

Resolution in support of Racial Justice Training

Background Information¹:

- According to 2017 demographic data [www.census.gov], ~94% of Wisconsin residents are European descent [or white], and ~6% of residents are people of color [percentage reflects population without Milwaukee County, which would be 87% for the state as a whole when including that area]. Wisconsin residents of African descent make up the largest single minority group outside of Milwaukee [2.2%], and 69% of people of African descent in the state of Wisconsin live in Milwaukee County.
- Boundaries Training, which focuses on respecting the boundaries between people and how power can have a negative impact on relationships, has been a part of the ELCA and the Northwest Synod for many years. Currently, the cost to participants of the Boundaries Workshops offered by the NW Synod is \$75.
- Training and Workshops that focus on Racial Justice are already readily available to people living in NW Wisconsin via a variety of forms, modes, and settings throughout the year.
- Resources, including books, interactive experiences, worksheets, Bible Studies, Adult Forums, and video are available for rostered ministers and congregations from the ELCA, 1517 Media, the Wisconsin Council of Churches, and the NW Synod of Wisconsin's own website.

Whereas, Jesus has asked us to bring God's word to all, as it is recorded in the Gospel of Matthew: And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." [*Matthew* 28:19-20], and

Whereas, Paul reminded the people of God in his letter to the churches of Galatia that "in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." [*Galatians* 3:26-28], and,

Whereas racism – a mix of power, privilege, fragility, and prejudice – has been acknowledged as sin by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) in Assembly, a violation of God's intention for humanity as expressed by Jesus and Paul, and as such, members of this denomination are challenged to face our racism, bias, and White privilege, and

Whereas the ELCA is a primarily White denomination, and that the congregations that make up the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin are primarily White, and

Whereas the ELCA has provided anti-racism training for the ELCA Church Council, Bishops, and Churchwide Staff, and

¹ Information located by the Hunger and Justice Advocate on behalf of the Racial Justice Action Group.

Whereas the Synod Women's Organization (SWO) has had racial justice trainers since 2009 that have primarily worked with women's groups in our congregations, and

Whereas as leaders and members of primarily White congregations in a White denomination in a mostly White state, we are called upon to recognize the power of implicit bias and whiteness in order to live more fully as the people of God, therefore, be it

Resolved that the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin offer at least one Racial Justice/Anti-Racism Training workshop every year at the same cost to participants as Boundary Workshops, and be it further

Resolved that all Rostered leaders and Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs) in the Synod be encouraged to participate in Racial Justice/Anti-Racism Training in 2021 or 2022, and be it further

Resolved that each congregation, including its church staff and lay leaders, set aside a time each year to reflect on how racism, implicit bias, and privilege impact their own life together.

Submitted by the NW Synod Racial Justice Group, the NW Synod Justice Team, and the NW Synod Council.