

## **Presbytery of Lake Michigan Anti-Racism Policy**

### **Preamble**

This policy is a statement of who we are and what we stand for. We believe in the sacred worth of all people and the value of diverse experiences and identities in the body of Christ. We seek to dismantle racism and white supremacy in all forms—personal, institutional, and systemic because we are called by Jesus to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. This is not only about what we reject, but about the beloved community we are actively building.

### **Theological Grounding**

As a council of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Presbytery of Lake Michigan affirms that all people are created in the image of God and are beloved members of God's family. We affirm the unity of the body of Christ across race, ethnicity, gender, culture, age, ability, and geography, and we root this work in Scripture: "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." — Galatians 3:28

"God does not show favoritism." — Acts 10:34

We draw from F-1.0403 of our Constitution: "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, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, geography, or theological conviction. There is therefore no place in the life of the Church for discrimination. The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) 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 Constitution."

### **Acknowledgment and Lament**

The Presbytery of Lake Michigan acknowledges:

- The legacy of colonization, enslavement, and systemic racism that undergirds the institutions of this nation, the church, including the Presbytery of Lake Michigan.
- The ways we, as a body, have been complicit through silence, inaction, or participation in unjust systems.
- That white supremacy, structural racism, and implicit bias remain embedded in our ecclesial, social, and institutional life.
- That we stand on the unceded ancestral lands of Indigenous peoples, including the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, Miami, and others who were displaced by colonial expansion and whose history has been marginalized.

- We lament the ongoing suffering and generational trauma caused by these systems, and we commit to a posture of humility and repentance as we seek justice.

## **Commitments to Action**

In order to live into our baptismal calling and resist systems of injustice, the Presbytery of Lake Michigan commits to:

### **Formation and Education**

- Providing regular antiracism and cultural humility training for presbytery staff, council members, and committee leaders.
- Incorporating diverse theological voices, especially BIPOC scholars, in our educational resources, liturgy, and programming.
- Promoting the use of Matthew 25 and Facing Racism resources throughout the presbytery.

### **Representation and Power-Sharing**

- Ensuring diversity in leadership and nominations by partnering with the Presbytery's Committee on Nominating and Representation.
- Reviewing our structures and practices to eliminate barriers to participation for underrepresented voices.

### **Community Partnership and Public Witness**

- Collaborating with mid councils and congregations engaged in antiracism ministry.
- Publicly naming and opposing racial injustice, including voter suppression, police brutality, economic disparity, and environmental racism.
- Lifting up the voices and leadership of those most impacted by injustice in our advocacy and witness.

## **Financial Stewardship and Reparative Action**

- Committing to reparative financial practices, including support for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)-led ministries.
- Expanding vendor and partnership relationships to include businesses owned by historically marginalized people.
- Exploring participation in initiatives like Restorative Actions that address wealth disparities rooted in systemic racism.

## **Accountability and Implementation**

- This policy will guide the work of all Presbytery committees and initiatives.
- An annual review of progress will be conducted by the Executive Presbyter/Stated Clerk and the Committee on Nominating and Representation, with the findings reported to the Presbytery.

- Complaints of racism or racial discrimination within the Presbytery's jurisdiction will be addressed promptly, transparently, with discretion and openness, and in keeping with our polity and values of justice and equity.

### **Closing Affirmation**

We confess that the road to justice is long and requires persistence, courage, and grace. We embrace the call to build an intercultural church where all gifts are welcomed, all people are valued, and the love of Christ compels us to act boldly for justice.

“Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” — Amos 5:24