

## WEST SEATTLE RESPONSE / RESOURCES FAMILY MINISTRIES

Hi families,

I wanted to reach out on this Monday for a few reasons. It has been a difficult and, truthfully, painful few weeks and months that we have been navigating together amidst Covid-19 and quarantine. But an even more unfathomable and difficult time for Black Identifying People of Color (BIPOC) in our neighborhoods, communities, and our nation is happening.

We as a Bethany staff will not be silent. We as your West Seattle Staff, that love your families, will not be silent. I will not be silent.

It is long overdue and past time to address the systemic racism in our country and we will be a part of calling for justice and hope. If you didn't know where we stand as a church, or where I stand as your Family Pastor, know now. Black Lives Matter. People of Color Matter. Diversity Matters.

I humbly come to you as a white woman, broken and hurt, but still not being able to comprehend the pain that the black community is facing and has faced for a long time. But I commit to each of you, both personally and professionally, to continue in learning, to challenge the system, to read and research, and do my part in being an ally and an active anti-racist. As I have the privilege to be in a sacred space with your kids each week, know that I don't take that honor lightly. I commit to working towards using diverse materials and not shying away from hard conversations, as well as supporting you as you navigate big topics at home.

I also wanted to offer some encouragement for you as parents and leaders of the next generation who can continue the legacy of being chain breakers and can grow up actively knowing how to talk about race and calling out acts of racism in their own lives. We have an enormous part to play in our own homes and hearts as we continue to move forward together. I

have collected some resources for us all that are listed below. These have begun to teach and shape me and my family, and I hope that they would be of use to you and yours.

Know that we at Bethany West Seattle are doing our best to listen to stories and experiences and grow together as we stand up for justice.

As we pray, let us look to 2 Chronicles 7:14, "*if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*"

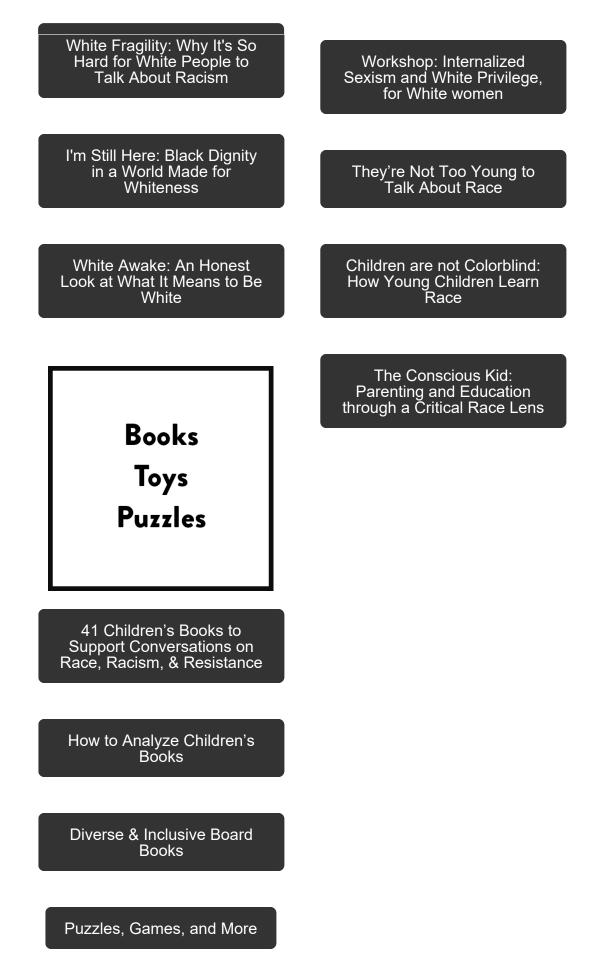
Feel free to also listen to A Special Message from Senior Pastor Richard Dahlstrom here.

Do not hesitate to reach out if you want to have a conversation or need support in any way.

## Ashley

Pastor of Family Ministry and Community Life Bethany West Seattle





West Seattle Family Ministries

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