

Racial Justice Engagement Opportunities

for Local Units of United Methodist Women

Share with your District President which of these activities you have completed:

Build awareness.

- Distribute a copy of the *Charter for Racial Justice* to every United Methodist Women member in your unit and to members of your local church. Post it on a church bulletin board or include a link in your digital newsletter. Read and discuss the *Charter* at your unit/circle meetings.
- Develop a regular practice of reading/sharing news articles from local and regional news sources related to racial justice issues in your community.
- Host a racial justice guest speaker from your community at your unit/circle meeting. Seek out a trusted voice with a history of deep engagement. Be sure to compensate that person appropriately for the time and energy of preparing and presenting.



Grow your understanding of racial justice.

- Engage in a Bible study or devotional program focused on racial justice themes. Explore the resources available from **United Methodist Women**, the **General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR)**, **Discipleship Ministries, Church and Society, Black Methodists for Church Renewal, MARCHA—Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de los Hispano-Americanos, New Federation of Asian American United Methodists, Native American International Caucus** and **Pacific Islander National Caucus of United Methodists**.
- Study **United Methodist Women’s Racial Justice Time Line** together. Invite each member to choose an event for deeper research and study. Then bring back your learnings to share with one another at the next unit/circle meeting.
- Lead the **“Because We Believe: Life Within United Methodist Women”** workshop during a unit/circle meeting. This dynamic workshop offers a variety of United Methodist Women-specific scenarios for member engagement and reflection.
- Screen a film or TV documentary series on racial justice and discuss it as a group.
- Participate together as a unit in a webinar related to racial justice and one of the two United Methodist Women campaigns (Just Energy for All and/or Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline).
- Attend a Conference- or District-sponsored racial justice event together.
- Lead a racial justice book study, drawing from trusted reading list recommendations. One useful resource for beginning this work is *So you want to talk about race* by Ijeoma Oluo. ***A companion supplemental online course*** is also available for readers who want to go deeper.
- Plan a pilgrimage to an important local site in your region’s racial justice history. For example, you might visit a local civil rights museum, a justice memorial or local courts and/or ports of entry with trustworthy guides.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN PLANNING

How can we engage new members and potential members in our racial justice programming? (For more on member engagement, see here.)

How can we engage/partner with our pastor(s) and other lay ministry teams in our church to deepen our impact?

Are there special Sundays or other seasons of the Christian year that may be especially useful times to engage?

Looking for an abridged resource list to build your own understanding of racial justice? **Click here.**

Build relationships across lines of race and ethnicity.

- Plan a joint unit/circle meeting with a unit/circle of a different racial/ethnic background. Be attentive to issues of equity in your planning and participating. For example: Who has to travel and who gets to be “host”? How are speaking/listening times shared responsibly? How is your gathering aligned with our “sisterhood of grace” guidelines?
- Plan a joint worship service with a church whose majority membership is of a different racial, ethnic or language background than your own church.
- Develop a relationship with your United Methodist Church Conference Commission on Race & Religion (CCORR) team. Connect your United Methodist Women circle/unit to your Conference’s racial justice work.

Take action.

- Join local coalition efforts to advance racial justice in your local community. Regularly support the group with your prayers, your presence, your gifts and your service.
- Participate in a local or state-level vigil, march, advocacy day or other public witness for racial justice. You might think about collaborating with groups such as the NAACP, Black Lives Matter, United We Dream or others.
- Hold a letter-writing event after church to support racial-justice focused efforts through one of United Methodist Women’s two national campaigns (**Just Energy for All** and/or **Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline**) or another campaign in your community/context.
- Partner with your church’s pastor, other lay ministry teams and congregants of all ages to update your church’s classrooms, curriculum resources and library to better embrace core values of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Deepen your self-awareness and practice accountability.

- Explore and deepen your own racial self-awareness at an individual level. When in your childhood did you first realize you were [Black/Asian/Native/White/Pacific Islander/Multiracial/Latina/o/x]? How does your identity inform your perspective and experience? Reflect personally and share your stories with one another.
- Conduct a racial justice audit of your church with the help of trusted antiracism leaders. **The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCRORR), Crossroads** and **People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond** are potential partners in this work.

A Word for District and Conference Presidents: Please encourage and uplift the work of local units engaging with the Charter for Racial Justice. Consider featuring stories in the District/Conference newsletters and/or publicly celebrating units’ racial justice engagement at annual meetings or other gatherings. Most importantly, continue to pray for local unit leaders as they engage in this vital ministry.

United Methodist Women Resources

Just Energy for All: unitedmethodistwomen.org/just-energy-for-all

Online Class on *So you want to talk about race*: umw.convio.net/site/MessageViewer?em_id=4991.0&dlv_id=8777

Racial Justice Resource List (abridged): unitedmethodistwomen.org/racialjustice/racialjusticeresourcelist.pdf

Racial Justice Time Line: unitedmethodistwomen.org/rjtimeline

Remembering King 50 Years Later: unitedmethodistwomen.org/king

School-to-Prison Pipeline Bible Studies: unitedmethodistwomen.org/school-to-prison-pipeline-bible-study

Tools for Leaders: Resources for Racial Justice: unitedmethodistwomen.org/download-resources/racial-justice-tools-for-leaders.pdf

United Methodist Women: unitedmethodistwomen.org

Additional Resources

Black Methodists for Church Renewal: bmcrumc.org

Church and Society: umcjustice.org

Crossroads: crossroadsantiracism.org

The General Commission on Religion and Race (GCORR): gcorr.org

Discipleship Ministries: umcdiscipleship.org

MARCHA—Metodistas Asociados Representando la Causa de los Hispano-Americanos: marchaumc.org

New Federation of Asian American United Methodists: nfaaum.org

Native American International Caucus: naicumc.com

The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond: pisab.org