

A Covenant of Inclusion: Anti-Racism Policy for Westminster Presbyterian Church of Albany, NY

Approved by Session January 16, 2024

Introduction:

Westminster Presbyterian Church is a community of faith rooted in the love of God and the teachings of Jesus Christ. We believe that each person is created in God's image, worthy of dignity, respect, and love, regardless of their racial or ethnic background. Racism and discrimination are contrary to the spirit of Christ and have no place in our church family.

Statement of Commitment:

Westminster Presbyterian Church is committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to participate fully in the life of the church. We actively oppose all forms of racism, both individual and systemic, and we strive to dismantle the structures and attitudes that perpetuate it.

Policy Guidelines:

- **Education:** We will provide opportunities for our members and leaders to learn about the history and impact of racism, both within and beyond the church. We will engage with diverse voices and perspectives to deepen our understanding of racial justice issues.
- **Worship:** We will celebrate the richness of our diverse heritage through our worship practices, music, and liturgy. We will strive to ensure that our worship reflects the voices and experiences of all our members.
- **Membership and Leadership:** We will actively seek to welcome and include people of all races and ethnicities into the full life of the church, including membership and leadership roles. We will work to dismantle any barriers that prevent full participation.
- **Communication:** We will foster open and honest communication about race and racism within our church community. We will create safe spaces for dialogue, listening, and learning.

- Action: We will go beyond words and take action to dismantle racism in our community and the world. We will partner with other organizations and individuals who are working for racial justice.

Accountability:

We recognize that this is an ongoing process, and we commit to holding ourselves accountable for our progress in becoming an anti-racist church. We will regularly review and update this policy to ensure that it reflects our values and commitments.

Conclusion:

Westminster Presbyterian Church is dedicated to building a beloved community where all are welcome, respected, and loved for who they are. We believe that this is the call of Christ, and we are committed to working together to make it a reality.