

**Presbytery of Lake Erie**  
**Committee on Ministry**  
**Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Policy**  
**Unity in Diversity**  
Adopted 11.2024

*“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29).*

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church’s membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination against any person. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and Lake Erie Presbytery shall guarantee full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership. No member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in this the church’s Constitution. (Book of Order F-1.0403)

Our denomination’s 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly adopted an anti-racism policy which states: Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the diminishment or rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others. It is also a lie about God, for it falsely claims that God favors parts of creation over the entirety of creation. 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.<sup>1</sup>

In the same manner, our understanding of who God is and what God intends also calls us to stand, speak, and work against the other forms of discrimination such as those listed above. As Presbyterians we know something about work. While aspects of the Protestant work ethic may be problematic, to the degree that it signifies our determination, persistence, and stubborn strength, we embrace it in this regard: we commit ourselves to DO THE WORK of countering racism and discrimination in our witness to the Gospel.

- In our affirmation that God loves variety, we will honor diversity as a good in which God delights.
- In our conviction that God desires justice, we will learn from others to broaden our understanding of equality.
- In our humility as sinful people, we will listen openly to diverse voices regarding how racism functions in our society and repent from our failings.
- In our gratitude for God’s grace, we will turn again and again towards the vision of whole community found in the Word of God.
- In our joyous response to God’s love, we will love one another.<sup>1</sup>

The task of dismantling racism and all forms of discrimination must be a partnership effort that involves all levels of the church. Since institutions vary in their social reality, it follows that the approach to dismantling racism and addressing discrimination must be flexible and adaptable to changing situations. Nevertheless, there can and must be continuity in the general approach so that resources can be developed and shared to support antidiscrimination and antiracism work across the church and in ecumenical relationships.<sup>1</sup>

As a presbytery within the PCUSA, Lake Erie Presbytery will:

1. Seek to welcome and be open to all people.
2. Educate ourselves to seek awareness of our own behavior, blindness, and biases and the impact on our community of faith and the wider community.
3. Seek resources (curriculum, worship, preaching, music, and literature) which are reflective of people of all backgrounds.
4. Study Matthew 25 materials, (<https://presbyterianmission.org/ministreis/matthew-25/matt-25-resources>), the Churchwide Antiracism Policy (2016), and materials advised by the presbytery resource center to increase our awareness of systemic racism and any form of discrimination and its impact.
5. Together seek within each congregation and the community those whose experience and expertise can be instructive and inspiring, and to identify partnerships that increase cooperation and understanding.

This policy takes effect when it is approved by the presbytery and will be included in the Presbytery's Manual of Operations. The council will review it annually and change it as necessary to fulfill the requirements of the Book of Order. In addition, the presbytery will annually assess how well it is addressing each of the action items listed above. This policy is provided to the sessions and congregations of Lake Erie Presbytery and is commended for study by sessions and congregations and to be used by sessions as a model in creating policy for congregations. (See the copy formatted for session use)

<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, Churchwide Antiracism Policy as approved by the 222<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly (2016).