

Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley Policy on Racism and Training

Prepared by Anti-Racism Committee

Adopted January 24, 2020

Approved February 28, 2020

August 20, 2020 approved by acclamation

Anti-Racism Committee Mission Statement

The mission of the Anti-Racism Team of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley is to learn about and address the historic, systemic, and individual racism found within our presbytery. We seek to encourage and equip our churches, presbytery staff and individuals to take part in training, relationship building, and active engagement in church and community efforts to repent for and dismantle racism in central Alabama.

Adopted June 13, 2019

Rationale

“Moreover, I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

**Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Letter from a Birmingham Jail; April 16, 1963**

“There is a strength, a power even, in understanding brokenness, because embracing our brokenness creates a need and desire for mercy, and perhaps a corresponding need to show mercy. When you experience mercy, you learn things that are hard to learn otherwise. You see things you can't otherwise see; you hear things you can't otherwise hear. You begin to recognize the humanity that resides in each of us.”

**Bryan Stevenson
Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption**

Section I – Purpose

To enact the Church-wide Anti-racism policy approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016).

The Book of Order, Section G-3.0103, provides for councils of the church, including presbyteries, to address issues of racism. In partnership with General Assembly agencies, **presbyteries need to recruit, train, and commission presbytery-based anti-racism teams that shall work with congregations in establishing and supporting anti-racism programs and ministries.** Presbyteries need to provide for anti-racism training for their staff and committees.

Section II – Assumptions

The church and its people have been wounded by centuries of racism. The vestiges of racism are ever-present and continue to impact and impede joyful relationships, honest dialogue, thoughtful cooperation, and intentional inclusion in our churches and among its members.

Section III – Assertions

Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley, through its Anti-Racism Committee, is committed to upholding the edict approved by the 222nd General Assembly (2016) and added to the Book of Order Section G-3.0103 to provide training; to offer resources and educational opportunities; to organize opportunities for dialogue, interact with, and explore persons with different experiences and viewpoints; to present forums led by individuals and teams that focus on the history of racism within our church institutions and the communities in which we live; to highlight previous attempts to eradicate racism in those settings as we explore new avenues to address present-day racism in all of its subtleties.

Training shall be carried out with an undergirding of theological principals inherent in the Presbyterian tradition with social subtexts and from a historical perspective.

Section IV – Approach

Stated Clerk shall maintain a record of persons who complete training. This requirement shall be included in the terms of call.

1. Anti-Racism training shall be **required** at least once every three years for:
 - A. All Ministers of the Word and Sacrament who are serving as pastors to a congregation or otherwise engaged in a Validated Ministry are required to participate in a training program organized by the Anti-Racism Committee, within one year after this policy is adopted or within one year of assuming the role. This requirement shall be included in the terms of call.
 - B. All Certified Christian Educators are required to participate in a training program organized by the Anti-Racism Committee, within one year after this policy is adopted or within one year of assuming the role.

- C. Commissioned Ruling Elders (CREs) and Ruling Elders elected to serve on Executive Council, the Commission on Ministry (COM) and the Commission on Preparation for Ministry (CPM) are required to participate in a training within one year of being commissioned (CRE) or elected to COM or CPM, Anti-Racism Committee, Permanent Judicial Commission, and Personnel Committee
 - D. All Candidates for Ministry are required to attend an anti-racism training program organized by the Anti-Racism Committee or alternative training (approved by the Anti-Racism Committee). If an alternative training is incongruent with the anti-racism mission and policy, it shall not be accepted as having met the requirement.
 - E. All Presbytery staff are required to attend within one year of the adoption of this policy or within one year of hire/election.
 - F. The Presbytery **strongly encourages** honorably retired teaching elders and ruling elders serving in leadership roles in the Presbytery, session members, youth directors, Christian educators, music leaders, and other congregational staff leaders to participate in approved and recommended anti-racism trainings
2. Required Training Schedule and Locations
- A. Required anti-racism training shall be provided once per year at a location to be determined by the size of the class.
 - B. Remote alternate training shall be allowed for those unable to attend scheduled required training held within the perimeter of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.
3. Recommended Anti-racism Activities
- A. Anti-racism activities are recommended at least annually for churches and members throughout the Presbytery using a variety of vehicles, including but not limited to listening sessions, workshops, book/video discussions, presentations involving speakers and panels, field trips, and other vehicles developed by or presented by the Anti-Racism Committee.
 - B. Youth throughout the Presbytery using a variety of vehicles developed by or presented by the Anti-Racism Committee that are age appropriate and meaningful. Parents/guardians shall give signed consent for youth to participate.
4. Recommended Anti-racism activities schedule and locations
- A. Recommended Due to the size of the presbytery, anti-racism training activities should be offered four times a year in various regions of the presbytery including but not limited to Presbytery meetings, Main Event, youth retreats, churches or other locations to accommodate geographic church clusters based on the size of the attendance.

- B. Remote alternate training may be available for those interested in diving deeper in the work of anti-racism of the Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley.

Section V – Administration and Oversight

1. The office of the Stated Clerk is responsible for ensuring notation of Teaching Elder and Certified Ruling Elder participation is made in their permanent files and notifying them of compliance deadlines. The Presbytery of Sheppards and Lapsley shall communicate to Pastoral Nominating Committees and churches who are requesting references on the status of candidates with respect to this requirement.
2. Provision for Training Evaluation and Policy Review
 - A. The Presbytery shall review and adopt this policy during the 2020 calendar year to become effective immediately.

Section VI – Committee Leadership

1. The Committee shall be co-chaired by members who are of diverse racial heritage. If possible, they should represent both clergy and lay.
2. Committee Chairs shall remain in effect for one year with the option to renew for a successive year.

Section VII – Funding

1. Funding shall include but not be limited to:
 - A. providing training opportunities and activities led by third-party organizations or consultants, included associated travel, lodging and meals for said presenters,
 - B. for members of the Anti-Racism Committee to attend continuing education training and activities to further its mission,
 - C. for Committee members to travel to meetings with partners, collaborators, PCUSA, Presbytery, anti-racism team-related anti-racism events,
 - D. building an anti-racism resource library,
 - E. enhancing the availability of anti-racism literature, links, and websites, and
 - F. for future uses that bring awareness of the anti-racism initiative.