



Ideas for Congregations

There is much to be done to combat racism, and there are many good resources online and elsewhere to get educated and involved. Pray. Protest. Donate. Listen. Show up. Advocate. Vote.

In the wake of George Floyd's death, here are four ideas for congregations from the Racial Equity Team:

- 1. Speak out against racism and commemorate the Emanuel Nine:** The ELCA recently released worship resources to commemorate the Emanuel Nine on or near June 17th. The Racial Equity Team encourages congregations to make use of these resources. More information here: elca.org/EmanuelNine
- 2. Identify a Racial Equity Liaison for your congregation:** The Racial Equity Team would like your help in creating an anti-racist network throughout our synod in order to foster collaboration and action. We know many of our congregations are already doing important work – book studies, speakers, dialogue, advocacy – and we believe we can and must do more together. Our goal is to identify a Racial Equity Liaison at each congregation. Fill out this form to get your congregation involved: bit.ly/scswracialequity
- 3. Doing our anti-racist homework (specifically for those of us who are white):** Often times the emotional labor and burden of racial justice work falls on people of color. For real change to happen and as an act of care for our siblings, white people need to take ownership of their anti-racist education. There are many good books and blog posts about racism and white privilege. Organize a group in your church (or partner with a nearby church) to “do your homework.”

A few good resources for congregational discussion:

- **Church specific resources:**
 - Consider studying the [Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent](#)
 - [“On Behalf of Our Children: Wisconsin’s Racial Disparities and the Call of the Gospel”](#) – a Study Guide from the Wisconsin Council of Churches
 - [ELCA Racial Justice Resources](#)
- **Books:**
 - [SCSW Racial Equity Bibliography](#)
 - *Just Mercy* by Bryan Stevenson (Book & Movie) – Stevenson spoke at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering. His memoir is a good introduction to systemic racism in our criminal justice system. The book was turned into a movie. The movie is free to rent online for the month of June on YouTube, iTunes, and Amazon Prime Video.
 - *Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US* by Lenny Duncan
 - *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* by James Cone

- [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism](#) by Robin DiAngelo
- [How to be Anti-Racist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- A list of [31 Children's books to support conversations on race, racism, and resistance](#)
- **Movies:**
 - Emanuel – [Study Guide for Discussion](#)
 - Just Mercy
 - A Time for Burning – About a Lutheran pastor and church in the 1960s in Omaha that tries to cross the race divide with simple dinner meetings between members of two Lutheran churches, one black and one white.

4. **Listen to and amplify local black voices:** For those of us who are white, perhaps the best thing we can do is listen to our siblings of color and then follow through with action in response. The events of these past weeks have been deeply painful and traumatic for the black community. There are several area churches and organizations that are led by black leaders. Perhaps your congregation can make a point to listen to these leaders and amplify their voices.

Some local voices and organizations:

- [The African American Council of Churches of the Madison-area](#)
- [Nehemiah & Justified Anger](#) – Justified Anger offers educational opportunities
- [“Black Like Me” Podcast by Rev. Dr. Alex Gee](#) – Dr. Alex Gee is a Madison pastor who invites listeners “to experience the world through the perspective of one Black man, one conversation, one story, or even one rant at a time.”
- [Madison365 Town Hall featuring Black Leaders and Local Police](#)

[The Racial Equity Team also has a working document with additional ideas for places to donate, actions to take, policies to advocate, and more educational resources.](#) Please let us know if you have ideas or resources you would like us to add. You can do so by contacting Andy Twiton at pastor@tlcmsn.org.