

‘Fasting From Whiteness’? Chicago-Area Church Offers New Take on Lenten Tradition

A Chicago-area church is making headlines for purportedly making a Lenten pledge to stop any music or liturgical elements “written or composed by white people.”

First United Church of Oak Park’s “fast from whiteness” is being observed during Lent, the 40 days commemorating Jesus’ fast in the desert. Lent runs this year from March 2 through April 14.

The church’s controversial move—described as a “mix of ‘giving something up’ and ‘taking something on’”—has sparked local and national media attention.

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Rumble("play", vx6eh3);
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“In our worship services throughout Lent, we will not be using any music or liturgy written or composed by white people,” a statement on the church website purportedly reads. “Our music will be drawn from the African American spirituals tradition, from South African freedom songs, from Native American traditions, and many, many more.”

The statement continued, “For Lent, it is our prayer that in our spiritual disciplines we may grow as Christians, united in the body of Christ with people of all ages, nations, races, and origins.”

A Facebook post on the First United Church of Oak Park published March 29 advertises one of the church's "evotional" reflections, which are also tackling these issues, and acknowledges the so-called fast from whiteness:

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