



## Pres House Ten Challenge

At Pres House, engaging in racial justice is a regular part of our life together because following Jesus compels us to recognize the deep roots of systemic racism that pervade the communities we live in. Incidents of racial violence periodically get flashes of attention on the news and in social media; we believe that a sustained commitment over the long haul is necessary to effect meaningful change.

So we challenge you this summer by giving you this “playlist” which is a selection of ten sermons, blogs, and events about race from Pres House. There are many great resources available out there. We hope that hearing from people you know will encourage you to ask questions and continue the conversations in your specific communities.

Don't let the latest events of racial violence go by with simply a post of outrage, a 2.23 mile run, or silence. Do the work so you grow in faith and learn how to *“Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.”*

### [“A Pastoral Letter on Recent Events: Holy Friction” \(December 2014\)](#)

“I understand the hesitation to engage in this topic—I know our community is one in which people endeavor to treat each other with respect and do not want to offend others. To talk about race may feel like walking into a field of unmarked landmines, and most folks would rather choose a different field than attempt to engage this issue. Don't—this is too important for us to not talk about, especially in a faith community.”

### [Confessions of a White Preacher \(March 2015\)](#)

A confession in response to the police shooting death of Tony Robinson, an unarmed black teenager.

### [“Race: Repairers of the Breach” \(November 2019\)](#)

“Today we are naming the uncomfortable truth that the DNA of American Christianity is embedded with genes of white supremacy and racism, and that slaveholder religion is an entrenched part of our society.”

### [“Who Do You Say That I Am? Being Christian in Public” \(August 2017\)](#)

#### [Full Sermon](#)

“If we want to follow Jesus the Messiah, then we have to recognize that his entrance into the world was about challenging the systemic brutality and oppression of an empire that trod on the weak, marginalized, and powerless... It necessarily means that we must address the way white supremacy has become normalized by our governmental leaders and also in many of the institutions we are a part of.”

[“Letter From Birmingham Jail” \(January 2017\)](#)

[MLK Letter; Video Context](#)

“Though King’s letter is over fifty years old, one can easily see how contemporary and relevant it is for us right now with what is going on. Many of us have at least a passing familiarity with the Civil Rights Movement that happened during the 1960s as we likely learned about it in school; perhaps many of us have also wondered how we would have responded had we been around at that time. Well the truth is we do not have to wonder because right now there are many injustices being perpetrated behind the veneer of ‘law and order.’”

[“Let Us Walk Together: A Word of Comfort From Your Asian American, Female Pastor” - \(November 2016\)](#)

“We have a long road ahead of us which may feel overwhelming. Here are some things I encourage you to do because it is important that we protect our hearts from being hardened even as we continue to cry out for justice...”

[“Shut Up and Speak Up: A Call to Action from Your White, Male Pastor” \(November 2016\)](#)

“How can we love and support each other? I’ll suggest two ideas. The first is to shut up. And the second is to speak up. Shut up and speak up. Pretty simple. The hardest part is to figure when to do one and not the other.”

[“What Romans 16 Has to Do with Ferguson: Listening to the Voices of the Stranger” \(August 2014\)](#)

Our scripture passage from Romans 16 is a call to invite the stranger in...These were voices people were not used to hearing, perspectives that were foreign, stories they were not accustomed to following. And Paul urged the church to pay attention to them.

This is not about agreeing with everything that is said, it is about recognizing those who are considered strangers by the majority and letting *them* lead this conversation. Now is the time for us to listen to the voices of the stranger, the ones who have walked this road and know it in a far different way that we must try and understand.”

[“Hope Endures” \(February 2018\)](#)

“One of the core visions that Eastpoint Peace Academy has is a 250 year work plan to achieve the beloved community that Rev. King dreamt about; when I first heard that, I laughed aloud—250 years! I am not always sure of what my plan is for tomorrow! But it is a 250 year plan because they know it will take a multi-generational effort to address the issues of poverty, racism, and conflict in our country.”

[“Solidarity” \(October 2016\)](#)

“But people of color have been under attack this election season. No, let me rephrase that - they have been under attack for centuries in America. White people like me have power and privilege that I benefit from subconsciously every day. So I feel responsibility to acknowledge my position of white privilege and use it to support people of color through my thoughts, feelings, and actions. To stand in solidarity with those who don’t have the same benefits afforded to me simply because of the color of my skin.”

Race & Faith Events  
Sponsored by Pres House & Other Organizations

**RACE & FAITH PANEL AND DINNER DISCUSSION**

**Tuesday, February 9, 2016**  
5:45 PM-8:00 PM • Pres House - 731 State St.

**Panelists:**

- Justina Marie Johnson, Assistant Head of Campus Director of the Multicultural Student Center
- Everett Mitchell, Director of Community Relations, Pres House, 731 State St. Pres House Church
- Linda Park, Faculty Member, Christ Lutheran Church
- Anna Stanbury, UW Student
- Chrysemis Cooke, UW Student

An evening focused on breaking down walls of division and learning to love our neighbors.

5:45 PM - Welcome  
6:00 PM - Panel Discussion with Q&A  
7:00 PM - Dinner to continue the conversation

[Race and Faith Panel \(February 2016\)](#)

Do people of faith talk about race and racism at UW-Madison? How can we do that together in a respectful way? A panel discussion between faculty, administrators, and students.

**Tuesday, February 7**  
5:45 pm - Welcome  
6:00 pm - Storytelling & Performance  
7:00 pm - Dinner & Conversation

**Race & Faith: Seeing Color**

Join us for an evening of personal storytelling on the theme "Seeing Color" from voices in our UW—Madison community. Dinner will follow to continue the conversation.

**Featured storytellers:**

- Maria Ahmad, Assistant Director of the Multicultural Student Center
- Mike Hughes, Assistant Director, College Pastor
- Bobbie Kelsey-Grayson, First Vice President, Women's Board of Deacons
- Sami Karim Haddad, Graduate Student, Community & Intercultural Studies
- Jasmine Bhatta, Undergraduate Student at UW-Madison

RSVP at: [bit.ly/racefaith17](http://bit.ly/racefaith17)

Featuring live performances from First Wave & Matthew Charles

["Race and Faith: Seeing Color" \(February 2017\)](#)  
[Audio Only](#)

Personal stories and spoken word performances from UW-Madison community members

**Race & Faith 2018 Digital Art Collaboration Reveal**  
7:00 PM @ The Crossing / Geneva Campus Church (1127 University Ave)

Handwritten text from art pieces includes:  
 - "The image of God should be individualized for each person. This would allow for a person to create a more meaningful relationship with God."  
 - "I need to see myself as a more dependent of God... I need to see myself as a more dependent of God... She upturned to chase the fruits."  
 - "All I know is that my God smiles down on me. They know my strength, my fears, my insecurities, and whatever they may look like they please Me."  
 - "The church is inherently political, we are called to love EVERYONE, no exceptions. We are called to stand up when we are wrong, we are called."

["Race and Faith: Digital Art Collaboration" \(2018\)](#)

This digital art piece resulted from a collaboration between various faith communities at UW-Madison. Students and community members were invited to reflect on and respond to various art pieces, and their responses were compiled into the video.

## Recommended Reading

Pres House Council Leaders commit to reading at least one book from the below list as part of their learning; we encourage you to do the same.

### American Christianity

[The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear](#), Rev. Dr. William Barber II

[I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness](#), Austin Channing Brown

[Disunity in Christ: Uncovering the Hidden Forces That Keep Us Apart](#), Christina Cleveland

[The Cross and the Lynching Tree](#), James Cone

[Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America](#), Michael Erik Dyson

[Activist Theology](#), Robyn Henderson-Espinoza

[A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches](#), Martin Luther King

[Rescuing Jesus: How People of Color, Women, and Queer Christians are Reclaiming Evangelicalism](#), Deborah Jian Lee

[Just Mercy](#), Bryan Stevenson

[Jesus and the Disinherited](#), Howard Thurman

[America's Original Sin: Racism, White Privilege, and the Bridge to a New America](#), Jim Wallis

[Reconstructing the Gospel: Finding Freedom From Slaveholder Religion](#), Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

[Revolution of Values: Reclaiming Public Faith for the Common Good](#), Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove

### American Christianity (Non-religious)

[The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#), Michelle Alexander

[Between the World and Me](#), Ta-Nehesi Coates

[White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#), Robin DiAngelo

[Waking Up White](#), Debby Irving

[How to Be an Antiracist](#), Ibram X. Kendi

[1619 Project](#), New York Times Magazine

[A People's History of the United States](#), Howard Zinn