

Presbytery of Lake Huron Antiracism Policy – Approved by Presbytery 3/1/25

Introduction

In the book of Micah, chapter 6, the Hebrew scriptures remind us of what the Lord requires of their people - “to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with [our] God” (New Revised Standard Version).

As the Presbytery of Lake Huron seeks to live out this calling, we understand that there are many injustices that continue to plague our world, including the sin of racism. Recognizing this, we, the Presbytery of Lake Huron and its members commit ourselves to the work of recognizing, confronting, and dismantling racism and racist systems by requiring anti-racism training for all leaders at the Presbytery and local congregational levels. Such training will allow us to better equip ourselves and our congregations as we seek to confront the pervasiveness of racism and racist structures, and move toward the hope of racial healing and restorative justice.

We affirm that “[r]acism is more than individual acts of bigotry or prejudice. Racism is any system, institution, or cultural practice or tradition, which protects or prefers the lives, property, and status of White people--or any group which takes power over another, at the expense of our siblings of color or other marginalized persons or groups. Racism is contrary to the Gospel injunction to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. Scriptures teach us that though we are individually unique, we are collectively, as children of God, one in God’s eyes, equally beloved by God” (National Capital Presbytery’s Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism).

The Presbytery of Lake Huron reaffirms its commitment to justice, equity, and love, as central to its mission as followers of Christ. These tools are intended to aid our member congregations as they seek a deeper awareness of the sin of racism and its corrosive effects and discern how they may become agents of racial justice and reconciliation. This policy and training structure is a step toward fulfilling this commitment, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

With this understanding, the Presbytery of Lake Huron and all of its members dedicate ourselves to this important work as a reminder that God created humankind and called us all “good”, and that as the prophet Isaiah stated, “My house will be called a house of prayer for all peoples” (56:7 - NRSV).

Implementation

Antiracism Training Structure

- **Mandatory Training:**
 - The Presbytery of Lake Huron (PLH) shall offer annual antiracism training workshops. The following people are required to complete the training once every three years:

- All church leaders serving in a pastoral capacity (called and installed ministers of Word and Sacrament, designated pastors, contracted or temporary supply pastors, etc.)
 - Commissioned Pastors (also known as Commissioned Ruling Elders) serving in a work commissioned by the Presbytery.
 - Presbytery Staff and Officers
 - Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Ruling Elders serving on Presbytery Committees
 - Inquirers and Candidates for Ministry
 - Certified Christian Educators and Certified Associate Christian Educators on the rolls of the Presbytery.
 - All those on the PLH Pulpit Supply List
 - Failure to complete the required training may result in consequences following the guidelines set by the Presbytery Council.
 - The Mission Coordination Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Council, will select a non-profit organization dedicated to racial justice, antiracism practices, and restorative practices to conduct the training. This training should include education on racial justice, systemic racism, and restorative practices. The cost of the training module will be paid from PLH funds.
 - The Stated Clerk of the Presbytery will maintain a roster of those who have completed the training and those who need to complete the training or be retrained.
 - Congregational members, especially Elders, Deacons, and church staff are strongly encouraged to participate in these trainings as well.
- **Content of Training:**
 - Education on the history and impact of racism within the church and society.
 - Examination of implicit bias and strategies for identifying and addressing it.
 - Practical steps for individuals and congregations to take in combating racism.
 - Development of allyship skills to support marginalized communities.
 - **Resources:** The Mission Coordination Committee (MCC) will provide access to a variety of resources, including workshops, reading materials, and online modules, to support ongoing education and action. The MCC will review and update the resource list annually.

PLH invites and encourages clergy and lay members to embrace this discipline of training and commit to the work of confronting and ending systemic racism. The training will provide information and insights into anti-racism efforts; however, this workshop is only a beginning. Ongoing prayer, study, conversation, discernment, and practice by and among PLH members will be essential.

The major work within the Presbytery of dismantling racism, of restoring right relationships with God and each other, will be done within the member congregations of the Presbytery.

Suggested Actions for Churches and Individuals

- **Policy Implementation:**
 - Sessions should regularly review and update church policies, practices, and programs to ensure they align with antiracist practices. The Session should also oversee the implementation of the church's antiracism policy and ensure accountability in these practices.
- **Community Engagement:**
 - Partner with local organizations dedicated to racial justice to support community initiatives and provide opportunities for congregation members to engage in antiracist work.
 - Host regular forums and discussion groups on racism, allowing space for education, reflection, and collective action.
- **Internal Practices:**
 - Implement fair hiring practices to promote diversity within church leadership and staff.
 - Ensure that church investments and financial practices reflect a commitment to racial equity and justice.
 - Create a reporting process for instances of racism or discrimination within the church.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement

- **Continuous Learning:** Encourage a culture of continuous learning and self-examination, where members regularly engage with new materials and perspectives on racism and social justice.
- **Regular Evaluation:** Church Sessions will regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and training, making adjustments as necessary to ensure ongoing relevance and impact. The progress of antiracism initiatives including successes, challenges, and areas for improvement should be reported to the congregation annually to facilitate accountability.

Conclusion

As we work towards the implementation of this policy and becoming a more unified church, we profess our beliefs as stated in the Belhar Confession:

“We believe that Christ's work of reconciliation is made manifest in the church as the community of believers who have been reconciled with God and with one another;”

“Therefore, we reject any doctrine which absolutizes either natural diversity or the sinful separation of people in such a way that this absolutization hinders or breaks the visible and active unity of the church, or even leads to the establishment of a separate church formation;”

Rejecting divisive doctrine is the beginning of this journey that we will walk together.

Anti-Racism Resources

Implicit Bias Test: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

21 Day Racial Equity Challenge - <https://www.americaandmoore.com/>

“The Inherent Problem of Whiteness in our Policy” By Rev. Jill Duffield, *Presbyterian Outlook*. <https://pres-outlook.org/2020/08/the-inherent-problem-of-whiteness-in-our-polity/>

“What Is BIPOC?” <https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html>

“Microinterventions for Maximum Effect” by Sarah Lazarovic, *Yes! Magazine*. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/black-lives/2020/08/26/microaggressions-how-to-intervene>

“Celebrating Diversity” University of Louisville
https://louisville.edu/philosophy/ftw/files/FreemanandStewart_MicroaggressionsinMedicineandtheHarmstoPatients.pdf

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*. New York: Random House, 2019.

Ijeoma Oluo, *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Basic Books, 2018.

Matthew 25 Resources: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/matthew-25/matt-25-resources/>

“Teaching Hard History: American Slavery Classroom Videos”
<https://www.learningforjustice.org/frameworks/teaching-hard-history/american-slavery/classroom-videos>

Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*, Beacon Press, 1949.

Intersectionality, https://awis.org/wp-content/uploads/AWIS_FactSheet_Intersectionalityv4.pdf.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>