

Press Release

For Immediate Release

First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto Launches Anti-Racism Commitment with Sermon Series and Juneteenth Celebration

PALO ALTO, Calif. — First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto has formally adopted a bold anti-racist statement affirming its commitment to equity, justice, and transformation. This public declaration marks a spiritual and communal milestone in the church's evolving journey toward racial justice.

"We live in a white supremacist society in which racism affects every relationship," said Rev. Tom Harris, Pastor of First Presbyterian "Our commitment to anti-racism acknowledges that it is not enough to just say we are not racist. We have to do the hard work of changing ourselves as well as society."

In alignment with this commitment, the congregation will launch a three-week sermon series titled "With Humility and Hope: Unlearning Racism, Relearning Love," beginning Sunday, June 1. The series will explore the internal, external, and reparative dimensions of anti-racism as a faithful response to the teachings of Jesus. The newly adopted statement will be incorporated into the worship service as liturgy.

Although First Presbyterian has a long-standing history of social engagement, the urgency of this moment cannot be ignored. "Our church has a long commitment to justice and the time to join our allies in the work against racism is now," said Leif Erickson, Co-Chair of the church's Anti-Racism Team. "We have much to learn, but when we see leaders acting with such cruelty targeted at People of Color, our faith requires us to act. We hope to join with other people of faith and goodwill in this work."

Co-Chair Gail Thompson, adds, "Our goal is to continue to practice our Christian faith by opening up ourselves to involvement with the ongoing struggles of those experiencing racism and to examine and confront our own complicity in those struggles."

The series will culminate in a Juneteenth Sunday celebration on June 15, featuring a service of freedom and remembrance. Guest artist Kevan Peabody—renowned gospel musician, historian, and mentor—will lead the congregation in music. Peabody brings decades of experience as a gospel music educator, performer, and church leader, uniting audiences across traditions with his soulful, dynamic presence.

Location:

First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto
1140 Cowper Street

Palo Alto, CA 94301

Dates & Details:

- June 1: “Internal Work” – confronting bias and naming complicity
- June 8: “External Advocacy” – living out love through authentic partnerships
- June 15: “Repairing What Was Broken” – Juneteenth Celebration with Kevan Peabody

All services begin at 10 a.m. and all are welcome.

[Read the full anti-racism statement](#)

For media inquiries or interview requests, contact:

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