

Policy Statement on Dismantling Racism

Approved March 23, 2021

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the pervasive sin of racism in our church and society and commit National Capital Presbytery (NCP) to the work of confronting and dismantling racism. NCP shall seek to accomplish the missional work of building the body of Christ by requiring anti-racism training for our clergy and by marshalling credible, trusted resources to enable and better equip our congregations as they examine and confront the issues of racial injustice, systemic racism, restorative justice, and racial healing.

Rationale:

Racism 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. As disciples of Jesus Christ, NCP will engage in this transformative work as we seek to build the beloved community of Christ where there is neither "Jew nor Greek...no longer slave or free...no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28.

Implementation:

1. The first component of the policy is structured education. NCP shall offer **training** for our clergy, lay leadership, and member congregations on racial and social justice. The Dismantling Racism Team will select a non-profit organization dedicated to catalyzing social justice through service and "allyship" to offer this training.
 - a. Attendance for all minister members of NCP and NCP staff is **mandatory every three years** on a recurring basis. The cost of the training module will be paid from NCP funds. The Committee on Ministry will maintain a roster of those needing and those who have completed the training and will report the list to the Stated Clerk annually.

- b. Attendance at a workshop is **encouraged** for:
 - 1) Chairs of NCP committees and commissions, church staffs, including directors of music, education, and youth, as well as members of NCP congregations, so that NCP may learn more about the work of identifying and ending racism.
 - c. NCP invites and encourages clergy and lay members to embrace this discipline of training and commit to the work of confronting and ending 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 NCP members will be essential.
- 2. 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 NCP.
 - a. NCP, through its Dismantling Racism Team, will identify *educational resources* for our congregations, some of whom may just be starting to explore the issues of racism and racial injustice while others have already begun to study and take actions toward racial healing. The Dismantling Racism Team will maintain on the NCP website a compendium of trusted resources (written, visual, or experiential) to illuminate and guide this work wherever our congregations may be on this journey.
 - b. Financial assistance in the form of training grants will also be available to congregations needing that help. Applications for financial assistance may be directed to the Director of Congregational Development and Mission.
 - c. 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.

Conclusion:

Our mission as members of the church of the Triune God is to be agents of salvation, justice, and reconciliation. These training workshops and educational resources are an opportunity and a means for our body to turn away from the sin of racism, to act as faithful disciples of Christ in ministering and caring for the marginalized in our world, and to witness God's love for all creation. We humbly undertake this work, trusting that God's Holy Spirit will be our guide and inspiration.