

Reconciliation Grant Report

June 25, 2018

Broadway Christian Church received a \$1300 grant from The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) of Mid-America to support a book study on racism. This money was used to purchase books for the study. In addition, Broadway Christian Church contributed \$1246.59. The book study was called, "Critical Conversations in Troubled Times." After discussing the project with several ministers, it was decided to study "America's Original Sin" by Jim Wallis. We also used a study guide that was developed for the book. Books were provided to all the participants.

Following is the Statement of Purpose that was developed for the program:

Statement of Purpose:

1. Study groups will share their personal stories of racism as the book study progresses. The purpose of this is to gain a better understanding of issues of racism in Columbia and beyond.
2. Study groups will compile a list of current problems of racism today in Columbia that need to be addressed. In doing this, we will determine what efforts are already underway and determine what gaps there are that need to be addressed.
3. As groups form and study, lasting friendships will develop. Some efforts are already underway and this project will build on those efforts.
4. Participants will gain a better understanding of racism from racially and culturally diverse points of view.
5. Above all, this project will not end with a book study, but will lead to continuing efforts to address racism in Columbia and beyond.

On January 14, a kickoff dinner was held at Second Missionary Baptist Church. Over 100 people attended this dinner. As more people heard about the program, people were added to the book studies.

At least fourteen churches were represented by people who participated in the book study. Five different book studies have been completed and one will complete in August. One group plans to begin their study in the fall. In total at least 130 people have participated in the studies to date. All of the groups had a mix of Whites and African Americans.

Following are the churches involved:

Second Missionary Baptist Church
Sugar Grove Baptist Church
St. Luke's Methodist Church
Fifth Street Christian Church
Tabernacle of Grace Church
Broadway Christian Church
Olivet Christian Church

First Baptist Church
Community of Christ
Fairview Methodist Church
Unitarian Universalist
Friendship Baptist
Convergence Church
Newman Center
Legacy Point Church

Following is a description of the groups that were formed:

1. St. Luke's United Methodist and Fairview United Methodist met every week for 8 weeks. They alternated between their churches. Each week they shared a meal together. They reported that this was a profound experience of learning and getting into communion with other people.
2. Broadway Christian Tuesday group. This group included people from Friendship Baptist Church, Tabernacle of Grace Church, Convergence Church, Legacy Point Church, and Broadway Christian. One thing that came out of this group was the idea of a credit union for minority owned businesses.
3. Broadway Christian Friday group. Churches involved were the Unitarian Universalist, Newman Center and Broadway Christian Church. People in the group were from various backgrounds. They had a passion for seeing each other at the meetings. They discussed frank and tough topics, created love, care about each other and want to continue to meet. The white people in the group came to know their white privilege [a system of structure and assumptions that deem whiteness as superior]. This group plans to continue meeting and talking.
4. Bethel Baptist. This was a mixed group in a predominately white church. They have a Black minister who led the sessions. They met on Wednesday evenings during lent. One member of the group felt they would look beyond their church walls more as a result of the study.
5. Second Baptist, First Baptist and Broadway Christian. This group meets at Second Baptist Church once a month. The pastors of the three churches lead the discussion. They divide into three groups at each session. First and Second Baptist have had a long relation and Second Baptist and Broadway Christian have had a relationship. These groups involve real fellowship and strong committee leadership. Questions the group has dealt with are: What does this book say to us and what does the word of God say to us? One thing that is coming out of this group is a proposal for a Civil Rights Pilgrimage in November.
6. Broadway Thursday group. The group became as a family over time. Relationships were developed and the group cared for each other. The church is the most powerful voice to be heard from on these issues. The group plans to continue to meet. Churches involved in this group were Fifth Street Christian, Community of Christ, Convergence Church and Broadway Christian.

7. Olivete Christian Church and Sugar Grove Baptist. This group plans to start their book study in the fall. They have had some joint meetings already that have involved films on racism and they have some pulpit exchanges planned. These two churches have a long-time relationship.

On June 1, a potluck dinner was held at Broadway Christian Church. Approximately 70 people attended. The various book study groups reported briefly about their studies and what they hope for the future. The summaries above are a part of what was discussed that evening. Over and over we have heard the question, "what are we going to do next?" In addition, questions were discussed at the tables during dinner.

An activity that is being planned is an interfaith Habitat Build. So far at least five churches have expressed an interest in participating.

A Facebook account has been set up for those who have participated in the book studies. This will be used to maintain contact with people and announce future activities.

A Civil Rights Pilgrimage is being planned for November.

Other activities will be planned including fellowship dinners with some of the groups.

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