousness and bread,  
We need new eyes for seeing, new hands for holding on;  
Renew us with your Spirit; Lord, free us, make us one!

Grace Cajiuaat (pronounced "kah-hee-waht"), Wisconsin Conference Coordinator of Multicultural Ministries shares these thoughts:

The key to cultural competency is self-knowledge. Matthew 22:39- "*Love your neighbor as you love yourself.*" We can't genuinely and authentically love others if we don't know how to love ourselves. The same goes for cultural awareness: we need to know our own culture and values before we can genuinely open ourselves to other cultures so as not to get lost in the process. It is more difficult to be a multicultural church, yet that is our call as Disciples of Christ: to love everyone at the table. We do this by celebrating who we are so we can then celebrate others.

Learning about culture, Grace maintains, is simply a means to do greater works for God. She has a vision for our conference. It is that all congregations will know who they are with their culture and values and will celebrate that, so they can celebrate with others; not only to open their hearts, their minds, their doors, but to go out of the church walls and walk with people, walk with the poor and marginalized, act justly, love kindly, and walk humbly with God. The vision is to have the image that it isn't one culture at the center, but that Christ is as the center, and all cultures and all people surround Him and grow deeply as disciples, so that they may disciple others.

Many Gifts, One Spirit – United Methodist Hymnal #114

Sing – or read - with JOY!

1. God of Change and glory, God of time and space,  
When we fear the future, give to us your grace.  
In the midst of changing ways give us still the grace to praise.

**Refrain:**

Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.  
In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise  
One giver, one Lord, one Spirit, one Word known in many ways  
Hallowing our days.  
For the giver for the gifts praise praise praise

2. God of many colors, God of many signs,  
You have made us different, blessing many kinds.  
As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear. REFRAIN
  
3. Freshness of the morning, newness of each night,  
You are still creating endless love and light.  
This we see as shadows part, many gifts from one great heart. REFRAIN

**Prayer:** Dear Lord, You have created us all, in all our diversity. Help us to walk with each other in perfect harmony, respecting one another's cultural values. Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me. In the name of our loving Savior we pray. Amen.

## CELEBRATION IN WISCONSIN

### **Reader 1 (African American):**

Kwanzaa is a pan-African and African-American holiday celebration founded by Dr. Maulana Karenga (born Robert McKinley Everett) in 1966. He was then chairman of Black Studies at California State University in Long Beach, California. His name in *Kiswahili* means “keeper of tradition”, “master teacher”. *Kwanzaa* is a celebration of family, community and culture.

Karenga was quite disturbed after witnessing the 1965 riots and its aftermaths in Los Angeles' Watts area. He saw a great need to reaffirm African-American culture and instill racial pride and unity. Blacks needed to honor and celebrate themselves and their history while critically evaluating their present and commit to a fuller and more productive future.

Kwanzaa, which means “first fruits of the harvest” in the African language *Kiswahili*, was established to give blacks an alternative to the existing holiday of the dominant society. It begins on December 26 and continues through January 1.

Kwanzaa is a spiritual, festive and joyous celebration of the oneness and goodness of life. The celebration includes singing, dancing, drumming, storytelling, eating, exchanging gifts, etc. It is patterned after traditional African festivals.

The celebration is guided by *Nguzo Saba* (seven guiding principles)—one discussed each day of the observance. The celebration begins with the lighting of a candle, followed by the discussion of a principle. The guiding principles are:

- ***Umoja* (OO-MO-JAH)**—Unity stresses the importance of togetherness for the family and the community, which is reflected in the African saying, “I am we”, or “I am because we are”.
- ***Kujichagulia* (KOO-GEE-CHA-GOO-LEE-YAH)**—Self-determination requires that we define our common interests and make decisions that are in the best interest of our family and community.
- ***Ujima* (OO-GEE-MAH)**—Collective Work and Responsibility reminds us of our obligation to the past, present and future, and that we have a role to play in the community, society, and the world.

- **Ujamaa (OO-JAH-MAH)—Cooperative economics emphasizes** our collective economic strength and encourages us to meet common needs through mutual support.
- **Nia (NEE-YAH)—Purpose** encourages us to look within ourselves and to set personal goals that are beneficial to the community.
- **Kuumba (KOO-OOM-BAH)—Creativity** makes use of our creative energies to build and maintain a strong and vibrant community.
- **Imani (E-MAH-NEE)—Faith** focuses on honoring the best of our traditions, draws upon the best in ourselves, and helps us strive for a higher level of life for humankind, by affirming our self-worth and confidence in our ability to succeed and triumph in righteous struggle.

According to the official Kwanzaa website ([www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org](http://www.officialkwanzaawebsite.org)), “*The holiday, then, will of necessity, be engaged as an ancient and living cultural tradition which reflects the best of African thought and practice in its reaffirmation of the dignity of the human person in community and culture, the well-being of family and community, the integrity of the environment and our kinship with it, and the rich resource and meaning of a people's culture.*”

*Written by Cathryn Luse, Metro North District*

### **Reader 2 (Hispanic):**

**Las Posadas** (pronounced: poh-SAH-dahss) is a 9-day celebration beginning December 16 and ending December 24, *Nochebuena* (pronounced: noh-cheh-bway-nah). It is believed this tradition started in Spain and is now celebrated in Mexico, parts of Guatemala, among Hispanics in the Southwest states of the U.S. and a growing number of Hispanic communities throughout the United States.

*Posada* is the Spanish word for “lodging” or “place to stay”. *Posadas* have been a tradition in Mexico for more than 400 years. The celebration is viewed as a Catholic tradition, but many non-Catholic Latinos also follow the celebration. The tradition may have been started by Catholic priests who combined *Posadas* with the Aztec celebrations of the god *Huitzilopochtli* (pronounced: Weet-seal-oh-POACHED-lee), in December.

During the celebration, participants re-enact Joseph and Mary's search for a place to spend the night. The head of the procession has a light (a candle) and participants, or pilgrims, stop at several designated homes. At each house, the pilgrims ask for “lodging”, the resident of the home answers by singing a song, and Mary and Joseph are finally recognized and allowed to enter. The group goes inside and kneels around the Nativity scene to pray (the rosary). *Las Posadas* continue to be celebrated in the Latin American countries pretty much the same way, with very few changes.

Sometimes the “pilgrims” may use a real donkey for Mary to ride. There may also be angels and shepherds in the procession. Children are part of the procession, along with musicians. At the end of the night, children will break the traditional star shaped *piñata*, which is full of candy and other treats, and a *fiesta* (a party) is held with food and drink for all.

In Wisconsin, because of cold weather, the *Posadas* may be held inside the home, going from room to room. It is a celebration of faith and family traditions, and men join in the celebration, along with women and children.

*Written by Martha Boyer, Conference Nominations*

### **Reader 3 (Native American):**

“Though there are significant cultural differences among the more than 500 distinct Native American tribal groups in the United States, among traditional people there is a fundamental understanding that everything is related and that all living things play an important role in keeping the Earth in balance. Each community derives its unique spiritual and cultural identity from shared values, knowledge, stories, and relationships with one another and the natural world.

Traditional indigenous knowledge systems and stories acknowledge that the rivers, rocks, trees, plant life, and celestial world are alive with spirit and meaning. When traditional indigenous people speak of their relatives, they are referring to every living thing, not just human kinship. The very identity of traditional tribal people is derived from the natural world, the land, and the community. They understand their own insignificance in the totality of things.

The Creator provided us with ceremonies to remind us of our place in the universe and our responsibilities as human beings... There are hundreds of different seasonal ceremonies among the diverse tribal groups in North America. Many acknowledge or even mirror certain functions of the natural world or members of animal nations. Each spring, the Northern Ute hold a Bear Dance to shake off the effects of the long winter and prepare them for what lies ahead. The Cherokee have a Green Corn Ceremony to celebrate the ripening of the corn... and some of the people of the North Country hold wild-rice ceremonies.” [from p. 38-39, *Every Day Is A Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women* compiled by Wilma Mankiller, a UMW Reading Program Choice 2013, Nurturing for Community]

**Honor the Earth Pow Wow** and the **Wild Rice Festival** are two celebrations held each year in Northwest Wisconsin by the *Anishinabe* (Anish·i·na·be) or Chippewa people.

Many visitors of all ethnic backgrounds visit the Pow Wows to watch the athletic dancing, drumming, and native singing. Some come to eat the traditional foods such as wild rice, venison, and fry bread. The Honor the Earth Pow Wow is held the third weekend of July, in Hayward, Wisconsin.

Additional Information (does not need to be read):

*(If you would like to visit a Pow Wow, you can find out more about the history and meaning of the celebrations at [powwow-power.com](http://powwow-power.com) and [edsitement.neh.gov](http://edsitement.neh.gov) and [www.stcciw.com](http://www.stcciw.com) and [haywardareachamber.com](http://haywardareachamber.com).*

*For further investigation and understanding of Wisconsin Native American culture consider doing internet searches for “Oneida Nation” and “Bad River Chippewa.” All eleven tribes are listed at this website: [www.mpm.edu/wirp/ICW-05.html](http://www.mpm.edu/wirp/ICW-05.html)*

*There are three United Methodist Native American congregations in Wisconsin. They are located in Milwaukee, Odanah, and DePere.)*

*Written by Judy Vasby, Conference President, and Billie LaBumbard, Chippewa District*

### **Reader 4 (Hmong):**

The Hmong New Year celebration is a cultural tradition that takes place annually in select areas where large Hmong communities exist and in a modified form where smaller communities come together. During the New Year's celebration, Hmong dress in traditional clothing and enjoy Hmong traditional foods, dance, music, bull fights, and other forms of entertainment. Hmong New Year celebrations frequently occur in November and December (traditionally at the end of the harvest season when all work is done), serving as a Thanksgiving holiday for the Hmong people.

Historically, the Hmong New Year celebration was created to give thanks to ancestors and spirits as well as to welcome in a new beginning. Traditionally, the celebration lasts for ten days, has been shortened in

America due to the difference between the traditional Hmong farming schedule and that of the American 40-hr work week schedule. It has also served the double purpose of a convenient meeting place and time for the Hmong leadership, from the days of China, even until now.

During the Hmong New Year celebration, the Hmong ball-tossing game *pov pob* (pah pah) is a common activity for adolescents. Boys and girls form two separate lines in pairs that are directly facing one another. Girls can toss a ball with other girls or boys, but boys cannot toss balls with other boys. It is also taboo to toss the ball to someone of the same clan and to date someone from the same clan. The pairs toss a cloth ball back and forth until one member drops the ball. If a player drops or misses the ball, an ornament or item is given to the opposite player in the pair. Ornaments are recovered by singing love songs *has lug txaj* (hah lou tsah) to the opposite player.

The Hmong New Year celebration—specifically based on both religious and cultural beliefs—is an “in-house” ritual that takes place annually in every Hmong household. The celebration is to acknowledge the completion of the rice-harvesting season—thus, the beginning of a new year—so that a new life can begin as the cycle of life continues. During this celebration, every “wandering” soul of every family member is called back to unite with the family again and the young will honor the old or the in-laws—a ritual of asking for blessings from elders of the house and clan as well as the in-laws of other clans.

Also, during the Hmong New Year celebration, house spirits as well as the spirit of wealth *xim kaab* (see kun) are honored. In addition, if a shaman is in the house, the healing spirits of *She-Yee* are also honored and released to wander the land *Neeb Foob Yeem* (nain fōn yain)—similar to vacationing after a long year of working—until they are called back right after new year. Hmong New Year lasts only for 3 days—with 10 dishes of food each day, for a total of 30 dishes—thus the Hmong saying “eat 30.” Here are a few practices that the Hmong observe during their New Year Celebration, performed anytime during the 3 days of celebration.

- Soul Calling—Calling back every soul in the family to unite with the family.
- Offerings to the God of Wealth.
- Shamanistic Ritual to release the Curing spirits of *She-Yee* for “vacationing”—occurs only if the specific family has a shaman in the house.
- The main meal of New Year.
- Asking for blessings from elders—occurs early morning during New Year’s day, including parents, uncles, father/moth-in-law, and dead ancestors.
- Cleaning the Body—To cleanse the body of dirtiness.
- A ritual to get rid of problems, issues, temper, loneliness, and all the bad things which have occurred in the household.
- A very special “thanksgiving” event where parents and in-laws are honored.
- A thank you feast from parents and in-laws.
- To release the souls of all dead ones.
- A very big “eat 30,” involving pigs, cows, and buffalo feasts.

*Compiled by Kady Herr-Yang, Hmong Language Coordinator*

## **Reader 5:**

### **“Imagine”**

Imagine you are a light-skinned person going into a low-income neighborhood in a city. There are 4 or 5 dark-skinned youth approaching you.

How do you feel? Do you feel safe? Scared? Fearful? Afraid?

Now, imagine you are a person of color traveling to a small town in northern Wisconsin. You get out of your car and are approached by 4 or 5 light-skinned youth.

How do you feel? Do you feel safe? Scared? Fearful? Afraid?

Imagine that you are a professional person of color. You are wearing your normal work attire—a suit. You stop to do some shopping after work. While you are in the store you realize that a clerk is following you around the store.

How do you feel?

Imagine that you are a person of color waiting in line to be served. A salesperson comes up and asks the person behind you (a light-skinned person) if they need some help.

How do you feel?

*Dear Lord, give us insight to see how we treat other persons and help us to treat others as we want to be treated. Amen.*

*Written by Ruby Dow, Conference Social Action*

### **Closing:**

God of many colors, God of many signs,

You have made us different, blessing many kinds.

As the old ways disappear, let your love cast out our fear.

Many gifts, one Spirit, one love known in many ways.

In our difference is blessing, from diversity we praise

One giver, one Lord, one Spirit, one Word known in many ways  
Hallowing our days.

For the giver, for the gifts, praise, praise, praise!

## Resources

*Charter for Racial Justice* - available free for postage from the UMW Mission Resource Center  
*Response Magazine* – Nearly every issue has something related to racial justice.

### Reading Program Books:

2010 ~

*No Turning Back: My Summer with Daddy King*  
*Can We Talk About Race?: and Other Conversations in an Era of School Resegregation*  
*Am I a Color Too?* (Children)  
*Louis Sockalexis: Native American Baseball Pioneer* (Children)  
*John Lewis in the Lead: a Story of the Civil Rights Movement* (Children)

2011 ~

*Inheriting the Trade: a Northern Family Confronts its Legacy as the Largest Slave- Trading Dynasty in U.S. History*  
*The Latehomecomer: A Hmong Family Memoir*  
*Same Kind of Different as Me: A Modern Day Slave, and International Art Dealer, and the Unlikely Woman Who Bound Them Together*  
*The Heart of Racial Justice: How Soul Change Leads to Social Change*  
*Dia's Story Cloth: The Hmong People's Journey of Freedom* (Youth)  
*Slant* (Youth)

2012 ~

*The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*  
*Color-Blind*  
*The New Jim Crow*  
*Amazing Faces* (Children)  
*The Beatitudes* (Children)

2013 ~

*Outcasts United*  
*A Country for All*  
*Love in a Headscarf*  
*Every Day Is A Good Day: Reflections by Contemporary Indigenous Women*  
*One World Kids Cookbook* (Children)  
*Violet* (Children)

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