

## Monday Minders – July 11, 2016

First Presbyterian of Hector & Lodi Presbyterian Church

Dear members and friends,

I planned to continue sharing about the decisions and work of the denomination at this year's General Assembly, but events in our country mean this needs to be put on hold.

We were still trying to make sense of the deaths of so many in Orlando last month. And now we have the killings this past week in Baton Rouge, Saint Paul, and Dallas.

Our fear is that violence will be responded to with more violence. As I told our youth last Friday night, the last night of our mission trip to Philadelphia, the answer is what they had been doing all week. Listening to people on the margins of society, finding out the struggles they face, and doing work together to try to address some of the needs, even if it was in a small way.

But there is more we need to do. Following are entries from the blogs of our co-moderators with honest but difficult suggestions. I hope you will give them thoughtful consideration.

Grace & peace,  
Pastor Jim

### T. Denise Anderson, Co-moderator

Okay, white family. Let me talk to you right quick...

For those of you who ask "How long?" or "How many times must this happen?" I'll tell you precisely when it will stop. It will stop when people en masse are aware of the ways in which whiteness/white supremacy have shaped the way people of color are viewed, engaged, and treated in this world (even by other people of color). To come to this realization, however, white people will then have to be self-aware and convicted of the ways in which they have benefitted from and promulgated the lie of whiteness. As necessary as this is for the well-being of society, it is also an uncomfortable undertaking and there is literally nothing forcing white people to do it. White people, then, will likely have to create the force.

White people, you have heard it said that you must talk to other white people about racism, and you must. But don't talk to them about their racism. Talk to them about YOUR racism. Talk to them about how you were socialized to view, talk to, and engage with people of color. Talk to them about the ways you've acted on that socialization. Talk to them about the lies you bought into. Talk about the struggles you continue to have in shedding the scales from your eyes. Don't make it "their" problem. Understand it as your own problem, because it is. To not do this would put you in danger of being yet another well-intentioned racist, convinced of their own goodness and living a life wholly unexamined and unaccountable to anyone. We don't need any more of those. It's confession time.

### Jan Edmiston, Co-moderator

The day after Denise Anderson and I were elected to be Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly in Portland, I found myself on the hotel elevator alone – which was rare – headed down to the lobby for our next thing. The doors opened about halfway down and a young man got on the elevator, saw my Co-Moderators' stole and blurted out, "Oh hi! You're the white one."

Yes. I am The White One. My name is Jan. I think of myself as white.

My skin is pale. My people are from Europe (although the Irish were once considered Black.) Sometimes "blackness" has less to do with skin tone than level of oppression. Quite a few of us have varied and colorful DNA. I'm not sure that even the palest among us is 100% "white."

But I think of myself as White. I am biased about race. I am a perpetuator of racial prejudice. I am so thoroughly privileged that I only notice it a tiny fraction of the time. I am uncomfortable around people of other races sometimes to the point that I say or do awkward – sometimes even asinine – things.

#### Examples:

- I don't think I've ever touched the hair of a black person without permission – although maybe I have – and yet I often talk about hair with friends whose hair is different from mine because it's easy to talk about. Stupid maybe, but easy. I honestly would like to have Samira Wiley's hair and basic head shape but my head is lumpy. So I'll see a woman who looks amazing with hair different from mine and I'll want to talk about that as if a stranger's hair is something I have the right to hold forth about. Note: I've noticed that when people feel awkward – especially women of every color – we comment on each other's clothing or hair or shoes. I once went into a church meeting and a person literally said, "Oooh a boucle skirt and top from Talbot's." It felt weird. I am not my clothes/hair. Neither are you.
- I expect Black friends (or Asian friends, LGBTQ friends, etc.) to be my teacher and explain "their people" to me. "Why do Black people \_\_\_?" This is ridiculous unless it's genuinely a joke.
- I assume a lot of things that people of color cannot assume: that I will not be shot if pulled over in my car with a broken tail light, that I belong in the fancy department in Nordstrom, that I am smart, that I can live in any neighborhood I can afford, that I can get a bank loan based on my credit score (and not my skin tone.)
- I think I can sing "We Shall Overcome" without a monumental sense of irony.

On this day, exactly 60 years ago I was baptized. Many of us were baptized for purely sentimental reasons. But if we are serious about those vows we will quake in our shoes:

*"Do you renounce evil and its power in the world, which defies righteousness and love?"*

**Response: I do renounce them.”**

*“Do you renounce the ways of sin that separate you from the love of God?”*

**Response: “I do renounce them.”**

We have witnessed evil and its power in the world this week. Much of that evil has been race-based. We are afraid. We are angry.

Or worse: we are indifferent. We go about our vacations or our cook-outs or our business without once pondering what we have done to contribute to/perpetuate racial prejudice in our families, in our churches, in our neighborhoods, in our country.

I remember visiting a local church in my Presbytery on Sunday, July 14, 2013 – the day after George Zimmerman was acquitted for the second degree murder of Trayvon Martin. I felt sick. I craved God’s Word.

Not only was there no mention of this trial or the agony of a 17-year-old boy’s death without anyone being held accountable, but the sermon – clearly pulled from a seasoned preacher’s file – referred to “the new play on Broadway called ‘Hair.’” Jesus wept.

What can we do besides “think and pray”?

- [Read this book.](#) Talk about it with your friends.
- Correct people – out loud – when they say something racist. (Note: you have permission to do this to me too.)
- Talk about race in our families. I’m talking to you, White families.
- Spark conversations by doing privilege exercises in classes, training retreats, etc. [Here are some.](#)
- Register for [this conference.](#)
- Plan to register [for this one](#) in 2017. Seriously, take a group. Registration for the 2017 conference in Kansas City (April 27th-30th, 2017) opens in January.
- Read books – fiction and non-fiction – by people of color.

One way to change the world is to change ourselves. I for one – The White One – am focusing on this right now.

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This week (7/11 – 7/17)

Mon: Euchre @ 6:45 pm (Hector)

Tue: Bone Builders @ 8:30 am (Hector)

Wed: Men’s Breakfast @ 8 am (Toni’s Diner & Hector)  
Bone Builders @ 10:30 am (Hector)

- Thu: Choir rehearsal @ 9 am (Hector)  
 Office for the Aging luncheon @ 12 noon (Hector)  
 The Heat Is On! @ 7 pm (Hector)
- Fri: Mobile Food Truck @ 10 am (Hector)
- Sat: Lodi Food Pantry @ 3pm (Lodi)
- Sun: Worship  
 @ 9:30 am (Hector)  
 @ 11:15 am (Lodi)

Hector worship leaders for July:

Ushers: Lois Carter & Sally Jo Smith

Liturgists: Shelly Gimbar (7/17), Amy, Lexi & Bri DeRaiche (7/24), Lois Carter (7/31)

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Looking ahead:



Fri, Aug 12 = 8 am – 4 pm  
 Sat, Aug 13 = 8 am – 4pm  
 Sun, Aug 14 = 11 am – 3pm

Bring items to Fellowship Hall: Mon – Thu (Aug 8 – 11) / 9 am – 2 pm  
*Be ready to say "yes" when asked to help!*

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**Vacation Bible School 2016**

(August 15 – 19)



See Shelly Gimbar or Pastor Jim for more information.