

# HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

OFFERING TALK



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

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## COME AND SEE

This offering talk builds on the sermon starter “Come and See” based on John 1:35-51. It can be adapted to stand alone if the pastor preaches a different sermon or focuses on an alternate Scripture reading.

During this season, when many congregations are worshipping beyond the walls of the church, consider emailing the invitation in advance with links to give online: [UMC.org/SSGive](https://umc.org/SSGive).

**D**uring the challenges of the past year, we saw how systemic inequality affects the most vulnerable people. When neighbors experience poverty and live in communities that have less access to community resources, we may find ourselves wondering, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Today we have an opportunity to make an impact in communities where people struggle because they don’t have the tools or resources to reach their God-given potential.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. Today

we join with other congregations to receive the Human Relations Day Special Sunday offering.

Our gifts are part of building beloved community through faith-based volunteer programs, community developers and programs that work with at-risk teens. As society begins to recover from this health and financial crisis, these programs are vital in strengthening communities that are most affected.

For example in Chicago, churches are in partnership to engage in community based alternatives to juvenile incarceration. In the Philippines, community organizations are strengthening family resiliency to address



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substance abuse, particularly with those who are living in the Manila North Cemetery. And in West Congo, United Methodist Churches are working with ecumenical partners to provide pastoral support and advocacy for children and youth who are in prison.

For nearly three decades, Buena Vista United Methodist Church, whose slogan is “Building beloved community,” has tackled numerous community concerns, often with support from the Community Developers Program funded through Human Relations Day offerings.

Among the programs of the Alameda, California church is a partnership with the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity (IM4HI) to engage in joint immigration advocacy. Members have co-sponsored “Know Your Rights” trainings, lobbied for human rights legislation and attended monthly protest vigils on behalf of incarcerated immigrants. Working with IM4HI and its East Bay affiliate enables the church to network and advocate with other congregations.

The church’s immigration committee in 2016 began its accompaniment ministry and provided

temporary housing to the Alva-Garcia family from Guatemala. That allowed the family to establish residency in Alameda and to welcome other family members entering the country seeking asylum.

Lynette Lee, chair of the Buena Vista Community Institute, and Alton Chinn, the immigration committee’s new chair, want to increase participation and indigenous leadership in the ministry and do more to protect and support immigrants.

According to Chinn, “COVID-19 doesn’t change our commitment to this ministry.”

(more information about Buena Vista’s ministries: <https://www.umcmmission.org/share-our-work/news-stories/2020/august/community/multicultural-church-s-history-inspires-support-for-immigrants>)

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his Letter from a Birmingham Jail, “I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be.”

If as Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. said, “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you



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doing for others?" Human Relations Day offers a concrete response. Friends, now more than ever, the church is invited to connect with our neighbors, join our resources, and come and see how together we can be the hands and feet of

Jesus. Please give generously, trusting that your gifts will be multiplied and "you will see greater things than these." (John 1:50)

Thank you for your faithful gifts.

### OFFERING PRAYER

Thank you for the gifts of each person you created.

We offer back a portion of what you have given to us

trusting that in community, they will be multiplied

to strengthen relationships with you and with your people

who are wonderfully made and known by you. Amen.

Gifts may be made online: [UMC.org/SSGive](https://www.UMC.org/SSGive) or mailed to the church using the envelope provided.



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