

Presbytery of Santa Barbara Anti Racism Policy

We are taught in the book of Galatians: “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.” (Gal. 3:27–28).

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, disability, geography, or theological conviction.

Racism is the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the 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.

The Presbytery of Santa Barbara affirms that, “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. Antiracist 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.”¹

Therefore, in our efforts to create a church that reflects the rich diversity inherent in the body of Christ, Presbytery of Santa Barbara commits to:

- Strive to ensure that there is no place in the life of the church for discrimination against any person; full participation and representation in its worship, governance, and emerging life to all persons or groups within its membership;
- Strive to work so that no member shall be denied participation or representation for any reason other than those stated in the constitution of the PC (USA) or policies of the presbytery;
- Continue to acknowledge and repent for the harm that has been done and continues to be done by the sin of racism;
- Encourage anti-racism and anti-discrimination training for our members and congregations;
- Acknowledge and celebrate the wonderful diversity in God's creation.

¹ Facing Racism: A Vision of the Intercultural Community, 222nd General Assembly (2016).
<https://www.pcusa.org/resource/facing-racism-a-vision-of-the-intercultural--40843/>