



First Presbyterian Church

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January 3, 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Our culture feels very divisive. Many issues evoke reflexive responses from people. This makes it hard to have even civil conversations and fuels our divisions. We often wonder how to address tough issues in a constructive way. First Presbyterian Church is starting a series on “Faith and Social Justice” to address this.

On January 21st at 7PM First Pres will be hosting the first of a series of panel discussions on some issues where our society has institutionalized injustice. Things like racism, immigration, poverty, homelessness, domestic violence, and mass incarceration can be difficult to talk about and even more difficult to understand. So, we are inviting experts from our community to help us to better understand these issues. Our hope is to create a safe space where we can learn and share together. As we learn more of the facts, perhaps ways we can help (as churches or collaborators) will become clear. We are inviting churches from all along the Wasatch Front to join us. Imagine what we might discover together as people of faith!

Our first panel discussion will be on incarceration, what leads to incarceration, injustice within the system, and the challenges faced by people *after* they have served their time. The panelists are as follows:

Dr. Heather Bachelor (Westminster College Faculty): Part of Dr. Bachelor's scholarship and practice focuses on restorative justice, which seeks to understand and address the circumstances that contributed to the crime and to repair relationships between offenders, victims, and communities.

Nubia Peña (Director of the [Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs](#)): Director Peña's work focuses on issues of anti-oppression through her professional experience as a lawyer and personal faith-based initiatives as a community organizer, advocate, and ally for marginalized populations, including the juvenile justice system.

Rep. Sandra Hollins (Utah State Representative and social worker): Rep. Hollins' legislative work includes getting the ["Ban the Box" bill passed](#), which called for the removal of inquiries from job applications asking about criminal records.

We are blessed to have such wonderful experts to join us in this journey. Please plan to come and learn and get excited about the church's place in caring for our community. Again this will be January 21st, 7 PM, at First Pres on the corner of South Temple and “C” street. Please feel free to contact me with questions. We hope you can come!

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