**Sacred Conversations to End Racism – JLCM UCC**

**SACRED CONVERSATIONS TO END RACISM**

Welcome to Sacred Conversations to End Racism

The United Church of Christ has a long history of working towards eradicating systemic and institutional racism. In 2003 General Synod 24 adopted a resolution calling for the UCC to be an anti-racist church stating that “racism is rooted in a belief of the superiority of whiteness and bestows benefits, unearned rights, rewards, opportunities, advantages, access, and privilege on Europeans and European descendants.” <http://www.ucc.org/justice_racism_anti-racist-church>

In 2008, racial justice advocates within Justice and Witness Ministries developed the online curriculum Sacred Conversations on Race. The Sacred Conversations Resource Guide was designed to address the needs of local congregations, pastors and laypersons with interest in starting on a journey towards racial justice and reconciliation.

Over the last nine years many UCC congregations have used the Sacred Conversations Resource Guide to develop meaningful relationships, delved into the impact of systemic and institutional racism, planned events and activities highlighting participants growth and awareness of the issues communities of color face.

**Where are we today regarding race relations within the Christian Church and Society?**

The United Church of Christ remains committed to being an anti-racist church, however, we are facing a resurgence of tactics and behaviors that call for a deeper commitment to eradicate the ongoing practices of oppression, hate speech, individual bigotry, and overt violence against communities of color.

**What is needed in this present moment?**

I believe we can Reclaim God’s Love and Justice through Sacred Conversations to End Racism

Scripture teaches us that God’s love for humanity remains foundational to the mission vision and purpose of reconciliation with God and neighbor. The greatest commandment in the Scripture is: *Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul, and with all of your mind.”*[Mt 22:37]. Jesus continues teaching the command with, *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* [Mt 22:38]  The Scripture is an ancient reminder to us in the twenty-first century that love is a priority within the Christian community when we believe in and follow Jesus.

**Sacred Conversations to End Racism: A Restorative Justice Journey**

“Racism is a philosophy based on contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the center of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission.” (MLK, Jr.)

You are invited to begin a journey with *Sacred Conversations to End Racism.* The updated curriculum is introduced in 4-Phases. Each phase is 6 to 8 weeks and is intended to lead participants into conversations leading to sustainable actions that are historical and foundational to the *how* race was constructed, *who* constructed and sanctioned race as a model for American society, and *what* role the Christian Church played in supporting the division of humanity by skin color categories as a means for instituting the global European colonialism project.

 Phase I through IV are culturally inclusive learning modules. The goal each week is to deconstruct whiteness as the norm in America—social, political, and religious life. Truth telling begins the reality that there is no one culture that is dominant over others. God did not create race nor assign Europe and Europeans over and against other human beings. Sacred Conversations to End Racism is a curriculum inviting, nurturing, and sustaining participants to be on a journey that values culturally inclusive narratives and people groups. The learning modules rightfully place all God’s people on the margins. God is the center, creator, and sustainer of everything that exist.

**Enter the Journey through Phases I through IV**

Each phase is inclusive of:

* Understanding who, how, and when the Christian Church and European colonialism created, sanctioned, and supported racism
* Engage culturally inclusive biblical texts
* View webinar sessions
* Listen to personal stories, poetry, and contemporary and sacred music
* Review short documentaries
* View culturally inclusive artwork
* Engage deeply with participants through group and one-on-one processing
* Develop meaningful relationships and commit to the journey to dismantle racism

**Will conversations end racism?**

Sacred conversations alone will not end racism. We are people of great faith who believe in and trust the living God. We can disrupt, dismantle, and eradicate systems that prevent people from living freely within the United States, We can create a movment towards activism protecting undocumented immigrants from being deported. We can show up when communities of color are threatened by militarizism and police violence, and we must take a stand and declare that Black Lives Matter. The Good News as reported 2 Timothy 1:7 states,

*“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but the spirit of power, of courage and resolution, to meet difficulties and dangers; the spirit of love which will carry us through opposition.*”

**Join the journey and begin today engaging with Phase One of Sacred Conversations to End Racism.**

***Sacred Conversations to End Racism*** *is a restorative justice curriculum Available at UCC Front Line Faith website March 2018*

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