



**WISCONSIN  
CONFERENCE**  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

## **Honoring Our Pledge to Address Racism**

*by Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels*

The first time I remember being aware of my white privilege was when I was in college. I was newly aware of the importance of being environmentally conscious and “going green.” When a group of friends and I stopped at a convenience store for a cold drink, I smugly called out the two fellas who accepted the clerk’s offer of a bag. What a waste of a dinosaur! They were literally going to put the bag in the next trash can they saw! I was proud of my minor activism, maybe even a little haughty...until they explained to me that, as young men of color, they didn’t have the luxury of declining a plastic bag for their Gatorade. They were no less pro-earth than I was; they simply knew that as young black men, the optics of them walking out the door of a store with an un-bagged item were just too fraught. In just this minor exchange, I realized how privileged I had been, and that I really knew nothing.

It’s a simple, sad memory, but it comes to mind as the Wisconsin Conference Racial Justice Working Group encourages clergy and lay leaders to register for the Anti-Racism Training and Retreat at Moon Beach from April 28-30.

The intent of the retreat, presented by Jessica Vazquez-Torres of Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training, is to increase one’s understanding of the systemic violence that is racism in our society, our communities, and our churches. As the church, it is our duty to not just be not racist, but to be anti-racist. This means we need to identify and work against racism. This workshop will help us to identify the insidious ways we perpetuate racism without even thinking about it. Whether this is your first step or a continuation of your journey, this workshop will meet you where you are to help you get closer to being an anti-racist, pro-reconciling leader for your church and community.

Sadly, it’s barely news anymore when we read that Milwaukee is the most segregated city in the country and that Wisconsin is the worst state in which to be a person of color. There is no surprise anymore when the statistics show that the school to prison pipeline in Wisconsin disproportionately incarcerates people of color in comparison to Minnesota, a state with a similar size population and demographics.

It is in part because of this harrowing reality, but even more because we as a Conference pledged that we would actively engage in the work of addressing the racial

issues in Wisconsin, that General Synod 2019 is scheduled to be here. You can be a part of keeping that pledge by [registering for the retreat here](#).

The retreat, which is being heavily underwritten by the Conference, is \$199. Contact Franz Rigert at [frigert@wcucc.org](mailto:frigert@wcucc.org) if additional scholarship funds would be helpful.

In Joyful Hope,

Rev. Bridget Flad Daniels  
Senior Minister  
Union Congregational United Church of Christ, Green Bay  
and NE Association Representative to the Wisconsin Conference Racial Justice Task Force