



The United Methodist Church

Upper New York Area

January 26, 2018

Dear Colleague in Ministry,

Greetings in the name of our precious Savior, Jesus Christ!

In July of 2016, the Northeastern Jurisdiction of The United Methodist Church summoned every annual conference to confront the sin of racism in our own hearts, our churches and our communities. To enact this call in our conference, I convened a task force to develop strategies, plans and goals to equip local churches to address issues of racism present in congregations and communities. After months of hard work, the task force is ready to invite the rest of us to act.

The task force has called this new ministry, Imagine No Racism, drawing inspiration from our denomination's successful Imagine No Malaria campaign. Like Imagine No Malaria, Imagine No Racism will unapologetically identify the disease of racism and offer concrete ways to bring healing.

As a key leader in your congregation and in the life of our conference, your involvement in Imagine No Racism is expected and needed. I ask you, therefore, to set aside Saturday April 21, 2018 (12:30 pm – 4 pm) to participate in the Imagine No Racism Launch Day. You are also asked to bring one or more of your laity who are passionate about racial justice. Simultaneous events will be held across the conference in every district; your district office will notify you of the location near you in a couple of weeks.

The participation of all persons under appointment or assigned is mandatory. Retired clergy not under appointment are invited and encouraged to attend. If you feel a previous obligation might prevent your participation, you should contact your district superintendent as soon as possible to discuss.

As I've shared before, Imagine No Racism isn't seeking to be another program offered by the conference, but a set of spiritual practices involving deep listening, new learning and authentic relationship building, beginning in the local church and reaching out into the community. The launch event will explain the purpose and vision of Imagine No Racism and provide resources to begin its implementation. I

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look forward to what God will do through this initiative – in particular, what God will do in and through each of us – as we imagine and work for a world where the scourge of racism is eliminated.

I always, I celebrate and appreciate your leadership and ministry and thank you in advance for your participation in this important work. You remain in my prayers.

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. J. Webb', written in a cursive style.

Bishop Mark J Webb