

First Presbyterian Church Palo Alto's Commitment to Anti-Racism

Inspired by the teachings and example of Jesus of Nazareth, we affirm the basic worth and dignity of every person. Racism and white supremacy are beliefs and systems that deny and attack that basic worth and dignity. Because we have all been influenced by racist beliefs and society, we cannot simply say we are "not racist." We must actively pursue anti-racism: the intentional work of dismantling systems of oppression, addressing personal and institutional biases, and advocating for justice in all areas of life.

We recognize that anti-racism is not a one-time statement or task but a lifelong commitment.

So, with humility and hope, we commit to growing together, walking alongside those who have been harmed by racism, and embodying the love and justice of God.

Foundations

Our anti-racist work is grounded in our values and our interpretation of the Bible. Founded in themes from the Hebrew Scriptures of justice and liberation, we believe Jesus' inclusive and liberating message and ministry compel us to act with courage and compassion in the face of racism and white supremacy.

Our church's Mission Statement clearly expresses this calling:

Drawn together by God's inclusive love, we are a Christian community committed to seeking wisdom, practicing empathy, and disrupting injustice.

Internal Work

We seek to grow as individuals and as a congregation, addressing our shortcomings and creating an environment that reflects the inclusive love of Christ. We will:

- Acknowledge and address microaggressions in our interactions.
- Remove barriers to welcome and ensure our community does not unconsciously communicate a preference for "white space."*
- Speak out against racism when we encounter it as individuals and as a community, rather than remaining silent.
- Observe hiring practices that emphasize outreach to diverse networks of applicants and reduce unconscious bias.
- Seek and nurture diverse leadership from within the congregation.

External Advocacy

Our anti-racist commitment extends beyond our walls. As a congregation, we will actively show up for racial justice in our community. We will:

- Partner with local leaders and organizations working for racial justice,
- Support initiatives that address the specific harm caused by racism, while recognizing that racial justice intersects with all forms of advocacy,
- Center racial justice in all areas of our mission and outreach, as an expression of our faith.

Reparative Work

We would like to engage in reparative work that delves into the history and impact of racism in our church and community. As resources become available we plan to:

- Learn the racial history of our church and community, including but not limited to:
 - the sources of our wealth
 - racial housing segregation in our community
 - individual experiences of church members and friends
 - our congregation's relationship with systems of power
 - experiences of Native Americans in our area since our church's founding
 - history of social justice advocacy by church members and friends
- Understand and respond to the experiences of people of color within our church.
- Pursue initiatives for healing and justice as resources and leadership emerge.

We know our efforts will be imperfect and so we commit to humbly listening and learning as we take this journey. We invite all who share this vision to join us in this transformative work.

**White space refers to physical, social, or institutional spaces that are predominantly white and where whiteness is treated as the norm and People of Color are often absent, underrepresented, or made to feel like outsiders. These spaces are spaces where whiteness is assumed to be the default identity, shaping expectations for behavior, speech, and belonging. When People of Color enter white spaces, they may face scrutiny, discomfort, or the burden of proving they belong.*