

HIGHLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ANTIRACISM POLICY

Highland Presbyterian Church has a long history of involvement with issues attributed to and resulting from racism. From appointing a member to a city-wide committee focused on racial issues in 1950 to supporting the beginning of Dellabrook Presbyterian in 1954 through declaring worship at Highland to be open to all in 1961 and involvement with the Presbyterian Inter-Racial Dialogue in 1992, Highland has worked to ensure openness and communication on issues related to race. The Book of Order requires in G-3.0106 that “All councils shall adopt and implement the following policies: a sexual misconduct policy, a harassment policy, a child, youth, and adults with vulnerabilities protection policy, and **an antiracism policy.**” To that end, the Session of Highland Presbyterian Church hereby clarifies, reaffirms and summarizes its policy and practices regarding racism.

Racism is contrary to the Gospel injunction to love God and to love 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. But, as our church wide antiracism policy affirms: “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.” Racism is not limited to individual acts of bigotry or prejudice. Racism includes any system, institution, cultural practice, or tradition which produces outcomes that preferentially protect, empower, or benefit the lives, property, or status of one race over another.

Acknowledging the progress that has been made but cognizant of the need to remain steadfast in the core beliefs held by Highland since its inception, Highland will actively resist racism in its leadership, membership, and ministry by:

1. Using our voices, our bodies, and our material and other resources to educate and work toward the enactment of laws, policies, and tangible actions leading to justice and equity for all.
2. Evaluating ministry program outcomes for potential racism or bias;

3. Emphasizing in our worship, ministry, and communications that diversity and inclusion are inherent to the gospel of Jesus Christ;
4. Seeking to act as faithful disciples of Christ in ministering and caring for the marginalized in our congregation, our community, our world, and as a witness of God's love for all creation.
5. Pray without ceasing that "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24)