

Mid-Kentucky Presbytery Anti-Racism Policy

Approved 2/22/2025

Goal: to satisfy *The Book of Order* (G-3.0106), to offer a path for educating churches/ministries and provide benchmarks, and to engage in an ongoing process for addressing the sin of racism.

Introduction:

The Mid-Kentucky Presbytery is committed to the radical, transformative work of anti-racism. Rooted in the Christian teachings of love, justice, and equality, we recognize the pervasive nature of racism—individual, institutional, and systemic—across our society and within the church itself. We understand racism as a sin that distorts the image of God in every human being and commits us to a lifelong journey of learning, unlearning, and action. This policy outlines our commitment to dismantling white supremacy, promoting racial equity, and building a racially just and inclusive church.¹

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

1. Defining Racism:

Racism, as we understand it, encompasses both conscious and unconscious acts of bias, discrimination, and prejudice based on race. It exists on multiple levels—personally, interpersonally, and institutionally—and is rooted in historical systems of power and privilege, primarily benefitting white people while marginalizing People of Color. This policy also recognizes the intersectionality of race with other social identities, such as gender, class, and ability, acknowledging the compounded impact of racism on these groups.

2. Commitment to Racial Equity:

The Presbytery affirms its commitment to racial equity, recognizing that simply treating everyone equally does not address the disparities and historical disadvantages faced by communities of color. Racial equity involves acknowledging these systemic barriers and taking specific steps to ensure fair outcomes, which may require additional resources and support for marginalized groups.

3. Anti-Racism Training:

We will require all clergy (including retired clergy active in any organized ministry) along with other staff and members of the Presbytery, to participate in anti-racism training on a regular basis. Mandatory training will be held annually, covering topics such as the history of racism in the United States, the impact of implicit bias, white privilege, microaggressions, and how to actively dismantle white supremacy in our church and communities. These trainings will be facilitated by people with expertise in racial justice issues and will evolve based on current social contexts and feedback from participants.

4. Inclusive Leadership and Decision-Making:

The Presbytery will work to create racially diverse and inclusive leadership. This includes setting targets for representation of People of Color across committees, boards, and other decision-making bodies within the Presbytery. These targets are aimed at ensuring diverse voices have a meaningful role in shaping the future of the church. We will also develop leadership programs specifically designed to support clergy of color and lay leaders of color, providing mentorship and development opportunities.

5. Racial Justice Committee:

¹ Genesis 1:27, Matthew 22:37-39, Acts 10:34-35, Gal. 3:27–28, James 2:1-4, 1 John 4:20, Revelation 7:9

A Racial Justice Task Force under the Personnel Committee will be established until a Committee on Racial Justice is formed within the Presbytery. This committee will be tasked with monitoring the implementation of this Anti-Racism Policy, reviewing and suggesting amendments to the Presbytery Standing Rules and Manual of Operations as needed, and holding the Presbytery accountable for progress. Additionally, the committee will spearhead racial justice initiatives, engage in community outreach, and work with community organizations to advocate for racial justice beyond the church walls. The suggested composition of the Task Force/Racial Justice Committee is 6 people including 1 from Personnel Committee, 1 from Nominations and Representation Committee, and at least 2 People of Color who belong to Presbytery congregations/ministries made up mainly of People of Color.

6. Accountability and Reporting:

We are committed to building an environment where racial discrimination, bias, and harassment are not tolerated. To this end, the Personnel Committee in consultation with Racial Justice Task Force/ Committee will establish clear, confidential procedures for reporting and investigating incidents of racism or racial bias within the church. Disciplinary actions are the purview of the Personnel Committee (as well as – potentially – the Presbytery’s Permanent Judicial Commission or civil authorities).

We will ensure that those who come forward are supported and protected from retaliation. A public annual report will be issued to outline the number of incidents reported, actions taken, and outcomes.

7. Support for Congregations Made Up Mainly of People of Color:

The Presbytery will prioritize supporting congregations made up mainly of People of Color through dedicated financial grants (including help with salaried positions), leadership development, mentorship programs, etc. We will ensure that the voices, experiences, and spiritual needs of communities of color are centered in church life and ministry. We also commit to identifying and removing any institutional barriers that have historically limited the full participation of People of Color in the life of the church.

8. Congregational Engagement with the Larger Community

Congregations will be encouraged to actively engage in racial justice work within their larger communities. This may include actions such as partnering with other congregations across racial/ethnic lines, cooperating with local racial justice organizations, advocating for legislative changes that promote equity, and providing educational forums on race and racism open to the wider community. The Presbytery will allocate funding and resources to support congregations in these efforts.

9. Historical Truth-Telling:

As part of our commitment to anti-racism, we will engage in truth-telling about the history of racism in our church and the broader community. This involves acknowledging the church's role in both perpetuating and resisting racism, and working toward reconciliation through educational events, memorials, and open dialogues about the past. Congregations will be encouraged to explore the racial history of their local communities and confront any complicit roles in perpetuating racial injustice.

10. Inclusive Worship Practices:

Worship planners are encouraged to reflect in worship services the diverse cultural expressions of faith found among the body of Christ. The Worshipful Work Committee, in publications, social media, and presbytery worship, will offer up resources and examples for churches to try. This includes incorporating hymns, prayers, and liturgies from various racial and ethnic traditions, so that worship can be a space where all people feel seen, heard, and valued.

11. Regular Policy Review:

This Anti-Racism Policy will be reviewed every two years by the Racial Justice Committee. During this review process, we will seek feedback from clergy, staff, and congregation members, to assess the policy's effectiveness and identify areas for improvement. We will check with our partners on our effectiveness in community engagement. Updates and amendments will be made as necessary to respond to evolving challenges and contexts.

12. Measurable Outcomes:

The Racial Justice Committee will review the Presbytery's progress on these measurable policy goals including but not limited to:

- Increase the percentage of People of Color in leadership roles by a specified amount over the next five years
- Host a minimum of two anti-racist educational events per year
- Provide financial support and fund-raising assistance to the Presbytery congregations/ministries made up mainly by People of Color
- Provide financial support to at least three community-based racial justice initiatives per year
- Increase the percentage of congregations/ministries that have developed and adopted their anti-racism policy and implemented anti-racism initiatives.

Conclusion: This policy is a living document, one that evolves as we continue to learn and grow in our understanding of racism and racial justice. We, as the Mid-Kentucky Presbytery, commit to this journey with humility, dedication, and the conviction that true discipleship requires the dismantling of all forms of oppression, including racism. Guided by the gospel's call to love and justice, we pledge to be a body of believers that not only denounces racism but actively works to eradicate it from our lives, our church, and our world.

Find resources at <https://facing-racism.pcusa.org/>

