

Criteria for the Mai Gray Charter for Racial Justice Club

Become a member of “The Mai Gray Charter for Racial Justice Club” by completing any four (4) of the following action steps and documenting how your unit fulfilled the requirements to your District President by December 31, 2023.

1. Celebrate diversity by respecting the traditions of different groups, attending holiday festivities of a culture other than your own and/or recreating elements of such festivities in local meetings or events. Examples of traditional holidays are:

Kwanza (African American)
Tet (Vietnamese)
Cinco de Mayo (Mexican)
Sol Day (Korean)
Hanukah (Jewish)
Oktoberfest (German)
Kodomo-No-Hi (Japanese)
Polski (Polish)
Odwira (West Africa)

2. View one of the videos listed below and have a group discussion of the video at a United Women of Faith unit or circle meeting. Determine some specifics of how you can advocate for an interracial/multicultural church, work to eliminate racism and/or to combat hate crimes. Include the following reflections/questions:

What is racism? What are the blessings and costs of differences?

What lessons have you learned about interacting with people who are different from you?

A. The Help, Video (2 hrs 26 min) Touchstone Pictures (2011). This movie is based on the #1 New York Times best seller by Kathryn Stockett. This story is set in the 1960's South, where several ladies form an unusual friendship around a secret writing project and how simple acts can create change.

B. National Seminar Webinars: Mass Incarceration and Maternal Justice, videos. United Women of Faith website. (45 min. each) Maternal health talks about the infant mortality with mothers of color and how racial stress can influence it. Mass incarceration illustrates the need for change as the United States leads the world in incarceration rates and how it affects, women, youth and people of color.

3.. Affirm and support each other's efforts to take advantage of books and information, training events, colleges and community activities and other educational opportunities on inclusiveness, justice, and social action. Report on such activities to the unit.

4. Select one of the following culture-specific books and identify members of your UMW unit who will commit to have it read by a specific date for a group discussion of the book at a UMW unit or circle meeting. These books are from the UMW Reading Program:

A. TILLY, Monique Gray Smith, Sono Nis Press Books 2014

B. THE GIRLS OF KABUL, Jenny Nordberg, Broadway Books, 2015

C. COFFEE, TEA AND HOLY W ⁵¹ Amanda Hudson, Abingdon Press, 2015

D. I AM MALALA, Malala yousafzai, BackBay Books, 2015

E. DREAMERS, Eileen Truax, Beacon Press, 2015

F. MISS BRENDA AND THE LOVELADIES, Brenda Spahn and Irene Zutell, Waterbrook Press, 2015

G. THE WHITE UMBRELLA, Mary Frances Bowley, Moody Publishers, 2012

5. Plan a joint unit or circle meeting with a unit/circle of a different racial background and use the January 2016 **response** magazine issue on “The Fullness of Life” to plan follow-up spiritual growth and social action activities. Pre-order enough copies of the January issue to ensure all participants have their own copy.

6. Develop a cultural exchange for opportunities to increase our awareness of ethnic groups, gifts and graces.

One of the easiest ways to accomplish this is to use the Prayer Calendar. Pen pals may be found for members of your unit or choose one missionary to contact regularly during the year, and study that country or area. Choose a mission site in your area to visit or contact to see if you could do an ingathering of needs specific to the ethnicity of their clients.

Look for opportunities to visit other cultures in your area – an ethnic church, a festival or musical event by a culture other than your own.

7. Be involved in putting an end to unfair and abusive conditions of Mexican workers in Missouri poultry plants.

Participate in a letter writing campaign to state and national elected officials; to retailers across the state that sell products from these chicken packing plants; and to union officials. (Several plants are located in Monett, Missouri.)

Present an informational/action-orientated program in the local unit.

Contact our UMC, GBGM, and Missouri Conference Missionaries to the Hispanic Ministry, Fausto and Alma Villagrana, 310 Fourth Street, Monett, MO 65708, (417)236-0254 home, (417)235-7446 office, to advocate in the local community.

8. Hold a postcard-writing session within the local unit to contact Legislators with regard to issues as determined by the Social Action Coordinator of the Conference. Contact your District Social Action Coordinator for how tos and timely issues.

9. Send one member of the local unit to attend the workshop on the Charter for Racial Justice at the Legislative Training Event and have her present a report to the local unit. Involve your unit in the activit 52 workshop.

10. Present a program on equal education, housing, employment, and/or medical care. Have the group discuss how the issue is affected by race in your area.

11. Develop and/or implement a worship program to be used by the local unit promoting cultural worship style, music and praise.

12. Monitor the decision-making process, meetings and programs of your unit to ensure inclusiveness and to advocate for the needs and concerns of the racial and ethnic minority members.

Once your unit has met the requirements and becomes a member of the “Club,” you must maintain your membership by completing one additional requirement annually. This should also be reported to your District President.

If at any time there is a lapse in meeting an additional requirement annually, the unit must again complete four requirements to re-achieve membership.

CONTACT YOUR DISTRICT PRESIDENT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE.

A History of the Mai Gray Charter For Racial Justice Club

This club was established in 1998 by the Missouri West Conference United Women of Faith in an effort to promote the study of and implementation of the Charter for Racial Justice Policies. The Club was named to honor a prominent United Methodist Woman in the Missouri West Conference. With her permission and blessing, the club was called The Mai Gray Charter for Racial Justice Club.

Mai Evelyn Hutson Gray, a native of Jackson, Tennessee, graduated from Merry High School and Lane College in Jackson, Gammon Theological Seminary in Atlanta, and the University of Missouri Kansas City. She was a member of the Committee of 24 that proposed the organizational structure for United Women of Faith in 1972. She was elected a member of the United Women of Faith National Office in 1972 and from 1976 to 1980 served as the Division's first black president. She was a trustee of Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City, MO, represented the United Methodist Church at the British Methodist Conference, was invited to the Consultation on Salt II for religious leaders at the White House and participated in a development-education study in China and India. She was a member of the Church Women United Executive Council (1980-84) and the World Methodist Council Leadership Team (1981-86), an alternate delegate to the World Council of Churches Assembly in 1983, and a delegate to the 1984 United Methodist General Conference at which she presented a portion of the Lay Address.

Her honors include the establishment of the Mai Gray Education Grant to Women and children in Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa, a gift of the United Women of Faith National Office in honor of her presidency; and the Centime Poinsettia Clark Award..

Mai passed away shortly after the 2010 Assembly in St. Louis, Missouri.

