

# HOW TO HELP WHITE CONGREGATIONS OBSERVE BLACK HISTORY MONTH

*We reached out to pastors and worship leaders who are or have served mostly white congregations for advice... on why and how to introduce and incorporate Black History Month into their Christian worship, nurture, outreach, and witness.*



DO

**USE FEBRUARY AS A STARTING POINT** for including songs, prayers, theologies of people of African descent throughout the church year.

**INVITE WHITE PEOPLE AND OTHERS** to share the responsibility for planning and leading your observance. Ask Black members or ministry partners to advise, but don't make it their job.

**CREATE A BULLETIN BOARD** or page on your website that highlights Black heroes from your community, district, conference, or state.

**OFFER VISIBLE AND TANGIBLE SUPPORT.**

Donate to causes and organizations working against racism and for justice. Join efforts to repair past harm and bring about transformation.

**ENGAGE YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH** through Sunday school and community engagement to inspire curiosity about the contributions of Black people in church and society.

**START A MUTUAL PULPIT/CHOIR EXCHANGE WITH A BLACK CHURCH.** Or host a shared youth event, regularly schedule women's or men's meals, participate in a joint mission project, racial-justice event, etc., with a neighboring Black congregation.

**CHALLENGE DENIAL AND FRAGILITY SOME CHURCH MEMBERS MIGHT EXHIBIT.** Help your parishioners get used to embracing Black history and naming and confronting racism and white privilege.



DON'T

**AVOID ANY ORGANIZATION OR OBSERVANCE JUST BECAUSE THEY FOCUS ON BLACK PEOPLE.**

Black history and heritage are often-neglected aspects of our full church and social history. Help your parishioners to make the connection.

**"MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE" AND LEAVE THEM THERE.** Make the connection between the gospel teachings about love, justice, and reconciliation and addressing racial disparities and racism.

**MAKE THIS THE ONE TIME OF THE YEAR WHEN YOU INVITE YOUR FEW BLACK MEMBERS,** the one Black pastor on staff, or Black musicians to "perform" or "entertain" at your church. That's tokenism; seek ongoing engagement instead.

**GIVE IN TO THE FEAR THAT THE TOPIC OF RACIAL JUSTICE IS "TOO POLITICAL" FOR CHURCH.**

Preach sermons to teach that becoming Christ's beloved community requires us to right wrongs, confess sins of injustice, and work to repair all that racism has harmed or broken.



**RELIGION & RACE**  
The United Methodist Church

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