

# A Policy on the Reality of Racism and the Church's Imperative to Respond

First Presbyterian Church of Waco has a history of living in a culture of racism. We also have a history of leadership, learning, and growing toward greater equity. There is so much more to do as our Reformed tradition calls us to thoughtfulness, prayer, and intention regarding the worth of all people.

First Presbyterian Church of Waco, informed by the Race Equity training of Waco Foundation, understands that racism is in the groundwater of our culture and communities. Because all people take it in so thoroughly and it manifests in unique ways, we are committed to the management of racism in the life of our congregation, and in the wider community when it is within our power to do so. We observe that the scriptures call us to consider the differences within and surrounding communities. We observe that the scriptures surprise us with important moments of equity for God's people. We observe the struggle in scripture to behave well toward a wide and grace-filled kingdom of God.

Therefore, we are committed to resisting impulses that lead us to participate in structural racism and we are committed to challenging our implicit biases that dehumanize others. We are committed to being a congregation that manages impulses toward power while working to share power with all members in appropriate ways for our polity.

We recognize the strides we have made, even as we acknowledge there is more work to do. As we strive to be a congregation that manages racism in perpetuity, we commit to the following:

- to engage in conversation, dialogue, and formal learning opportunities to understand the history of racism in our culture.
- to honor the elements of our Personnel Manual that assure equal opportunity employment. This includes striving for racial equity in recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees.
- to remain aware of the General Assembly actions encouraging us to engage diverse suppliers and thoughtful management of church investments toward justice and equity.
- to work in partnership with mid-councils in their programs and ministries that inform congregations about implicit bias and racism.
- to act courageously and creatively within our community on matters that oppress or discriminate against people as it relates to education, healthcare, and financial opportunity.
- to put into practice General Assembly directives to build an intercultural church where justice and equity prevail.