Social Justice, Environmental Justice, and Racial Justice

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Racial Justice and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP)

Our Mountain Sky Conference has a Racial Justice Committee. You are welcome to join us. Our committee is involved in raising awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). We submitted a resolution regarding MMIP to the Mountain Sky Annual Conference in 2025 and it was approved. The resolution establishes a task force to support the MMIP movement within our four states. We also were awarded a $2,500 grant by the Board of Church and Society that will be used for education and advocacy in our Mountain Sky Conference. In addition, the Grand Junction unit has pledged an additional $1,000 as a match to the grant.

We plan to reach out to UW Faith districts and units, churches, schools, and communities to share information and urge our members to advocate with decision-makers to better coordinate on MMIP issues. Our goal is to teach our members to advocate for state and federal legislation and financial support of programs that address MMIP. We will share how to write letters or emails to state legislators, members of Congress, and the US Department of Justice. Our goal is to stand with our indigenous communities and bring the strength of United Women in Faith to bear on this issue.

As you may know, our denomination has a Charter for Racial Justice, but it was initially adopted by the Women's Division of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries in 1978—well before the larger Church acted.

How can you, as a member of United Women in Faith, help us to raise awareness about the Charter for Racial Justice? Please save the date—October 2-3—for our Annual Gathering in Helena, MT. The Racial Justice Committee is planning a program related to MMIP for our Saturday session. In addition, we will have an Ubuntu project to pack Christmas shoeboxes with gifts for delivery to the Blackfeet United Methodist Parish (BUMP) in Browning, MT. The shoeboxes will be packed for both children and elders. Please save your shoeboxes!

Creation Care Updates

I also want to share the good news that the Mountain Sky Creation Care Task Force recently received a grant from the UW Faith's Just Energy 4 All program. The $3,000 grant is for projects that will benefit Native Americans served by BUMP and Native Grace, which is based in Cortez, Colorado. Our Creation Care Task Force also wants to remind you that

our Conference is asking each local church to form a Green Team and to prioritize energy and water efficiency efforts. If you serve on your Board of Trustees or Church Council, please advocate for establishing a Green Team at your church. Need a role model? We just learned that Dr. Karen McElfish is serving on the Virginia Conference Creation Care Team; she also serves as the president of the Viginia Conference of United Women in Faith! We wonder when she has time to sleep.

The task force meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 6:30 pm on Zoom. If you would like to participate, please go to https://www.mtnskyumc.org/creation-justice or send an email to: creationjustice@mtnskyumc.MS4org.

Want to exercise your advocacy muscles? Please contact your US Senators and Representatives and urge them to continue to consider creation justice when making policy decisions. Learn what committees your members of Congress serve on and their impact on creation care. For example, Representative Joe Neguse, serving the 2nd District in Colorado, has a focus on climate justice and serves on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. Units within his district can contact him at: https://neguse.house.gov/contact.

But don't stop there. Please consider also contacting your state senators and representatives.

Your local Colorado state representatives can be found at: https://leg.colorado.gov/find-my-legislator?_gl=1*bfp567*_ga*MTQ0NTU2MjkyMS4xNzY5ODI0NDAy*_ga_V0L3NG2C4C*czE3Njk4MjQ0MDEkbzEkZzEkdDE3Njk4MjQ0MTckajQ0JGwwJGgw

State legislators for Montana can be found at: https://archive.legmt.gov/legislator-information/

State legislators for Utah can be found at: https://le.utah.gov/documents/find.htm

State legislators for Wyoming can be found at: https://www.wyoleg.gov/Legislators

State legislators for Idaho can be found at: https://legislature.idaho.gov/legislators/whosmylegislator/

If you need background information before contacting decision-makers, the UMC Council of Bishops has written a letter supporting and prioritizing the urgency of Climate Justice work that can be found at: https://www.umnews.org/en/news/bishops-prioritize-creation-'care.

Please consider drafting advocacy letters and having them at your church for other UW Faith and church members to sign before you send to your Congressman, Senator, Governor, or local state legislator.

Want even more information? Our UW Faith Reading Program has some great books to help us move forward by learning more about these issues. One we suggest is “Start With Hello (And Other Simple Ways to Live as Neighbors) “ by Shannan Martin. Other reading to help get started with your local units might be the Sarah August book, “The Land Is Not Empty,” about the Doctrine of Discovery, as well as the UW Faith racial justice timeline.

During the recent Northern Colorado District Leadership Team meeting, Laurel Kubin shared her inspirational sign: I need to be able to tell my grandchildren I DID NOT STAY SILENT!! We all need to take this message to heart.