

*WHITE FRAGILITY

"A phrase coined by author Robin DeAngelo, defined as 'a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves.'"

*BIPOC

Black, Indigenous,
and People of Color

* Definitions taken from Layla F. Saad; Me and White Supremacy.2020 (pg. 226 & 230)

Suggested Online Resources:

<https://elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture>

RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

NETWORK Pr. Hillary Burns-Kite, Network Coordinator

If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faiths, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful, or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. – 1 Corinthians 13:1-7

The synod Racial Justice and Advocacy Network would like to offer some resources for use in your congregational Bible studies, women's and men's groups, and youth groups. Here are a few resources that we, as pastors and laity in the synod, have personally used to participate in conversations around the topics of race and racism over the past six months. Recognizing that it can be painful to explore what it means to be part of the systemic problem of racism, our hope is that in doing the work we can become part of the movement toward a more just and equitable church and society. We hope you will find these resources and information helpful.

Luther's Small Catechism with African Descent Refelctions.

Augsburg Fortress, 2019 – This resource is being used, by the Shepherd of the Hills conference, throughout the month of October as an adult study, over Zoom. We will be discussing this familiar content in a new way; seeing the catechism through the lens of those who have contributed to this work. If you are interested in joining the conversation, everyone is truly welcome, you may e-mail me for the Zoom information at pastorhillary@alpinecom.net.

Me and White Supremacy by Layla F. Saad – Currently, this book is being used in a virtual community against racial injustice book discussion. The book invites the reader to make a journaling commitment and doing the slow, contemplative work of uncovering and dismantling the messages of white supremacy we hold in varying degrees of consciences. Layla Saad offers definitions that help readers to become more familiar with the language commonly used, today, in discussions of racial injustice. Her examples and journal prompts help readers to become more aware of both subtle and overt messages of white supremacy and anti-blackness, which we read and hear every day.

Fully known and loved by God; keep looking to know and love each other

Adapted from a sermon by the Rev. Anne Edison-Albright, Director of College Ministries at Luther College, given at Focus—the student-led multid denominational worshipping community at Luther—on Sunday, September 7, 2020. The sermon is part of series called: “Covenant Keeper: Exploring the Promises of a Faithful God”.

A full version of Rev. Edison-Albright’s adaptation can be found at <http://blog.neiasynod.org/>.

In 2015 Maggie Steinberg, now Maggie Hagen, wrote an outstanding senior paper on “Luther College and American Lutheran Engagement With Race and Racism.” She found in her research that there was a group of Norwegian Lutheran lay leaders who, overcoming the reticence of their pastors, pushed their synod to take a stance against slavery, and that stance helped hasten the founding of Luther College.

While the Lutheran church and Luther college was willing to take that kind of stance against slavery, however, Maggie found that it was *not* active in the movement for the rights of freed Black people, and not an ally with Blacks in the national conversations and conflicts over race that followed the Civil War.

The first Black student arrived at Luther in 1951, 100 years after the school was founded. From 1861 until the late 60’s/early 70’s, the college, and the wider Lutheran church it was part of, stayed largely silent and largely separate in white communities, committing both sins of omission and commission to maintain the status quo of whiteness at the college and in the church.

Maggie’s paper also traces how Luther students from the 1970s to the present time inherit a legacy both of powerful Black student activism and organizing but also of largely unspoken and unrecognized institutional whiteness.

Sometimes we tell the story of Luther College and focus only on the part about how we were founded to oppose slavery, leaving out the rest of the context and the critique from Maggie’s research. When we do that, we fail to recognize the whole story of who we are as a college and a community. We miss an opportunity for recognition, insight, and deeper relationships.

The Rev. Dr. Ron Bell is a pastor, writer, musician and speaker in the Twin Cities who wrote about missed recognition on his blog after the murder of George Floyd. Dr. Bell writes:

“I think you were so busy looking for a riot that you missed the gathering of the grieving. I think you were so busy looking for looters that you missed the lament and heartbreak of a community. I think you were so busy looking for trouble that you missed the tragedy of systemic racialized trauma on the bodies of Black and brown people. Tonight, tomorrow, and even the next day I beg of you, look again. Look again.”

Dr. Bell continues: “Once you have really looked upon our sorrow, once you have put away your hashtags, retweets and emojis, once you have set with the weight of our sorrow what you will discover is my city has become your city. My pain has become your pain. That young person protesting has become your young person grieving, that kid looting has become your kid weeping. Do not look away. For then and only then will you be truly with us! Look again.”

Our ability to recognize and love each other is incomplete; it is like looking through a dim mirror. And yet we are called, we are compelled, to look again.

Look again and keep looking.

Keep searching for a glimpse of that truth, that recognition of the Image of God in each other, that love that is unconditional and un-ending and able to overcome all the ways that we fall short.

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