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Media Contact

Connie Larkman, News Director

Office: 216-736-2196

Mobile: 216-496-5540

Email: larkmanc@ucc.org

United Church of Christ intensifies racial justice work, launches Sacred Conversations to End Racism

CLEVELAND (April 6, 2018) — The United Church of Christ is launching Sacred Conversations to End Racism (SC2ER), a curriculum for congregations to use in their ministry to eliminate racism.

SC2ER is central to the UCC's call to action in a movement by the National Council of Churches that aims to finish the work of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—to confront racism and remove it from American culture.

“We are now facing a resurgence of tactics and behaviors in America that call for deeper commitment to eradicating practices of oppression, hate speech, bigotry, and overt violence against communities of color,” said the Rev. Velda Love, UCC minister of racial justice and curator of this new resource. “SC2ER’s new language and strategies move people beyond anti-racism conversations to active engagement. SC2ER seeks to restore humanity, eliminate myths and stereotypes, and engage in deep truth telling about the construction of whiteness and white supremacy.”

It begins with the understanding that race is not real.

“Race does not exist biologically nor anthropologically, neither is there any reference to race in the 66 canonized books of the Bible,” said the Rev. Traci Blackmon, Executive Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries. “Race is neither scientific nor sacred. Race is not real. But, racism is. It originates from the unholy belief that there are human groups with characteristics that make them superior or inferior to another human group. If there is evil, this is it. And for the sake of the Gospel it is incumbent that we work to eradicate its evil effects on all humanity. The United Church of Christ’s Sacred Conversations to End Racism intensifies our commitment to being an anti-racist church and creating a just world for all.”

The SC2ER’s 8-week curriculum takes shape in 4 phases with each interactive learning module aimed at sustain-

able action. Participants explore how race was constructed, who sanctioned race as a model for American society, and what role the Christian Church played in supporting the division of humanity by skin color.

The goal each week is to deconstruct whiteness as the norm in America's social, political, and religious life. Based on the Bible and through video, stories and the arts, the SC2ER curriculum examines the reality that there is no one culture that is dominant over others.

Issuing an invitation to use the curriculum to the denomination's 5,000 churches, UCC General Minister and President the Rev. John Dorhauer said, "We owe this to ourselves for the sake of a Gospel given to us by Jesus Christ that we sum up in these words—No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey you are welcome here."

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About the United Church of Christ The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination comprised of nearly 900,000 members and 5,000 congregations nationwide. Headquartered in Cleveland, Ohio, the UCC is a church of many firsts, including the first mainline denomination to ordain a woman, the first to ordain an openly-gay man and the first predominantly white denomination to ordain an African American. The UCC and its members are tireless advocates for social issues such as immigration reform, racial equality, LGBT rights, marriage equality, environmental protection and economic justice.