

## **Presbytery of Utah Anti-racism Policy**

The Presbytery of Utah acknowledges that Anti-racism work will be difficult, uncomfortable, and ongoing. However, as our denomination affirms: "Because of our biblical understanding of who God is and what God intends for humanity, the PC(USA) must stand against, speak against, and work against racism. Anti-racist effort is not optional for Christians. It is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship, without which we fail to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ."

We believe that racism and any marginalization or discrimination are sins against God and humanity, inconsistent with our corporate and Christian values. Again, from our denomination: "[R]acism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity... [It] is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others."

In the beginning, God created humankind in diversity. (Genesis 1:27) And God saw that it was very good. And yet, as the people that we are, we created divisions amongst ourselves. The Presbytery of Utah dreams of making our life on earth, as it is in Heaven. So, we pray that all people be treated with respect, dignity, and with an honoring of diverse racial identities, and that systems of racialized inequality be dismantled and replaced with equity. In the spirit of words attributed to Paul, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28)

Christ breaks down all the divisions we create. As Christians, it is particularly foolhardy, and counter to the faith we proclaim, to bolster divisions between God's children, including those based on race and other social inequities. Therefore we, the people, congregations, and body of the Presbytery of Utah, stand boldly against racism in any form. We commit to the process of growing as disciples of Jesus, and to the deep work of collective action, led by the Spirit. We pledge to uncover those unconscious biases that lead to marginalization and oppression, to hold injustice accountable and redeemable, and to work toward transformation, not just within our Presbytery, but also for the communities in which our congregations reside.

As we strive to become an Anti-racist Body of Christ, we call ourselves to action, in ways that include, but

are certainly not limited to these kinds of efforts:

- We will continue to educate ourselves about racism, through the Presbytery's leadership, congregational studies, and children's & youth programs.
- We will use prayer, mindfulness, and the Spirit's guidance, to transform our hearts and souls from the inside out.
- We will continue to repent of the role that we individually and collectively have played and continue to play in establishing and maintaining systemic racism.
- We will hold events, or support collaborative recognition in worship, for holidays like Juneteenth, MLK Jr Day, and Indigenous Persons Day, and recognitions like Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and Native American Awareness Month.
- We will work toward racial equity in recruiting, installing/hiring, training, and retaining employees and leaders.
- We will encourage the management of church investments and finances in ways that acknowledge the presence of racial injustice through financial systems. For instance, we will support minority-owned or minority-led businesses.
- We will partner with local and regional community leaders, such as predominately BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, (and) People of Color) churches, to support their anti-racist work; and we will encourage other leaders to include anti-racism as part of their agenda.
- We will engage in acts of restoration and reparation, as a response to disparities of wealth

established and maintained by white supremacy.

- We will support peacemaking movements that address racism within a spectrum of other intersectional identities.
- We will support revitalizing churches for, and consider making space for New Worshiping Communities where, equity and justice are the norm.
- We will cultivate postures of curiosity, humility, shared humanity, and delight in interactions with all people who have been marginalized.
- We will pay attention to where we might mobilize to support young people of color, voting rights, housing access, fair immigration, prison reform, and other issues where love is on display in public settings.
- We will acknowledge and bring awareness of the Utah history that includes the Topaz Confinement camp of Japanese American people.
- Those of us who have the privilege of whiteness will practice listening to, more than speaking at, those of us who are BIPOC.