

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



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United Church of Christ national leaders ask churches to address racism on MLK Jr. Day

Leadership encourages pastors in 5,100 UCC churches to share a pastoral letter on racism with their congregations in light of nationwide racial tension.

CLEVELAND (Jan. 16, 2015) – As America honors the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the ideals of equality, service and beloved community that he lived and died for, the Cleveland-based United Church of Christ has released a pastoral letter on racism to its 5,100 churches nationwide. UCC leaders are encouraging pastors to read the letter to their congregations on Martin Luther King Jr. weekend or to conclude the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity on Sunday, Jan. 25.

“The church of Jesus Christ, when at its best, brings diverse people together to discern and discuss the important concerns of our day and then act to make things right,” said the Rev. J. Bennett Guess, a UCC national officer. “This is one of those urgent, critical moments when the witness of people of faith needs to be seen, heard and felt.”

The letter was inspired by the recent rash of deaths of unarmed African Americans at hands of white police officers in Ferguson, Mo., New York City, and Cleveland, and the deaths of two New York police officers in retaliation for these incidents. The UCC national leaders hope Martin Luther King Jr. weekend will be an opportunity to address those issues through continuing advocacy, and hope for change toward a culture of tolerance and acceptance.

“As we approach Martin Luther King weekend, we remember that his ministry was dedicated to justice for all,” said the Rev. Linda Jaramillo, another UCC national officer. “Dr. King’s dream of a beloved community has not yet been realized, but can be if we set our sights toward building relationships, seeking redemption, and working for the reconciliation of our differences.”

The complete pastoral letter can be read here: <http://uccfiles.com/pdf/pastoralltr-racism2015.pdf>

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About the United Church of Christ:

The United Church of Christ is a mainline Protestant denomination with nearly 1 million members and more than 5,100 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's motto ("That they may all be one") and tagline (God is still speaking,) supports the Church's long-standing commitment to social justice issues and its extravagant welcome to all, no matter who they are or where they are on life's journey.