

## **A Letter to the Wider Church**

The United Church of Christ (UCC) is among the whitest Christian denominations in America. In spite of our strong commitments to racial diversity, equity, and inclusion, our congregational reality remains 84% White with no other racial or ethnic group representation exceeding 6%, according to the UCC Center for Analytics, Research & Development, and Data gleaned from the 58% of UCC churches reporting. Given all churches did not report, it is estimated the racial divide is even more stark.

Regardless of public statements and actions, such empirical data presents a sobering reality for a church that makes bold commitments to anti-racism and toward the dismantling of White supremacy in our institutions of faith. The U.S. population is 62% White. Not only is there dissonance between our stated aspirations and our present reality, there is dissonance between many of our churches and the communities we are called by God to serve.

**But there is more to the story.**

The perpetual call to discipleship means such data need not be an indictment of who we are, but rather can serve as an opportunity to transform our theological, social, and cultural traditions in ways that more closely align with the gospel we preach. We believe the unity of the church is not of its own making. It is a gift of God. By the power of the Holy Spirit we are a united church and a uniting church.

We are certainly no stranger to such movement of the Spirit. Our historical narrative and current commitment remind us that such transformation is possible.

**As the church continues to align our operations, culture, and ministries with our values around racial diversity, equity, and inclusion, we recognize denominational leadership must lead by example.**

Everyone has their personal experience of the UCC and of the national setting, and all of those experiences matter. In order to engage the deeper emotional and spiritual work of building an equitable ministry, empirical data is necessary to establish a baseline from which to identify challenges and measure progress.

Toward this spiritual call, the United Church of Christ Board voted, unanimously, to lead both the UCCB and national setting in an institutional racial diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment. Just as we audit finances annually to assess fiscal stability and viability, **on September 1, 2020, the UCCB will issue a public [Request for Proposal](#) to several identified racial equity organizations to accompany us on this journey of self-examination by leading us through an objective racial equity assessment from which we will challenge and hold ourselves accountable.** Please feel free to share the RFP with others who specialize in such work.

Developing a common analysis and language is not a task for only one workshop, nor is it a 90-minute session to fit in a board meeting. There must be an ongoing commitment to build staff and board knowledge and skill to talk about racism, power, and white privilege within the church; to analyze data, to identify and implement interventions, and to develop a roadmap for racial equity.

At this moment in our nation's history, when the world seems to have paused at the intersection of courage and compassion, people of faith are poised to live justice out

loud in new ways. It is in this moment that the church is called to go deeper. And we will not go alone. The same God who has guided our incredible journeys in years past is the God who guides us now.



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