

# United Methodist Women

## Racial Justice Charter News

### Racial Justice for Such a Time as This

The call to racial justice workers is as urgent as ever. The rising incidence of hate crimes against South Asians, the murder of Black people at the hands of law enforcement, the ban on refugees and people from majority Muslim nations, the racialized disparities that exist for pregnant mothers, environmental racism, the racial-wealth divide and more all mean that as United Methodist Women, we are called for such a time as this. Just like Queen Esther, we may be wary and weary, scared and suspicious. Yet the call is as clear as ever.

God does not call us because we are ready, willing and able. God's call is about preparing us to serve, particularly in hard and harsh times. Many in our nation and around the world live in terror that they and their loved ones will be the target of racist attacks, deportation, eviction or even death. Our call to serve God is a call to stand in solidarity with those most at risk. Give us courage to answer this call.

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### Member Corner

*United Methodist Women Members  
Making a Difference for Racial Justice*

***Do Justice, Love Your Neighbor  
and Walk Humbly with God!***

Susan Sungsil Kim  
*Racial Justice Charter Support Team Member*

Like Jonah, I have tried to run from God's calling many times. When I was called to serve as Vice President and then President of the New York Conference of the United Methodist Women (UMW), I felt neither ready, nor qualified, but I ended up serving in both positions for four years each. At the end of each term, I realized God had equipped me through the years and using me for His purpose. At the end of my tenure as Conference President last year, I was called again to serve—this time by the Racial Justice Charter Support Team (RJCST) at the national level.

Through discernment, I was reminded “you are called by name” as it says in Isaiah. I was also reminded that God does not call the qualified but qualifies the called. I am blessed for the opportunity to serve again in a different capacity. The RJCST is made up of two UMW members from each jurisdiction, the Vice President of the National UMW, a few past and current members of the Program Advisory Committee, and several conference officers. Along with nine other racially diverse members of the RJCST, I attended a training session at our National Leadership Development Day. We attended a workshop about systemic racism throughout U.S. history, and we shared our thoughts on how to build an antiracist, multicultural and diverse society together. We explored the historical development of institutional racism and how it impacts our society today.

According to Professor Saito, “race has been used by whites to legitimize and create difference and social, economic and political exclusion.”

We studied systemic racism—how it operates institutionally and culturally, and how it shapes individual identity. During this seminar, I found myself in awe of how deeply I had accepted many white supremacist ideas and how I had come to identify myself close to these privileged whites due to my socioeconomic status and limited experience with racially motivated discrimination.

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## 2016 United Methodist Women Alaska Conference Racial and Social Justice Awardee

Racial Justice is an ongoing focus the mission work of United Methodist Women. The Charter for Racial Justice was created and adopted in 1978. The charter continues our urgent call for study and action on the principles and goals of its vision. Each year, the Alaska United Methodist Women seek to honor individuals or organizations whose efforts to overcome the barriers of racism, prejudice or injustice have made an impact in our communities, country and world. We commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and in deed, and to struggle for the rights and the self-determination of every person and group of persons.

Our 2016 recipient of the Alaska United Methodist Women's Racial and Social Justice Award is Dr. Walt Hays of Wasilla, Alaska. Walt Hays has been a resident of Alaska for over 50 years. He served for 20 years as program minister for the United Methodist Church in Alaska, pastor in Nome and director of Public Affairs and Development for Alaska Children's Services (now AK Child and Family). For 14 years, he served in nonprofit management and development for health, athletic and cultural institutions in Alaska and in fundraising counsel.

Walt's ministry has been that of an activist, supporter and communicator. He founded a coffee house for young adults in Anchorage in the late 1960s, hosted a weekly religious news program on two AM radio stations and was very involved in social justice issues, serving two terms as the President of the Alaska Council of Churches.

Walt was the recipient of the National Denman Evangelism Award of the United Methodist Church in 2005 and the Mount Award for Specialized Ministry from the Methodist Theological School in Ohio in 2008.

Since retirement, Walt has been an Alaska coordinator for the PET mobility cart—a sturdy, hand cranked cart that is provided free to the world's disabled through volunteer effort and private giving. Walt and his wife, JoAnn Shore, have led two humanitarian service teams to Guatemala in 2013 and 2015, and another team is being formed for 2017. He assisted in the delivery of the mobility carts and eye glasses on these occasions.

Walt is part of the grassroots nonprofit group Days for Girls. The organization's mission is to create a more dignified, free and educated world through access to lasting feminine hygiene solutions. In 2015, the Guatemala volunteers hosted a party for 330 preteen Mayan girls and their female family members, distributing 400 kits. Kits were underwritten by several donors and made possible by the volunteer sewing skills of women in Alaska, Florida, Iowa, Illinois, New York and Arizona. Indeed, this is a great step in helping to break the poverty cycle by allowing girls to stay in school!

This article was previously published at Chris Thompson's blog, [Church Visits](#).

### ***Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters: United Methodist Women's Work for Racial Justice Must Be Unceasing***

*I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. —Amos 5:21–24*

I love the image of justice rolling down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. I think of the powerful waterways, rivers and streams I have encountered. I remember a trip to Niagara Falls with friends, standing in the mist of that thunderous wonder where over six million cubic feet of water falls over the crest line every minute on average. I recall also a trip with my father to our homeland, Guyana, where we stood atop Kaieteur Falls, one of the world's highest single drop waterfall and marveled at its majesty. Whenever I am in front of a vast body of water I am shaken by its fierceness. I am made instantly humble and afraid of water's awesome potential.

#### **Move beyond “checklist racial justice”**

To be sure, fighting for justice is hard work, and doing it unceasingly takes grit and grace. We may want there to be surefire ways to certify that the work we do will result in a racially just world. Maybe, one theory goes, we just need to teach tolerance and have more inclusive history lessons in school. Or, as another theory posits, we simply need to spend more time together with people across racial lines to heal past wounds. These are not bad steps, but to see them as the answer leaves our work for racial justice incomplete. This is because these steps do not address the ways racism is fundamentally embedded into every institution in our society in order to systemically shift power and resources to white people and away from people of color.

The hard truth is that there is no list of things we can check off to guarantee racial justice. We must humbly and continually recommit ourselves to the lifelong struggle against racism and to changing our institutions so that they benefit all people equitably. Read the full text [here](#).

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### ON THE REFUGEE BAN WITH HARRIETT JANE OLSON, CEO OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

**Q: What is United Methodist Women's position on the recent executive order that bans all refugee admissions for 120 days?**

**A:** *"United Methodist Women takes to heart Jesus' commandment to love God and love our neighbor as ourselves. Throughout our 150-year history we have carried this out by extending God's love to women, men, youth and children around the world, including immigrants and refugees. Our foremothers met boats at Ellis Island to support young women, and created Gum Moon, a national mission institution in San Francisco to safeguard Chinese immigrant women. We have been active in receiving refugee families in our communities and welcoming immigrants to our churches. Working with immigrant organizations and The United Methodist Church, we advocate for just immigration reform at state and national levels in the United States and globally.*

*"Today, we affirm this history by calling on the United States to protect men, women and children fleeing war, famine, drought or persecution. We denounce calls to refuse refugees based on national origin and to turn away Muslim refugees. Our nation has a moral obligation to welcome refugees in numbers commensurate with the need, rather than excluding persons in need due to fear or xenophobia. The U.S. review process for refugees is already [stringent and extensive](#)." View the full statement [here](#).*

### Sign Up and Read the Newsletter Online!

You can now read excerpts from *Racial Justice Charter News* online!

The logo for the Racial Justice Newsletter, featuring the text "Racial Justice Newsletter" in white on a dark purple rectangular background.

*Racial Justice Charter News* has been in print since January 2013. There have been three volumes of this quarterly newsletter produced since then. Your contributions have made the newsletter a great resource! Please tell others that they can now sign up for the newsletter by entering their email address in the form at this [link](#).

### To contribute to the newsletter, contact

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Repercussions of European colonialism in the U.S. include white supremacy and white privilege through disenfranchisement, persecution against Native Americans, African-American oppression—even 100 years after the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863—and discrimination against Chinese immigrants (who began to arrive in California in 1850 and built the Transcontinental Railroad). Numerous efforts including the Immigration Act of 1924 and the Asian Exclusion Act were passed to bar other ethnic and racial groups from entering the U.S.

Because of the impact the Civil Rights movement and the work of people like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., major reform was seen including the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which repealed discriminatory quotas on immigrants, and allowed those banned by those previous acts to emigrate to the United States.

I moved to New York City in the early 1970s soon after this new law took effect. Growing up in a new language and culture was challenging and led to an identity crisis as a Korean-American youth. My 45 years as an immigrant to the U.S. can be summed up as follows: I assimilated into a predominantly white culture, teaching at predominantly white public schools and European private schools for 26 years. Korean-American immigrants in my generation as well as the generation above mine have benefited from this privilege which has been systemically denied to many Black Americans today. Although we faced prejudice because of our unfamiliarity with the language and culture, we too express and benefit from internalized racism.

I do not mean that we must feel guilty for feelings most people may not hold, but we must understand how Koreans have benefited from opportunities denied to others. As more generations begin to integrate we may see a gradual change in our internalized racism. However, in order to undermine the existing systemic racism and to bring justice for all, we must understand the injustice faced by Black Americans today. We must understand their historic plight and the impact of their long, agonizing fight for racial justice. This fight has ultimately benefited people of all races, through things such as the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, which made it possible for us to leave our poverty stricken or politically corrupted homes and seek the American Dream. As stated by John Wesley, we United Methodists are taught to "do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the places you can, in all the ways you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."

I hope the Korean-American UMW can "make it happen" by actively participating in racial justice as we are called to do in Micah: "do justice, love your neighbors and walk humbly with God."

*This article was originally printed [here](#) in English and Korean.*