

Wisconsin Annual Conference Training Day

June 12, 2023

Green Bay, WI

Workshop: Growing Together: Cultivating Inclusive Life in the Church

Led by: Elina Rodriguez, MACE and Hendrik Pieterse, D.Phil.

Learning Outcomes: At the end of the session, participants will . . .

1. Have Biblical and Theological grounding for why cultural diversity should be part of Christians' preparation to live out their faith.
2. Know key elements involved in communication across cultures.
3. Have a basic understanding of the complexity involved in cross-cultural encounters.
4. Have a baseline preparedness to explore these concepts with their congregations.

Our world today is characterized by astonishing cultural and religious diversity. As a truly global religion, Christianity experiences the same cultural diversity everywhere, including in the United States. The United Methodist Church, too, reflects the same trend, growing increasingly culturally, racially, and ethnically diverse. In this workshop we will discuss biblical and theological reasons why learning about our own culture and others' cultures, as well as why acquiring the skills to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultures, are so crucial for faithful discipleship and authentic witness today. We will use the metaphor of cultivating a garden to explore the dynamics of what happens when different cultures (races, ethnicities, genders, etc.) interact with one another. You will leave with a practical guide to explore these topics further in your own congregation.