

First Mennonite Church, Indianapolis – Anti-racism Statement 8/17/2023

We, First Mennonite Church of Indianapolis, recognize there are many forms of injustice in our community, our nation, and our world that are inconsistent with the teachings of Christ. As a congregation, we have intentionally chosen to name and address racial injustice.

We confess that we have been complicit in [racism](#). We are sensitive to the issues facing our siblings of color, and we admit we don't completely know how to be free of racial hierarchy. We don't know how to get to a place where all people have the chance and ability to thrive, but we can no longer ignore the injustices. We recognize and specifically condemn racism as sin. We are committed to being [anti-racist](#), promoting [racial equity](#), and seeking [racial justice](#) - beginning now.

We see our commitment to anti-racism and racial justice as being in keeping with our church's [core values](#), especially in terms of our focus on the "power of peace," the "relevance of reconciliation," and "the warmth of welcoming." Our core convictions as an Anabaptist / Mennonite church are rooted in the Bible, which we believe to be God's trustworthy message to us.

Guided by these core values, we commit to taking the following steps towards becoming anti-racist:

- lament and pray together;
- stand in solidarity with, walk alongside, and learn from people and communities of color'
- listen to voices and stories that we may have previously ignored;
- offer safe space for discussion and continued learning about the past to inform and guide our future action;
- recognize and value the experiences, cultures, and talents of all people;
- integrate anti-racism intentionally into each of our commissions;
- identify actions we can take that move toward racial equity and racial justice;
- engage more actively in peacemaking;
- celebrate anti-racism work.

We know that becoming anti-racist is an extended process as we become aware of our conscious and unconscious biases and commit to learning. We realize that we are at different places in our understanding and experience. We take confidence in knowing that we are not alone in our desire to take actions that lead to positive change as other Mennonite churches, Mennonite Church USA, and other denominations are also looking to recognize the power of privilege and prompt action that leads to reconciliation, healing, and hope for our communities. We recognize that God has chosen to include and use each of us to be a part of making real, lasting, and bold change.

Definitions

Racism Race prejudice plus the systemic misuse of power.

Anti-racist Proactive and deliberate efforts by individuals and collectives to oppose and dismantle racism in its individual, institutional, systemic, and cultural forms.

Racial equity A process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone through intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.

Racial justice The equal and fair treatment of everyone regardless of ethnicity or race. To achieve racial justice, societies must tackle racial prejudice, discrimination, and systems that disproportionately harm some while favoring others.