

Report to the Church Council
of
the United Church of Chapel Hill

Submitted by
the Sacred Conversations on Race
Workgroup

February 1, 2015

**Report to the Council of the United Church of Chapel Hill
from the Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR) Workgroup**

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"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- 1 John 1:1-9

**Report to the Council of the United Church of Chapel Hill
from the Sacred Conversations on Race Workgroup**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2008, the United Church of Chapel Hill (UCCH), in response to a call from national United Church of Christ (UCC) leadership, began having Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR). In 2012, ready for deeper engagement, the SCOR work group asked for a charge from church council to discern how our church might more consciously confront the racism that shapes all lives and institutions in America, and how we might heed the call of the UCC Synod to live as an anti-racist church. The Council obliged, with a call. Over a two-year period SCOR invested immense energy in the achievement of the following goals:

- Raising awareness about current effects and trends in racism
- Educating our congregation about racism and its eradication
- Developing additional leaders who will work to foster the anti-racism movement

In addition, SCOR struggled with the question of what anti-racism means and the necessary steps toward living more openly and intentionally as an anti-racist church. We know that our lives in America continue to be shaped by race. Fifty years after the passage of significant civil rights legislation, race is still the primary indicator of outcomes in all aspects of American life. To that end, we now share our findings and reflections in the hope that, as a body, we will continue our transformation into the true church of Jesus Christ where racial divisions have no place.

SCOR offers the following nine recommendations:

1. Continue on-going opportunities for anti-racism education to raise awareness and deepen our understanding about race and racism.
2. Develop opportunities and processes for corporate acknowledgment of the sin of racism, confession, grief, healing, and assuming a sense of responsibility and spiritual bond to act together for change.
3. Conduct an institutional church audit and evaluation to uncover and measure the effects of white dominance within the church's design, structures and culture.
4. Examine the existing relationship between our church and Fisher Memorial United Holy Church (Durham).
5. Examine our church's mission and relationship to Iglesia Unida de Cristo and the Karen community.
6. Develop an anti-racist mission or covenant statement.
7. Create a church-wide action plan to identify and carry out ongoing concrete actions.
8. Establish an accountability structure to ensure responsibility and objective completion.
9. Link the church's anti-racism work to the anti-racism work of related organizations and faith-based communities.

These recommendations are not intended to be implemented simultaneously, but rather sequentially over a period of time, in much the way the church employed the Open and Affirming (ONA) process, led by the pastors and lay leaders in the 1990s. This process demonstrated effectiveness in promoting the increased awareness, common understandings, and church-wide resolve needed for the church to adopt a new identity. Lastly, if so tasked, the SCOR workgroup is committed to lead or further guide our Council

as it begins the preparation and planning for this critical transformation of our church community into an openly anti-racist church.

Report to the Council of the United Church of Chapel Hill from the Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR) Workgroup

I. Background

In 2008, the United Church of Chapel Hill, in response to a call from the national United Church of Christ (UCC) leadership, began having Sacred Conversations on Race (SCOR). Appendix 1 more fully describes the UCC call for sacred conversations and our church's early response.

From 2008-2012, a SCOR committee hosted a number of planned conversations and programs. (See Appendix 2 for a list of SCOR programs during this period).

In 2012, ready for deeper engagement, the SCOR group asked for a charge from Council to discern how our church might more consciously confront the racism that shapes all lives and institutions in America, and how we at United Church of Chapel Hill might heed the call of the UCC Synod (Appendix 3) to live an open witness as an anti-racist church. The Council obliged, with a call.

II. Charge to SCOR from UCCH Church Council (August 2012)

“The Sacred Conversation on Race Committee (SCOR), in response to its request in a letter to this body on August 28, 2012, is hereby given responsibility to structure activities that will lead the congregation in discerning how the United Church of Chapel Hill might live more fully into its mission of being an anti-racist church.

Further, SCOR will provide Council with recommendations about how our church should proceed to achieve that goal.

During this two-year period SCOR will endeavor to:

- Raise awareness about current effects and trends in racism,
- Educate our congregation about racism and its eradication
- Develop additional leaders who will work to foster the anti-racism movement.”

III. Where have Sacred Conversations on Race led us?

The SCOR Workgroup, which has involved more than 35 members of our congregation, has met weekly since 2012. Committed to our charge, we have invested many hours and much energy into deepening our understanding of racism and into sharing opportunities and resources with the church community. (See Appendix 4 for a list of activities related to race and racism that have been facilitated by SCOR members, our pastors and other members of the church since the time of the August 2012 charge.)

Most importantly, we have grappled with the question of what it might mean to be a multicultural, anti-racist church and what steps would be necessary to launch us more fully and intentionally into a process that would lead to an church-wide embrace of this identity.

In the following pages, we share our findings, reflections, and recommendations.

IV. Findings and reflections: Where do we find ourselves at the outset of 2015, and what ought our response be, as a Christian community?

In 1991 a UCC Pastoral Letter on Contemporary Racism and the Role of the Church (signed by our church member, and then, conference leader, Rollin Russell) began, “Racism, in all its overt and covert forms, is an affront to the very foundations of our faith. ...Despite significant progress, our church, society and world are polarized today because of the perverse and destructive sin of racism.”

Today, twenty-three years later the same statements can be made. (And coincidentally another pastoral letter was issued just this past week in January 2015, with the same observation.)

Recently thousands of people across the country, acting in response to the unpunished killings of Trayvon Martin, Jordan Davis, Eric Garner, Michael Brown and so many more unarmed black people who have been injured or who have lost their lives to police or vigilante violence, have taken to the streets to proclaim that “*black lives matter.*”

It is true that our lives in America continue to be shaped by race. Even now, 50 years after the passage of significant civil rights legislation, race is still the primary indicator of outcomes in education, health, wealth, employment, criminal justice, social services, and housing. There have been progress and improvements in our public policy and judicial rulings. For example, it is no longer permissible by law to segregate people or deny access to public institutions. But white dominant culture, social structures and belief systems are not as easily changed by laws, and we remain a nation characterized by unconscionable racial inequities. (See Appendix 5: *Persistent Racial Disparities and Inequities*)

For those of us who follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, we must acknowledge and confess the sinfulness of racism in our nation and all of its institutions, and express the hope of deliverance from the world we have built.

Through deep, honest, and ongoing reflection and engagement with one other, we envision a transformation into the true church of Jesus Christ that rejects all forms of domination, including the norm of white supremacy that has prevailed in our country and its churches.

We seek to be liberated, once and for all, from the captivity of racism and economic structures that serve the interests of one group of people while allowing others to suffer.

And we acknowledge that all of us living in racist systems are damaged, living with distorted views of ourselves and our communities, terrific economic costs, squandered opportunities and compromised humanity.

We envision being born again into the life-giving wholeness of a Gospel community.

V. Recommendations

Our conceptualization of an anti-racist church is one that commits to an on-going intentional and purposeful process of engaging the congregation in activities and actions that deepen our understanding of race, racism and its impacts. As our awareness and analysis grows, the church seeks a way to respond, as followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

We recommend a **process much like the Open and Affirming (ONA)** process (that encourages churches to embark on a period of study and discernment that may lead to a public covenant of welcome into their full life and ministry to persons of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, http://www.ucc.org/lgbt_ona) that our congregation engaged in the 1990s. A similar study and discernment process could be undertaken to raise awareness and build a common understanding/analysis of racism with a critical mass of the congregation. The process would be named, widely and regularly communicated, and involve the entire congregation (including all staff, lay leaders, youth, children, etc.)

Following are what we see as the critical components of the process.

1. Continue on-going educational opportunities to raise awareness and deepen our understanding about race and racism. Education is a fundamental tool for change.
 - a. Important educational objectives
 - i. **Know our true history.** To understand racism today, we must have a good and complete knowledge of the racial history of our country, our state, our local communities and their institutions; and the Christian church, the Christian church in America, the UCC, and the history of local churches, including our own.
 - ii. **Develop common understandings and definitions.** Conversations about racism and attempts to address it are hampered by our lack of common understanding about what race is, and what racism looks like.
 1. We need to clarify that **race** is a relatively recent idea, a social and political construction with no genetic basis. We need to understand how and why it was constructed, and how it continues to re-construct itself.
 2. We need to expand our understanding of **racism**, shifting our focus from individual bigotry and prejudice, to understanding racism as a phenomenon of social systems with historical, structural and institutional manifestations.
 - iii. **Bring a focus to white supremacy, advantage, and privilege.** One of the stumbling blocks in understanding and addressing racism has been our focus on the oppression of people of color, while failing to examine and acknowledge that racism is a constructed system of advantage for those considered white. We need to develop an in-depth understanding of what whiteness has meant in America, in terms of the development of white supremacy cultural norms, advantages and privileges and what it means today.
 - iv. **Abandon colorblindness as a goal, and develop color- and culture-consciousness.** We cannot undo systemic racism by denying that we see race and pretending that we are all the same. This condition is a privilege of whiteness that helps maintain a system in which we are situated very differently

based on race. People of color are acutely aware of this condition, while white people are able to remain oblivious. Furthermore we must recognize that there are many cultures and cultural norms, besides the white dominant one that characterizes all our institutions. A multicultural society and church cannot be based on blindness to color and culture; one culture cannot dominate or overpower the other on the principle that it is better to all be the same.

- v. **Examine the racialization of immigrant groups—its history and present-day manifestations and impacts. Our country has a history of marginalizing and exploiting immigrant groups for the benefit of white economic and political power.** We need to understand the immigrant experience better, including what is gained and lost, when immigrants are allowed to assimilate to the place of being considered white. It is also important to develop an analysis around the “divide and conquer strategy” that has disempowered people of color, while maintaining white supremacy.
 - vi. **Develop an understanding of implicit or unconscious bias.** We need to understand what is meant by implicit bias, why we have it, how it impacts actions and decisions, and what we can do to minimize its impact.
 - vii. **Develop an understanding of internalized racial oppression.** We need to develop an understanding of psychological impacts of living in a racialized society, and how racial messages are internalized within us, impacting our feelings about ourselves, our values, and our ways of interacting with the world. This effort includes not only an examination of the internalized inferiority of people of color, but the internalized superiority of white people that also distorts and damages.
 - viii. **Race relations and racial dynamics** – As we deepen our analysis around race and racism, we can expect cross-racial relationships to deepen and to become more honest and open. At a relationship level, learning needs to be focused on understanding the barriers to right relationship (e.g., microaggressions). White people also need to learn and practice what it means to be accountable to people of color.
 - ix. Learn and be able to articulate the past and present **impacts of racism on people of color and white people alike. How do we all suffer from this system? How will we all benefit by its destruction?** Appendix 5 lays out institutional impacts of racism that highlight the advantaging of white people and the institutional, cultural and structural barriers for people of color. Obviously there are other impacts on us that are not easily captured in data. As a people of God, it is important that we also recognize and grapple with the emotional, psychological and spiritual damage produced by racism.
- b. Education opportunities, methods and resources
- i. We believe the **Racial Equity Institute** anti-racism workshops, which are regularly hosted at UCCH and have involved 80+ UCCH members, to be an excellent source of training for all the objectives above. These trainings provide a critical analysis for understanding and dismantling institutional racism. **We recommend that all pastors, staff, and lay leaders participate in this training in the next year. In addition, we strongly encourage all members of the congregation to enroll in a workshop .** This effort may require working with organizers to remove barriers to attendance (e.g., financial or scheduling).

- ii. Ground education about race and racism in **scriptural and theological teachings of the church.**
 - iii. Make use of ongoing sessions in existing **adult education venues** (e.g., Sunday mornings, Wednesday evenings, and special groups, like Women’s Group, Retired Men, Young Adults).
 - iv. Create opportunities for **small group discussions and personal reflection.**
 - v. Recognize that members of our congregation reflect **different levels of interest and knowledge and stages of readiness** for this study and develop educational opportunities to accommodate these differences.
 - vi. Create educational opportunities for **children and youth**, within exiting groups, and in intergenerational settings.
 - vii. Create **visual materials** such as posters, flyers, and inserts to help communicate about concepts as well as events.
 - viii. Make use of **experts within our congregation and within our greater community** to facilitate learning opportunities.
 - ix. Make use of **denominational resources** for sacred conversations on race and racial equity.
2. Develop opportunities and processes for corporate **acknowledgment of the sin of racism, confession, grief, healing, and assuming a sense of responsibility and spiritual bond to act together for change.**
3. After a period of education and development of a church-wide common analysis of institutional racism, **conduct an institutional audit and evaluation** to discern where white power, privilege and dominance have been institutionalized within the church’s design, structures and culture. This audit would include, but not be limited to:
- a. **Mission, purpose, identity** (Church’s constitution, by-laws, mission statement, belief system, worldview, history, and traditions are examined and changed to reflect a commitment to anti-racism)
 - b. **Personnel (paid staff and volunteers)** (Racial equity in leadership positions, salaries, effective training, policies that build a sense of community and trust)
 - c. **Members and community** (Members are racially proportional to the surrounding community, people of color in the surrounding community are adequately and fairly and served, outreach is not discriminatory)
 - d. **Educational programs** (Equitable quality of programs and services for white people and people of color; programs reflect anti-racism commitment)
 - e. **Pastoral care and other interpersonal services** (Prioritize inclusion of all church members, regardless of racial or ethnic background; reflect dominant culture humility and multicultural sensitivity)
 - f. **Worship style** (images, symbols, rituals, practices, music and other artistic expressions)
 - g. **Organizational culture** (Including decision-making processes, communication and management styles, use of time and space, scheduling, level of flexibility, structures for receiving and considering new ideas)
 - h. **Accountability to people of color and the lifting up of all cultures** (not to exclude white culture, but to recognize for what it is, and how it has dominated)
 - i. **Theological doctrines** (Recognize and identify the ways that white, mostly male theologians, have failed to engage substantive discussions of racism. Prioritize the

examination of the work of theologians of color, especially those writing about the experience of Black Americans and Latinos.)

- j. **Church initiatives for justice, outreach and service** (Programs have not only a continued emphasis on charity to address needs created by injustice, but an increased emphasis on dealing with the injustices that create the need for charity).
4. **Examine the established relationship between our church and Fisher Memorial United Holy Church** with whom we share a choir, United Voices of Praise, in the context of what it means to be an anti-racist congregation. Are there ways that we would change or enhance our relationship? In what ways, if any, could this long-time collaboration be more celebrated and visible within the church?
 5. **Examine our church's mission and relationship to Iglesia Unida de Cristo and the Karen community** in the context of what it means to be an anti-racist and multicultural congregation.
 6. When the church is ready, **develop a written mission or covenant statement** that explicitly states our congregation's commitment to being an anti-racist church.
 7. Following the development of a mission or covenant statement, **create a plan to identify and carry out ongoing concrete actions based on the shared new awareness and covenant.**
 8. **Establish an accountability structure**, identifying the groups or individuals who will be responsible for following up on various recommended actions, establishing timelines and goals, and reporting to appropriate church bodies (e.g. annual report).
 - a. This effort may take the form of a coordinating committee that reports to a board, or some other structure that Council determines to be most effective and appropriate.
 9. **Link the church's anti-racism work** to the anti-racism work of other churches, our denomination, organizations, institutions, and communities, for mutual support and shared resources.

VI. Conclusion

The members of SCOR have found this learning experience at times to be deeply disturbing, but also extremely moving as we have explored the meaning of white privilege, the ingrained institutional racism in our societies, and God's call to us to become the Beloved Community. We urge the Council to take immediate and decisive actions to further the transformation of our Church and community into an openly anti-racist organization. As members of SCOR, we stand ready to assist in the process through sharing our stories, our experiences, our skills, and our resources.

A number of us have offered personal statements (Appendix 6) regarding our commitment to supporting our church in undertaking a process to proclaim and uplift our identity as an anti-racist church, working in an on-going faithful process to reclaim our common humanity, in the name of the One who has claimed us and continues to work in our individual and corporate lives.

VII. Signatories to these Recommendations (*see personal statement in Appendix __)

1. Jeanne Allen*
2. Jack Allen*
3. Gary Boorman*
4. Natalie Boorman*
5. Christen Campbell*
6. Betsy Crittenden*
7. Bill Crittenden*
8. Robbyn Davis-Ellison*
9. Linda DeJongh*
10. Jan Dodds*
11. Carol Edmonds*
12. Janet Flowers*
13. Sharon Hanson*
14. Ann Hastings*
15. Megan Hughes
16. Sherick Hughes*
17. Tye Hunter*
18. Wanda Hunter, co-chair*
19. Mary Jenne*
20. Cindy Johnson*
21. Karlene Knebel*
22. Larry Kroutil*
23. Bill Murray
24. Kathy Murray*
25. Nancy Pipes
26. Ross Pipes*
27. Rachel Reckford
28. Katherine Royal*
29. Micah Royal*
30. Betsy Russell*
31. Rollin Russell*
32. Ingrid Schmidt, co-chair*
33. Linda Sellars
34. Deborah Stroman*
35. Gina Upchurch*
36. Gates Vrooman*
37. Nancy Vrooman*
38. Chuck Willingham*

Appendix I

The Initial Call for Sacred Conversations on Race and the UCCH Response

On May 18, 2008, the United Church of Christ Collegium of Officers issued a new pastoral letter on racism, calling for local churches to inaugurate a “sacred conversation on race,” stating that this conversation is urgently needed in our homes and work places, and in the halls of power.

This letter followed the firestorm of media coverage given to excerpts from sermons delivered by Jeremiah Wright, then pastor of Trinity UCC in Chicago to which Barack Obama belonged. Barack Obama was at that time running in the primary to be the Democratic nominee for the office of President of the United States.

In response to the castigation of Reverend Wright, Obama left Trinity and distanced himself from his pastor. UCC President John Thomas defended Jeremiah Wright and led the Collegium in encouraging UCC churches to initiate discussions and study of race and racism, especially the societal structures that maintain racial inequity and injustice. Resources for Sacred Conversations were made available on the UCC website.

UCCH took up this call under the leadership of the pastors and Hiawatha Demby and Ingrid Schmidt who led the first SCOR initiatives, gathering resources and facilitating discussions and programs within our congregation. These activities led to the formation of the SCOR committee (under leadership of Hiawatha, Ingrid, Janet Flowers, Jan Dodds, Karen Demby, and Wanda Hunter, along with Pastors Richard and Jill Edens), and then evolved into the current group that has met weekly on Sunday mornings since fall 2012.

Appendix 2

SCOR Programs and Activities on Race and Racism (Fall 2008 - Summer 2012)

- Film series: *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (Fall 2008)
- “Interpersonal Skills for Handling Racial Communications” with Bill Murray
- “Undoing Racism” half-day seminar with Partnership Project from Greensborough (Feb 2010)
- “Picking Cotton, Righting Wrongs, Becoming Friends” (Three adult forums with invited speakers (Sept 2010)
- Ongoing United Voices of Praise choir fellowship and ministry with Fisher Memorial United Holy Church in Durham (began 1994)
- Formation of Fisher-United Church Collaborative Committee on Racism (Sept 2010)
- First Racial Equity Workshop at United Church (January 2011)
- “Race, Health & Well-being” forum & community event with Dr. Camara P. Jones, CDC (June 2012)
- Summer film series: *Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?* (2012)
- Church-wide outing to view and discuss film, “The Help” (2011)

Appendix 3

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CALLED TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST CHURCH

ADOPTED 2003 GENERAL SYNOD MULTIRACIAL/MULTICULTURAL ADDENDUM TO 1993 PRONOUNCEMENT AND PROPOSAL FOR ACTION

- WHEREAS, 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; and
- WHEREAS, the reactions of people of color to racism are internalized through destructive patterns of feelings and behaviors impacting their physical, emotional, and mental health and their spiritual and familial relationships; and
- WHEREAS, through institutionalized racism, laws, customs, traditions, and practices systemically foster inequalities; and
- WHEREAS, the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance affirmed that racism has historically through imperialism and colonization created an unequal world order and power balance with present global implications impacting governments, systems, and institutions; and
- WHEREAS, the denomination has shown leadership among many United Church of Christ conferences, associations, and local congregations by initiating innovative antiracism programs, by developing anti-racism facilitators, and in general have made dismantling racism a priority, there is still much to be done. As we continue in this effort, the work we do must reflect the historical and present experiences and stories of all peoples impacted by racism. We must work from a paradigm reflective of the historical relationships of racial and ethnic groups and racial oppression within the United Church of Christ and society; and
- WHEREAS, the United States finds itself in increased racial unrest during this period after the tragedy of September 11, 2001. New studies show that hate crimes and blatant acts of racial violence doubled in number during the last half of 2002 and are continuing to rise. These outward acts, combined with continued institutional racism, emphasize the need for antiracism mobilization within church and society as we seek to do justice; and
- WHEREAS, there are growing movements of peace that have people of all races, backgrounds, and ages involved, urging us to expand our knowledge of what racism is and study its ramifications on all people; and
- WHEREAS, General Synods of the United Church of Christ have, since 1963, voted eleven resolutions, statements, and pronouncements denouncing racism, and it is time to honor mandates and expectations of this body and of the church.
- THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the United Church of Christ is called to be an antiracist church and that we encourage all Conferences and Associations **and local churches** of the United Church of Christ to adopt anti-racism mandates, including policy that encourages anti-racism *programs* for all United Church of Christ staff and volunteers; and
- LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that Conferences and Associations and local churches facilitate programs within their churches that would examine both historic and contemporary forms of racism and its effects and that the programs be made available to the churches; and
- LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that Justice and Witness Ministries provides leadership in the development and implementation of programs to dismantle racism, working in partnership with the Collegium, Covenanted Ministries, Affiliated Ministries, Associated Ministries, Conferences, Associations and local churches in developing appropriately trained anti-racism facilitators; and
- LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Covenanted Ministries of the United Church of Christ work in concert to dismantle racism in church and in society and partner with Conferences and Associations in sharing resources and costs associated with doing antiracism work.
- LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Justice and Witness Ministries will report the progress of the development and implementation of these programs at the Twenty-fifth General Synod.

Appendix 4

SCOR Activities Pursuant to the 2012 Charge from Council

1. Examination of relevant UCC archival material
 - a) UCC Calls To Be an Anti-Racist Church (2003, 1993) (see Appendix 3)
 - b) Pastoral Letter on Racism and the Role of the Church (1991) (Rollin Russell of UCCH was a signatory to this letter)
 - c) Pastoral Letter on Racism (2008)
http://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/unitedchurchofchrist/legacy_url/1998/pastltrracism.pdf?1418425519
 - d) Pastoral Letter on Racism (2015)
http://www.ucc.org/pastoral_letter_new_awakening_01162015
 - e) Pastor Yvonne Delk's "A Time for Action" (*Sojourners*, March –April, 1998)
<http://sojo.net/magazine/1998/03/time-action>
 - f) Sacred Conversation resources (<http://www.ucc.org/sacred-conversation>)
 - g) The congregational survey (2009), underscoring greater diversity as a priority for our members.

2. Reading and study of *Becoming An Anti-Racist Church* (Joseph Barndt)
 1. Joseph Barndt conference call, Aug 2012
 2. Joseph Barndt visit, July 2013

3. Special sessions with Rollin Russell (on history of the UCC) and Jill Edens (on *Practices of UCC African American Worship*)
 1. SCOR members participate in, promote and support Racial Equity Workshops at UCCH
 - a. Approximately 25 workshops at UCCH (2011-2014)
 - b. Approximately 800 people have participated in these workshops; workshops have spawned new organizing groups in Durham and Raleigh.
 - c. Approximately 80 UCC members have attended workshops
 - d. Several UCCH pastors, other Chapel Hill-Carrboro pastors (primarily from African-American churches), ENCA pastors, and Geoffrey Black, president of the national UCC have attended workshops.
 - e. Chapel Hill Carrboro Schools sponsored a youth workshop at our church.

 2. Began meetings between SCOR members and Iglesia members, 2014

 3. Leadership of Adult Education programming
 - a. "Racing Across the Lines" forum & community event with Debra Plummer

- b. Sponsored a Wednesday Nights Together series on “Becoming An Anti-Racist Church” (Sept. 2012)
 - c. Sponsored documentary series “Race: The Power of an Illusion” (summer 2013)
 - d. Sponsored adult forum series “Sacred Conversations: A Journey Toward Justice” (January 2014)
 - i. White Affirmative Action (Debby Stroman, Tye Hunter)
 - ii. Why Are People Poor? (Jeanne Allen, Ingrid Schmidt)
 - iii. Implicit Bias (Stephanie Perry, Wanda Hunter)
 - e. Adult Education forums on denial of Medicaid (April 2014, Carol Edmonds, Bill Murray)
 - f. Helped sponsor screenings of the documentary “Traces of the Trade” (with James DeWolf Perry), Fall Retreat 2014, and debrief January 2015
 - g. Organized opportunities for conversation and prayer after the grand jury decisions regarding the killing of Michael Brown and Eric Garner.
 - h. Adult Forum Series (January 2013)
 - i. Ambassador James Joseph, “How Dare We Hope?”
 - ii. Reginald Hildebrand, “What Did the Emancipation Proclamation Accomplish?”
 - iii. Tim Tyson, “From Stokely with Love: A Black Power Salute to Martin Luther King, Jr.”
 - i. Adult Forum Series (September 2014)
 - i. Reginald Hildebrand, “The Times Were Strange and Stirring: Methodist Preachers and the Crisis of Emancipation ”
 - ii. Ervin Milton, “Black and White: African American Church History in the UCC”
 - j. James DeWolf Perry (January 2015) “From Emancipation to Equality: What History Tells Us About the #BlackLivesMatter Movement Today.”
4. Organized movie outings for church members, to jointly view and discuss “Twelve Years a Slave,” and “Dear White People.”
 5. Worked with other UCCH church committees and groups such as Sacred Arts, Music, and Deacons to raise awareness and make recommendations regarding greater inclusivity in visual arts and worship practices (e.g. addressing white artistic depictions of Jesus and no longer discouraging clapping as a spiritual expression during worship).
 6. SCOR members help lead UCCH Prison Ministries
 7. Created a SCOR Facebook page to share resources and widen our church’s sacred conversation as we “seek to confront the sin of racism in our desire to see the church be as one.”
 8. SCOR members provide leadership in local community racial equity organizing

- a. Organizing Against Racism (OAR) activities including caucuses, Raising Anti-Racist Children, and special events
- b. OAR-sponsored “Politics, Race and the November Elections”—a 4-part series that has leadership from SCOR members (Karen Demby, Hiawatha Demby, Jan Dodds, Tye Hunter, Wanda Hunter, and Carol Edmonds) (Sept-Oct 2012)
- c. Support for MLK Monday Night Suppers in partnership with Chapel Hill High School (2013, 2014)
- d. Presentations on race and racism to other church groups (Church Women United, Trinity Lutheran)
- e. Leadership for new UNC class “Leading for Racial Equity” (Debby Stroman, Tye Hunter, Wanda Hunter)
- f. Activities addressing voting and voter suppression (led by Kathy Murray)
- g. Joining HKonJ (Historic Thousands on Jones Street) Coalition (led by state NAACP)
- h. Forward Together Moral Monday movement, rallies, and civil disobedience (led by the North Carolina NAACP)
- i. Participation in Chapel Hill-Carrboro branch NAACP
- j. Participation in Community Equity Partners for local schools
- k. Leadership and participation in Justice United

Appendix 5

Persistent Racial Disparities and Inequities

For every measure of well-being in the United States race is a determining factor, even after controlling for income and education (see references to academic studies in the list below.)

Data show that white Americans have the best outcomes in every institution: health, education, employment, income, banking, social services, criminal justice, etc. Black Americans are at the other end of the spectrum and suffer the worst outcomes. (In some areas, American Indian outcomes may be the worst, but population numbers are so small (consider the systematic annihilation of these people), it is often difficult to make statistical comparisons. There are historical, structural and institutional factors that hold the white-black polarity firmly in place.

Other racialized groups, e.g., Latinos, Asians, Pacific Islanders, Muslims (in the past, these were other immigrant groups—Italians, Irish, Jews, Eastern Europeans), move up and down the spectrum depending on their political and economic value to white elite power structures.

While the data demonstrated disparities and disproportionality are overwhelming, 75% of white Americans do not think that there is racial bias in the criminal justice system, and the majority of white Americans don't think that racism is a significant problem in America.

HEALTH

Life expectancy and chronic disease

- Black people, at exactly the same income and education level, are more likely to live sicker and die younger.

Green, T. & Darity, W. (2010). Under the skin: Using theories from biology and the social sciences to explore the black-white health gap. *American Journal of Public Health*, 100, S1, S36-S40.

Kochanek, K., Arias, E., & Anderson, R. (2013). *How did cause of death contribute to racial differences in life expectancy in 2010?* <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db125.pdf>

Murphy S.L., Xu J.Q., & Kochanek K. (2013) Deaths: Final data for 2010. *National Vital Statistics Reports*; 61 (4). Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.

Birth outcomes

- The infant mortality rate for Black Americans in the US is more than twice the rate for White Americans, with similar racial disparities existing in rates of low birthweight and preterm delivery. Survivors of these adverse birth outcomes have poorer development and health in infancy, childhood, and adulthood. These outcomes cannot be explained by socioeconomic status or health behaviors.

Dominguez, T.P., Dunkel-Schetter, C., Glynn, L.M., Hobel, C., & Sandman, C.A. (2008). Racial

difference in birth outcomes: The role of general, pregnancy and racism stress. *Health Psychology*, 27, 194-203.

Lu, M.C. & Halfon, N. (2003) Racial and ethnic disparities in birth outcomes: A life course perspective. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, 7, 13-30.

Rosenthal, L. & Lobel, M. (2011). Explaining racial disparities in adverse birth outcomes: Unique sources of stress for Black women. *Social Science and Medicine*, 72, 977-983.

EDUCATION

(with special thanks to church member, Sherick Hughes, Associate Professor in the UNC School of Education for this extensive citation of literature supporting racial disparities in education)

Disproportionality in discipline & the school to prison pipeline

- Beginning in preschool, black/African American children are more likely to be disciplined more harshly, including suspension and expulsion, than white children, for exactly the same infractions and with the same record of previous infractions. The school-to-prison pipeline issue has emerged as an ancillary element of this phenomenon.

New federal report: Racial disparities in school discipline begin in preschool (2014) posted March 21, 2014 on ajc.com, *The Atlanta Journal Constitution*
<http://www.ajc.com/weblogs/get-schooled/2014/mar/21/new-federal-report-racial-disparities-school-disci/>

Skiba, R., Eckes, S., Brown, K. (2010). African American disproportionality in school discipline: The divide between best evidence and legal remedy. *New York Law School Law Review*, 54, 1071-1112.

Skiba, R. J., Horner, R. H. Chung, C. G., Rausch, M. K., May, S. L., Tobin, T. (2011). Race is not neutral: A national investigation of African American and Latino disproportionality in school discipline. *School Psychology Review*, 40, 85-107.

Skiba, R. J., Arredondo, M., Williams, N. T. (2014). More than a metaphor" The contribution of exclusionary discipline to a School-to-Prison Pipeline. *Equity and Excellence in Education*, 47, 546-564, DOI: 10.1080/10665684.2014.958965

U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION
 Data Snapshot: School Discipline, Issue Brief No. 1 (March 2014)
 For other data snapshots in the series, visit the CRDC at: www.ocrdata.ed.gov

Assignment to special programs

- Nationally, we have over 38 years of research on the issue of black/African American, Latino/a, and impoverished youth being misguided/misplaced into Special Education (largely high-incidence highly subjective special education categories like ADD, LD, ADHD, ED, and BEH).

O'Connor, Carla DeLuca Fernandez, Sonia (2006). Race, Class, and Disproportionality: Reevaluating the Relationship Between Poverty and Special Education Placement. *Educational Researcher*, 35, (6), pp. 6-11.

- In NC and nationwide, black/African American youth are disproportionately not recommended for gifted education, and Advanced Placement courses even when they meet or exceed academic benchmarks.

Darity, W., Castellino, D., & Tyson, K, & Cobb, C. & McMillen, B. (2001). North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Division of Accountability. *Increasing Opportunity To Learn via Access to Rigorous Courses and Programs One Strategy for Closing the Achievement Gap for At-Risk and Ethnic Minority Students*. [Washington, D.C.] : Distributed by ERIC Clearinghouse, <http://www.eric.ed.gov/contentdelivery/servlet/ERICServlet?accno=ED459303>

Resegregation and bilingual education

- U.S. K-12 schools are the most segregated than they have been since the 1968 assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This issue is important because racially isolated schools are almost always inequitable, especially when they are filled with African-, Latino-, Native-American or immigrant youth.

Frankenberg, E., & Lee, C. (2002). Race in American Public Schools: Rapidly Resegregating School Districts. *The Civil Rights Project*, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Orfield, G., & Lee, C. (2005a). *Why Segregation Matters: Poverty and Educational Inequality*. The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Orfield, G. (2001). *Schools More Separate: Consequences of a Decade of Resegregation*. The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Hughes, S. (2006). *Black Hands in the Biscuits Not in the Classrooms*. New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishers.

Hughes, S. & Berry, T. R. (Eds.) (2006). *The Evolving Significance of Race*: New York, NY: Peter Lang Publishers.

Inequities in school funding and resources

- With school funding based heavily on local property wealth, it is the urban schools that serve large proportions of poor, minority, and immigrant children that are most negatively impacted by the unfair funding that is comprised heavily of property tax revenues.

Kozol, J. (2012). *Savage Inequalities*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.

Kozol, J. (2005). *The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America*. New York, NY: Crown Publishers.

- Bilingual learners' population grew substantially in NC and eight other southern states, since the 1990s. They face *benevolent racism*, a more benevolent view of racism that depicts Latinos as hard-working and compliant people who should be grateful and content with any form of compensation, since anything is better than what they could expect from their country of origin. This assumption serves to justify the exclusion of political agency and to exclude the Latino immigrants' availing themselves of positions of leadership, status and power.

Cervantes-Soon, C. G. (2014). A Critical Look at Dual Language Immersion in the New Latin@ Diaspora. *Bilingual Research Journal*, 37(1), 64-82.

Cervantes-Soon, C. G. & Valenzuela, A. (2010). Subtractive Legislative Policy: The Plight of Bilingual Language Learners. Chapter prepared for B. Bustos Flores, R. Hernandez Sheets, and E. Riojas Clark (Eds.), *Educator para Transformar: Teacher Preparation for Bilingual Student Populations*, pp. 191-204. New York: Routledge.

Villenas, S. (2001). Latina mothers and small-town racisms: Creating narratives of dignity and moral education in North Carolina. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 32 (1), 3-28.

Urrieta, L. (2010). Whitestreaming: Why some Latinos fear bilingual education. In L. D. Soto & H. Kharem (Eds.), *Teaching bilingual/bicultural children: Teachers talk about language and learning* (Vol. 371, pp. 47-56). New York, NY: Peter Lang.

EMPLOYMENT

- Black men with college degrees (and no criminal record) are less likely to be called for an interview than white men, with no college degree and a felony conviction.

Pager, D. (2003) The mark of a criminal record, *American Journal of Sociology*, 108, 935-937.

- White/European American men are more able than Black American men to be able to avail themselves of the kinds of contacts that matter most for new graduates seeking employment.

Royster, D. (2003). *Race and the invisible hand: How White networks exclude Black men from blue-collar jobs*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Implicit bias and discrimination in employment

Bertrand, M. & Mullainathan, S. (June 20, 2004). Are Emily and Greg More Employable Than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination. *American Economic Review*, 94, 991- 1013. <http://scholar.harvard.edu/mullainathan/files/emilygreg.pdf>

Mock, B. (Sept. 25, 2013) Bank of America ordered to pay \$2.2 million for racist hiring practices, *Facing South*, The Institute for Southern Studies.
<http://www.southernstudies.org/2013/09/bank-of-america-ordered-to-pay-22-million-for-raci.html>

WEALTH & FINANCE

- Some of America’s biggest banks charge people of color 3.3 times more than other borrowers.

Daniels, J. (June 8, 2009). Systemic racism in banking: The Wells Fargo case. *The Society Pages*.
<http://thesocietypages.org/colorline/2009/06/08/systemic-racism-in-banking-the-wells-fargo-case/>

Ferguson, J. Racism in finance? (April 3, 2012). Major banks issue higher interest rates to minorities.

Deseret News.

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865553379/Racism-in-finance-Major-banks-issue-higher-interest-rates-to-minorities.html?pg=all>

Kaufman, A.C. (Dec. 12, 2014). Black-white wealth gap has reached a 24-year high. The Huffington Post.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gap_n_6317202.html

Kochlar, R., Fry, R. & Taylor, P. (2011). “Wealth gaps rise to record highs between Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. Pew Research Center.

Kochlar, R., Fry, R. (Dec. 12, 2014). “Wealth inequality has widened along racial, ethnic lines since end of Great Recession.”

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/12/racial-wealth-gaps-great-recession/> . Pew Research Center.

Lui, M., Robles, B., Leondar-Wright, Brewer, R, & Anderson, R. (2006). *The Color of Wealth: The Story Behind the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*. New Press.

Oliver, M. and Shapiro, T. (1995). *Black Wealth/White Wealth*. Routledge: New York.

Shapiro, T. (2004). *The Hidden Cost of Being African-American*. Oxford University Press: New York.

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Children of color are more likely to be referred to DSS; more likely to be reported as victims of abuse and neglect; more likely to be removed from home and to spend more time in foster care; less likely to be returned to family; and more likely to “age out” before being adopted or placed in a permanent home.

Derezotes, D., Poertner, J. Testa, M. (Eds) (2005). *Race Matters in Child Welfare: The Overrepresentation of African-American Children in the System*. The Race Matters Consortium, Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America.

Crane, K. & Ellis, R. (2004) Benevolent Intervention or Oppression Perpetuated: Minority Overrepresentation in Children’s Services, *Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 9, 19-38.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- More than 60% of the people in prison are now racial and ethnic minorities. For Black males in their thirties, 1 in every 10 is in prison or jail on any given day. These trends have been

intensified by the disproportionate impact of the "war on drugs," in which two-thirds of all persons in prison for drug offenses are people of color.

- Black people and white people use illegal drugs at practically identical rates, but black people are three times more likely to be arrested for drug possession.
- People of color are far more likely to be stopped and searched by police, despite the fact that the likelihood of contraband actually being found is higher among white people.
- People convicted of crimes and later exonerated by DNA evidence are “disproportionately black.”
- Black children are more likely to be tried in court as adults and sentenced to life in prison than white children.
- The death penalty is significantly less likely when the murder victim is black. Baumgartner, F., Grigg, A., & Mastro, A. (in press). #Black Lives Don't Matter: Race-of-victim effects in U.S. Executions, 1976-2013. *Politics, Groups, and Identity*.

Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* carefully documents and analyzes the seamless interplay and continuity of cascading and accumulative consequences of differential treatment experienced by black men in the education system, by law enforcement, by legal representation, by courts, by prisons, and by hundreds of laws and policies that shape these systems as well as the on-going collateral damage once those who have been incarcerated are finally released back into society. *Highly recommended.*

Alexander, M. (2010) *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. The New Press.

The Sentencing Project website is also an excellent resource on racial disparities in the criminal justice system. See <http://www.sentencingproject.org/clearinghouse/>

Appendix 6

Personal Testimonies from UCCH Members

(in alphabetical order by last name)

JACK ALLEN

“If we are to align ourselves with God’s purpose for creation we must act in love. I find myself more and more attracted to what I discovered first in C. S. Lewis and lately have come to understand more fully in my recent reading of Reinhold Niebuhr, James Cone, and Martin Luther King. When we as a society wish to show love, that love is often best expressed by seeking justice. We claim our nation as a society which seeks liberty and justice for all. Only by addressing the societal injustices of racism can we validate that claim.”

JEANNE ALLEN

“I have been interested in doing something about the issues of racism for a very long time, but, particularly as I began to understand something of the experience of people of color through the work of Richard Wright's *Black Boy* and Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and the rich poetry of James Weldon Johnson, Nikki Giovanni, and Langston Hughes that I taught for a number of years at the high school level. My faith journey has always been part of why equality for all humans should be so. Most recently, however, I am finding myself in a new phase of my life, when I will be blessed to have 10 to 15 years to actively make a difference. The analysis of the REI Workshop and the call of King reheard in the movie *Selma* is the call upon my life to do something to help and support systemic changes, changes in the water of our culture in my local church, school system, and community.”

GARY BOORMAN

“Racism continues to have a detrimental effect on the United States by denying the country the full talents of many of its citizens. It explains in part why the United States is almost unique among industrial countries by its lack universal health care, limited funding for public education, lack of maternity leave for most folks, have active efforts to suppress voter participation, has anti-immigration policies and leads the world in mass incarceration. I want my grandchildren to grow up in a country that lives up to its ideals. I am convinced that only by providing opportunity for all and embracing the talents of new immigrants can the United States remain competitive and be a wonderful place to live and raise a family.”

NATALIE BOORMAN

“Discussing the issues of “race” whether with friends near or family far away, still raises many uncomfortable feelings for me. Shame, embarrassment, anger, sadness, guilt among them. It’s so easy to think I’ve got it together and “those People” don’t. Words from the familiar hymn “Not my brother or my sister but it’s me Oh God, standin’,” in the need of prayer”, what prayer do we (all of us) need when it comes to racism? It’s complicated. I believe becoming an anti-racist church is a wonderful means of support and will help all of us find answers.”

CHRISTEN CAMPBELL

“This country was founded on religious freedom and the equality of all men. When the greed of Slavery became an expected norm in our country, and systems were put in place to advantage the white men enforcing those systems, the collective body of our country became diseased. We, as a faith community need to hold to hope and work toward eradicating the "dis ease" and dismantling racism in our church and our community.”

BETSY CRITTENDEN

“As I sit down to write what I feel about racism and the dreadful results it has for all of us I find that my mind and heart are full but the “right” words do not always come easily. Having been a part of workshops, discussions, informal conversations, movies, and private thoughts I know what I feel about the harm done to us all as we participate, willingly or unknowingly, in our racist society. But mostly, I am proud to be a member of a congregation that takes seriously its role in the fight against racism.”

BILL CRITTENDEN

“As early as 1546 John Heywood, a writer and creator of proverbs, wrote, ‘There are none so blind as those who will not see. The most deluded people are those who choose to ignore what they already know’. More than 400 years later Heywood’s statement is depressingly true in regard to racial issues in America today. We would have to be blind not to “know” that the prevailing racial bias in our country is devastating to all concerned, no matter what the color of their skin. Against all positive evidence to the contrary we choose to be “blind” to the personal and cultural destruction we perpetuate on those around us. ‘When will it end, O Lord, when will it end?’”

ROBBYN DAVIS-ELLISON

One of the most important reasons to become an anti-racist church is because as the saying goes, "the most segregated place on Sunday is the church." What a shameful truth since God created us all equal. When I first joined UCCH it was because I wanted a place to pray and feel comfortable and the pastor would not be preaching about how I would burn in hell because of my sexuality. I was very surprised to find out that I was also sitting among people (mainly white) who wanted to also accept me because of my skin color. I thought that coming to UCCH meant that I had to give up my black church community. I kinda have. But I am gaining important white friends. White friends whom I can trust. White males whom I had absolutely no trust for. How would or could I? I didn't know any!!!

As a whole, becoming an anti racist church opens the doors for many other people of my skin color and faith to say, "I want to attend that church." Churches are segregated because people usually think the same thing. "We have nothing in common with those people." Even though we are all coming to church for the same reasons. We are all praying and asking God for forgiveness and replenishing our souls of the struggles from the week before.

Becoming an anti-racist church will also give People of Color a chance to let go of some of their mistrust of "all things white." We do not trust, and rightly so in many, many cases. However, we must have a place, organization and or church to go to as an example. Everyone talks about the need to understand each other's cultures. Our church needs to be a real example and starting with our own congregation and the congregations of our partners is the best way.

LINDA DE JONGH

“At this stage in my life as an older white American woman, I feel a deep, strong yearning to see all the personal hurts, damage to society, and waste of young lives and talents due to racial inequity come to a STOP. Before I finish my time on earth, I want to see full transparency and mutual respect in conversations and efforts among all God’s people. For too long, I’ve witnessed (at worst) worn-out and ignorant racial epithets or (at best) a talking “around” the issues, using surface politeness and agreeableness. I suspect that none of us were hearing—or saying--our true feelings. The waste, and the pain, are heartbreaking. As a nation, we have absolutely fumbled the ball on this, but “I do believe” that we can still rectify things. Doing so will give our beloved country fresh new strength, when all its people

truly do stand on equal footing, can speak honestly, and together accomplish amazing things--Godly things. I do so want to see a start to this in my lifetime so that we can build a foundation so that our children and grandchildren will want to continue the effort with even greater might and an unquenchable conviction.”

JAN DODDS

I moved to North Carolina in 1989 to bring African-Americans into my professional field. It has proved to be much more complicated than I could have thought. UCCH has been a support during this journey and I have been waiting for a chance to plumb the depths of racism, which can only be done deeply and safely through deep faith. The past four years of education and witness have been life-changing for me and the chance to face this demon head on with an institutional church is a welcome struggle. 400 years is a long time of habit to change but it can and I welcome a congregation willing to take it on in faith.

CAROL EDMONDS

“Our church and our denomination have a rich history of working for social justice and taking on the tough issues. The reality that we have people in our country, our community, and even our own church that have to deal with disparities in the way they are treated by educators, law enforcement, and the medical community is a tough issue. It is also a tough issue that we as a congregation, unknowingly can be unwelcoming because of our own blindness to the needs and sensitivities of others who come from different traditions and backgrounds. My involvement with SCOR, the Racial Equity Institute, UVOP and the NAACP have been valuable experiences in looking at the issue of race through the lenses of the people who have to live under a different set of rules and navigate society in ways that I, as a white woman doesn’t even have to think about.”

JANET FLOWERS

“Since 2008 when UCCH began having its SCOR discussions, I have become painfully aware of the many disparities and disadvantages people of color have faced and still face in our society. Now I see reminders of this moral issue in the paper every single day. Nowhere is this more evident to me than at Orange Correctional Center, where, of course, there are a disproportionate number of Black men. Institutional racism is wrong wherever it occurs. God clearly expects us to be in right relationship with him and with all others. I hope and pray that UCCH will seek to address and redress the results of white privilege, which keeps us from being in this right relationship.”

SHARON HANSON

“The reason that I believe we should become an anti-racist church is because there is such a disparity in health care, education, the criminal justice system and many other institutions in our country between white people and people of color. I believe this is unfair and due to the current institutional racism, implicit bias and because African Americans citizens have been discriminated against unfairly since the beginning of our country. This has to change and every Christian in this country who believes in the teachings of Jesus needs to understand this and needs to work to rectify it!”

ANNE HASTINGS

“Having taught race relations, as a white woman, for over 20 years, I continue to be disheartened by the ignorance and intractability of racism among whites. I’ve wandered from church to church seeking a predominantly white church pastorate and congregation that put forth racism and the fight against it at the forefront.”

SHERICK HUGHES

“Proclaiming oneself as a member of an anti-racist UCC is not an admission of previous individual active malice, but the naming and sharing of a mission and vision to actively fight structural racism. It is a proclamation that epitomizes Christ-inspired activism. It is a proclamation to empower oneself further by gaining more complex, clear and transparent understandings of how vexing racial issues of the past link to the present, as one joins the congregation in building a future *beloved community*. As a Black man and native son of NC, I am proud to be a member of a church with a SCOR ministry willing to make such a bold and necessary proclamation.”

TYE HUNTER

“Race-based slavery and its offspring, white supremacy and black oppression, are the great cracks in the foundation of American democracy. Health care, the environment, the distribution of wealth, criminal justice, foreign affairs, transportation, education, immigration, religion and every other facet of American life has been distorted and damaged by racism. As citizens, it is in all our interest to begin the task of righting this centuries old wrong. We will never be a healthy society until these sins are recognized, repented and repaired. As Christians, the stakes are even higher. Our fundamental charge from Christ is to love one another. As long as racism remains a powerful force in our lives, we are failing at our most important task.”

WANDA HUNTER

“Learning to see myself, my country, the Christian church, and my entire world through the lens of a white supremacy system has been the most jarring and important learning of my life. I recognize now how much the identities that we have constructed for ourselves, as citizens of a model democratic nation; as members of a progressive, liberal community; and as followers of Jesus are false identities that hold us all captive to a destructive, dehumanizing system. I long for the opportunity to continue to journey with my faith community into our racial history and the current realities that are its legacy. My hope is that together we can acknowledge what we have been, seek forgiveness and atonement, and find ways to live into the true identities of whom we claim to be and of whom we are called to be.”

MARY JENNE

“I think it is critical, for me as an individual, and for UCCH as an institution to which I belong, to look inward at the ways, despite our best intentions, we participate in and benefit from a racist system that is toxic for our country, our community, and our church.”

KARLENE KNEBEL

“I was drawn to United Church of Chapel Hill five years ago by the commitment and courage of the clergy and congregants to address the pressing social justice issues in our community and beyond. In my forty years as a resident of Chapel Hill-Carrboro I had attended other churches in the area but in 2010 I realized that I was coming to UCCH more and more frequently for community events and workshops that focused on racial and economic justice as well as advocacy training. It was a difficult decision to leave my faith community of eleven years but when I began attending UCCH I immediately found folks with whom I bonded and the worship experience fed my soul. My involvement with the anti-racism work of UCCH is a major focus of my spiritual life and my daily life. I look forward to our continuing journey toward increased racial inclusion in our church and also engagement with the wider community around the urgent need to end systemic racism.”

LARRY KROUTIL

“When I joined United Church of Chapel Hill, I promised with the help of God and as Christ's disciple, to resist oppression and evil. Although there are certainly many forms of evil, racism seems especially deep-rooted in our society. Through Sacred Conversations on Race, I have found a safe and grace-filled community within United Church that is committed to supporting one another in our individual and collective journeys to eradicate racism.”

KATHY MURRAY

“I recently saw the movie "Selma" and was so inspired by the bravery of those who fought so hard for equal rights, including the right to vote. I was saddened to know that those same rights are being rolled back. The Voter's Rights Act is being neutered and more and more people of color are losing their ability to vote. Violence still rules in the streets where young black lives are still devalued and lost through violence by law enforcement officials. Churches do need to rise up and start making statements that this is not right and it needs to change.”

ROSS PIPES

"God's children come from all places. We witness of the power of God's love for us, when all of the races, languages, cultures, and traditions gather, to celebrate His majesty, and worship with voices of love."

KATHARINE ROYAL

“When a young boy of fourteen is being bullied for being black, and his response is "why shouldn't I just kill myself and do society a favor since they're just going to kill me anyway," we should be way past the knowledge we have a problem. This outcry is not just a problem for people who are black. In the words of Desmond Tutu, "ubuntu speaks of the very essence of being human. It is to say, 'my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say a person is a person through other persons.”

MICAH ROYAL

“I feel like involvement in the limited way I have been in the sacred conversations United Church has been having about race has brought me to a deeper understanding of race. For me, I began my journey on this topic through a racial reconciliation ministry in southern California, which emphasized the need to put aside personal prejudice and work toward understanding across boundaries by race. I feel that the sacred conversations I have been involved in at United Church have helped me begin to see the systemic and structural aspects of race, and how I need to own my own privilege as a part of a racist system. Just as without justice there can be no peace, without confronting the systemic abuses and our part in it, we cannot find the reconciliation and healing we seek as the Body of Christ.”

BETSY RUSSELL

“If we Christians could follow the commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves, there would be no need for an anti-racism focus. The facts show that we have not learned this. Facts do matter, though I believe that it is always a mistake to expect everyone to understand anything in the same way. No one has the whole truth; we always need to seek “more light and truth.” I support this proposal for interaction and communication that should foster caring relationships leading to effective personal and institutional change.”

ROLLIN RUSSELL

“Racism exercises such an insidious and pervasive power in our culture and in our personal lives that it requires a particular sensitivity in addressing it. A full awareness of our racist history and the resulting

gross inequality among us is so painful that when we have begun to understand it and to share that knowledge we can seem over zealous. At United Church we have a spirit of mutual acceptance and of commitment to justice that will make it possible to engage this disturbing issue as we should: "speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into the spirit of Christ, into full maturity." (Eph. 4: 13-15) It cannot be our sole focus, but it is an inescapable dimension of our sole focus on building the beloved community in all its God given diversity and beauty."

INGRID SCHMIDT

"Our world seems to give me limited choices about racism—either to get stuck in feelings of guilt or defensiveness about unfair privilege I did not choose, or to numb myself to the disparities and suffering I'd rather not see, or to despair that institutional and systemic racism is so deeply entrenched that there is nothing I, as one individual, could ever do to change it. But as a member of this wonderful faith community, I am reminded that I am not alone, and that there is transformative power in God's love. Through the example of Jesus' suffering and redemption, God gives us the individual and collective courage to be vulnerable to pain as we take an honest look at the tragic harm done by our past and current failings, but also to celebrate the good work that has been done thus far, and to live with hope and strength as we continue working toward a better future."

DEBORAH STROMAN

"It is easier to accept or rationalize micro-aggressions, lack of inclusion, a color blindness mentality or a lack of interest about issues of race at a work setting. However, it is confusing and painful to be in a loving, faith community and experience these hurtful consequences of bias and racism. That's why I eagerly decided to be part of the SCOR ministry that works directly on anti-racism efforts and education for our church. How can we live and demonstrate the UCC mission without a commitment to the empowerment and justice of all people? It is wonderful to know that UCC cares about every member and continues to lead in thought and action."

GINA UPCHURCH

"I want to work with my faith community to un-do racism because "I do believe" that the quality of it is my life is greatly diminished when others in America don't have the same opportunities I have. When we value all lives and speak truth in love, we have an opportunity to thrive as Christ's beloved community."

GATES VROOMAN

"One of the benefits of becoming an anti-racist church would be an increased awareness of white privilege. I take so many things for granted. Just because of my skin color, people show deference, they look at me with trust when I'm going to my car in a parking garage. I feel welcome in places like the YMCA of the Rockies, and the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Duke. And then there is the legacy of power that I have inherited by being white. I hope that as I become more aware of my white privilege, I'll become a more whole human being, sensitive to and appreciative of persons of other races as we struggle together for equality and justice for all."

NANCY VROOMAN

"Back in the late 60's I began teaching math in an all-black high school in Chicago. I experienced a collegial black-white faculty dedicated to improving the education of our students through community involvement and Saturday workshops. Many of my colleagues had left the South in search of better lives in the Chicago area. Around that same time, Gates and I were part of a Methodist camp staff which taught a White Racism curriculum for white high schoolers concurrently with a parallel curriculum for black students. Now I find myself tutoring at the Orange County Campus of Durham Tech. I'm disturbed

by the lack of males of color in the classes where I work. Further, the few black males that I have had in class are reluctant to ask questions and seek help. As a result, they rarely successfully complete their courses. SCOR has helped me see how much more work needs to be done!”

CHUCK WILLINGHAM

“I am 59 years old and have lived my entire life with the white male privilege of access to the opportunities of our country and its economy. I participate in the SCOR ministry work because Brown v. Board of Education is 60 years old and the Civil Rights Act is 50 and yet the barriers of racism still limit this same access to all.”