



Reconciliation

Opportunities for Joint Mission, Study, Advocacy, & Worship

We invite congregations to come together for joint activities on the Presbytery's 2019 theme of reconciliation. We live, work, and worship in places that are divided along political, racial, class, age, gender and sexuality lines. We confront conflict in our families and churches. In 2019, we will challenge ourselves to celebrate the reconciliation to God that is ours through Jesus Christ, and we will strive for reconciliation with one another.

A fun way to explore this theme is for congregations to seek ways to blur or erase those lines of division together. We offer these ideas, but they are only suggestions. Let your imaginations run, but also let us know what you decide to do. We'd love to share it with others!

Worship & Pray

Form prayer teams/prayer services: meet together weekly (or more often!) to pray for reconciliation in our congregations, communities, nation & world. Organize a community prayer service and invite your communities to join you.

Pulpit exchange: Focus on reconciliation one Sunday and have your pastors exchange pulpits with another church in the group. If you are without a pastor currently, encourage an elder to preach on that Sunday at one of the exchange congregations.

Host weekday Bible study: Take turns hosting a weekday Bible study related to reconciliation, with participants traveling to each of the churches in the group over successive weeks.

Seek other opportunities for shared ministry: Our own Presbyterian-Lutheran fellowship in Beloit, San Jose Parish, welcomes connections with other congregations for joint ministry. Contact Rev. Gabriel Marcano for more information.

Study

Unlearn racism together: Send delegations from each congregation to the YWCA's *Unlearning Racism* series (Milwaukee and Racine) to see the impacts of racial division in Milwaukee.

Hold a book study on topics of division and reconciliation, such as:

- *White Fragility, Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*, Robin DiAngelo (also hear Dr. DiAngelo speak at our May 21 Presbytery Gathering).
- *We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom*, Bettina Love (copies available from the Presbytery Office at a reduced rate; also hear Dr. Love speak at our September 25 Presbytery Gathering).



- *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness*, Austin Channing Brown (also hear Dr. Brown speak at the Wisconsin Council of Churches Winter Forum (see below)).
- *Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption*, Bryan Stevenson.
- *Loving Our Interfaith Neighbors: A Study-Action Resource for Wisconsin Congregations* (downloadable at wichurches.org/programs-and-ministries/interfaith/).
- *Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul*, Eddie S. Glaude Jr.
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates (author of multiple, excellent books, so pick and choose a favorite).
- *Waking Up White and Finding Myself in the Story of Race*, Debby Irving.
- *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground (Pennsylvania Studies in Human Rights)*, Erin Daly & Jeremy Sarkin.

Listen to a podcast on restorative justice: Before we can move toward reconciliation, we need to be ready to make amends for the harm we've caused. In her podcast on NPR, former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske shares about her work in this field, particularly with the Catholic Church. She will be our keynote speaker at the November Presbytery Gathering. (wpr.org/listen/1239086).

Watch

Watch videos and hold a discussion on topics of division and reconciliation, such as:

- The Hate U Give (adapted from book by Angie Thomas)
- The Green Book
- 1-hour British television video, "Interfaith Dialogue" with a panel that includes Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim and Atheist perspectives.
youtube.com/watch?v=0_IQ2XjWtC0
- Entertaining 11-minute TED talk: Three Amigos and Breaking the Taboos of Interfaith Dialogue:
youtube.com/watch?v=tPnZArtsG_c&list=PLJOYQ8_6xnpM_mrtk1xcOlwGTRU5h1pWt&index=2
- "30 Good Minutes" video with Eboo Patel (Muslim) and Skye Jethani (Christian) on Interfaith Dialogue.
youtube.com/watch?v=jiatHzkKymw&index=17&list=PLJOYQ8_6xnpM_mrtk1xcOlwGTRU5h1pWt
- 35-minute video: "An Interfaith Dialogue with Students at American University"
youtube.com/watch?v=5jAOIpdGjwc



Attend the Milwaukee Muslim Film Festival: Discuss the film together over a meal. See the website (mmfilmfest.com/) for updated 2019 schedule and venues.

Pick your own favorite: Don't be limited by these suggestions. Read reviews, find something that pushes you out of your comfort zone.

Participate

Attend together conferences on topics of division and reconciliation, such as:

Austin Channing Brown, hosted by Wisconsin Council of Churches, March 9, in Madison (wichurches.org/calendar/event-list/winter-forum/).

Reggie Jackson, "Why Does Milwaukee County Have The Greatest Segregation of Any City in the USA and What Can We Do About It?", hosted by Christ Episcopal Church, April 9, in Whitefish Bay (christchurchwfb.org/talking-about-race-series-schedule/).

White Privilege Conference, "Understanding, Respect and Connecting," March 20-23, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa ([White Privilege Conference](#); use **PRES2019** as the discount rate (entered at the end of registration) to get a 15% discount).

Watch for other community events: Check your local papers and websites for events that you might do together.

Act

Get involved with community organizations: Before launching a mission effort, meet with and listen to community organizations in your area about the greatest needs and where you might contribute to an existing effort or start something new to fill a gap.

Visit an exhibition or museum focused on division and reconciliation: Explore the permanent and special exhibits of museums in the area, such as:

- Jewish Museum Milwaukee (jewishmuseummilwaukee.org/exhibits/upcoming-exhibits/).
- America's Black Holocaust Museum (to reopen, the museum needs your support; in the meanwhile, check out its online exhibitions at abhmuseum.org/).
- Visit your local museum of history with the aim of discerning whose story is told and whose is omitted or skewed. Discuss what you see and don't see.
- Visit one of our Native American museums, such as the Oneida Nation Museum in De Pere (oneida-nsn.gov/our-ways/museum/about-the-oneida-museum/).



Train to be advocates: Send a joint delegation to the Presbyterian Church's Ecumenical Advocacy Days training and lobby days, April 5-8, in Washington D.C. (www.advocacydayes.org/2019).

Take a mission/study trip together: Consider a trip to our southern border with our PC(USA) mission co-workers Mark Adams and Miriam Maldonado Escobar. Travel with other Presbyterians with the Peacemaking Program to learn about human trafficking. Use this year to prepare yourself for the trip. "Philippines and Hong Kong: Root Causes and Current Challenges of Forced Migration and Labor Trafficking," May 4-15, 2020. Application due date January 1, 2020. [Learn more.](#)

Host an anti-violence training: MKE LGBT Community Center offers community educational sessions around themes of anti-violence, working with LGBTQ survivors and other relevant topics.

Invite an International Peacemaker to speak: 2019 speakers will be listed in March. Learn about reconciliation and peacemaking in a different context that may guide your efforts here. presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/international-peacemakers/.

Volunteers with community organizations: Identify organizations in your area that are serving communities of people who have historically face discrimination, particularly organizations focused on empowerment of the community rather than charity. Offer to volunteer together and then learn about the people with whom you're serving.

Invite Chris Halverson and her sisters to speak: The Presbytery's own Office Manager and Associate Stated Clerk has a fascinating and thought-provoking story of her family's losses in Nazi Germany and her father's commitment against any form of discrimination. Chris and her sisters share their story to enthusiastic audiences across the state.

Volunteer with organizations serving our Latinx communities: Connect with organizations in your community to learn how you might best aid their work on a long-term or short-term basis. Voces de la Frontera has offices in Milwaukee, Waukesha, and Racine Counties (www.vdlf.org) and is a place to get started.

Going Deeper

The following resources were recommended by our February Presbytery Gathering speakers, David Sawyer and Deborah Fortel:

Boesak, Allan Aubrey and Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Radical Reconciliation: Beyond Political Pietism and Christian Quietism*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2016. A look at the intersection of reconciliation and justice.



Confession of Belhar, *The Book of Confessions, Part I of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)*. A Reformed Church of South Africa's answer to the question: "How should the church respond when sin disrupts the church's unity, creates division among the children of God, and constructs unjust systems that steal life from God's creation?"

Goodwin, Doris Kearns. *Leadership in Turbulent Times*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018. A resource for leaders of all kinds that demonstrates how Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, and Lyndon Johnson changed and grew, dealt with reversals, and demonstrated resilience in the midst of division and challenges.

Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011. How the human mind works and how we easily can arrive at inaccurate conclusions.

Kahneman, Daniel. "Why We Contradict Ourselves and Confound Each Other." On Being with Krista Tippett by On Being Studios on Apple Podcasts, 1/31/2019.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams. *The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*. New York: Avery, 2016. An unexpected friendship that bridges utterly different cultures and finds deep commonality – and joy.

Palmer, Parker J. *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Practical ways to build and deepen community.

Sawyer, David R. *Hope in Conflict, Discovering Wisdom in Congregational Turmoil*. Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007. A guide to utilizing conflict in congregations.

Sawyer, David R. and Deborah G. Fortel. *Pathmarks to New Church: A Workbook for Leaders of Communities in Search of Innovation*. Flourishing Church. Com., 2015.

Thurman, Howard. *Jesus and the Disinherited*. New York: Beacon Press, 2012. Originally published in 1949, in this book the great Black mystic offers a way from division to peace and reconciliation.

Volf, Miroslav. *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996. Written from Volf's own experience as a Bosnian and his deep grounding in the theology of Jurgen Moltmann.

Resources for practicing compassion include guided meditations at <http://compassionla.org/audio-for-cct>.