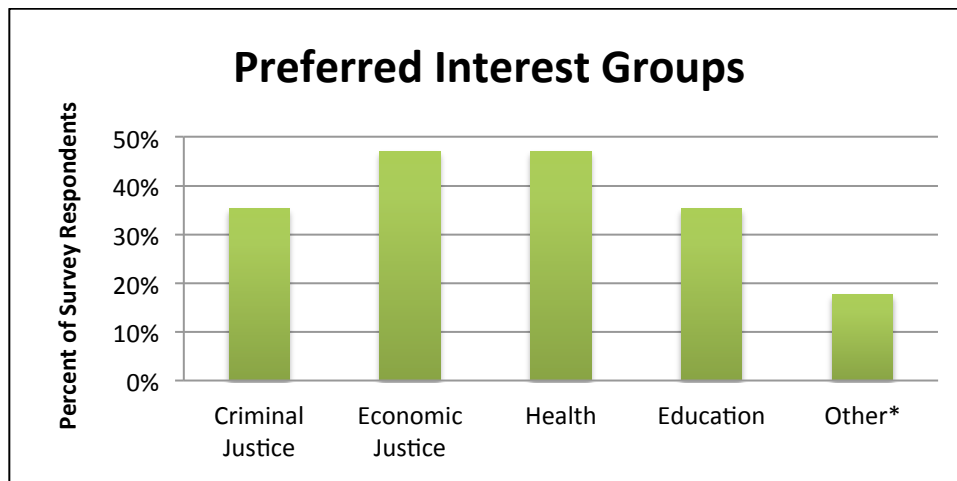


## **Anti-Racism Workshop Alumni Retreat at Fisher Memorial United Holy Church**

### **Summary**

Study. Discussion. Reflection. Planning. These are all words that describe what happened on the morning of January 28, 2012, at Fisher Memorial United Holy Church in Durham around the issue of race. Approximately 30 participants, including both people of color and white people, came together to share their perceptions, struggles, topic-based interests, and personal experiences related to racism and its impact on everyone, personally and collectively. The objective for the day was to allow people to reconnect, reorganize, and build upon the discussions and experiences they had shared during the workshops.

At the end of the retreat, participants were given the opportunity to complete a feedback form to help the Collaborative Committee Organizing Against Racism (CCOAR) organize the larger network. Roughly 57 percent of the participants filled out the form. Many respondents expressed an interest in continued discussions, either around a specific topic of interest or within a subgroup, or caucus. Topic areas of interest included criminal justice, health, economic justice, and education, all in relation to race. Some participants were interested in continued discussions within their racial identity groups. This interest has already spawned a people of color caucus and a white people caucus, which all participants who filled out the survey said they would be interested in. These particular affinity groups provide what may feel like a safer space for individuals to deepen their understanding of how racism plays out in organizations and systems. The feedback form also allowed individuals to volunteer to lead any of the new subgroups, and several have volunteered to lead future meetings.



Survey respondents could list more than one topic.

\* Other topics include media, book group and how to raise anti-racist children

### **How to Stay Connected and What's Next**

Moving forward, the CCOAR is continuing to host workshops, forums and other meetings to continue our collective journey to end racism. The newly formed affinity groups that came out of the alumni retreat, along with the Organizing Against Racism website ([www.organizingagainstracism.com/wp](http://www.organizingagainstracism.com/wp)), provide additional opportunities to stay connected. Many people leave the workshops wanting to jump into action and DO something. But leaders of the Racial Equity Institute have reminded us that "acting without understanding, at best, ensures the status quo and at worst, harms people of color and causes powerful resistance in white people." Therefore, it is important to first build a foundation of understanding through study, discussion, reflection and planning to ensure that our actions are inclusive, well thought out, and truly effective in undoing racism.

## **For the website**

### **Learn about the Collaborative Committee Against Racism (CCOAR)**

Since September 2010, a diverse group of representatives from Fisher Memorial United Holy Church, United Church of Chapel Hill (UCCH), and other congregations has met regularly to talk about race and to learn how to work against racism. CCOAR describes itself as “people of faith working together through education, activism, and healing to undo racism and build the Beloved Community.” One of the group’s goals is to bring others to a place of collective learning and understanding. Starting in early 2011, the group helped bring the Racial Equity Institute’s anti-racism training to UCCH and opened up the workshop to the public. By May 2012, more than 250 people had participated in these workshops. Since many participants have expressed the desire to stay engaged, CCOAR and other workshop participants are hosting caucuses, affinity groups and other opportunities to enhance our learning, keep the conversation going, and continue the momentum from the workshops.

### **How to Get Involved**

Moving forward, the Collaborative Committee Against Racism is continuing to host workshops, forums and other meetings to continue our collective journey to end racism. Newly formed affinity groups came out of a recent alumni retreat, along with the Organizing Against Racism website ([www.organizingagainstracism.com/wp](http://www.organizingagainstracism.com/wp)), provide opportunities to stay connected. Many of us feel it is important to build a strong foundation of understanding through study, discussion, reflection and planning to ensure that our actions are inclusive, well thought out, and truly effective in undoing racism.