

Annual Report - Racial Justice Team 2020

In January (2020), POP's Racial Justice Team (RJT) was organized after Pastor Froehlke brought Lenny Duncan's book, *Dear Church...* to POP in fall of 2019. God was setting us up (though nothing could have prepared us) for the national racial reckoning that started with horrific violence followed by exposed inequity, both caused by systemic racism magnified by the other pandemic, COVID-19. Striving to be allies in changing what black indigenous people of color (BIPOC) have always known but which was previously unseen, misunderstood, or denied by most whites in our church and nation is an overwhelming goal. This must be an ongoing journey and POP needs YOU to join. Here are some things your RJT did last year to get POP started.

Jan/Feb (in person)- Organizational/brainstorming mtgs to get ideas for addressing racism from members and *Dear Church* (notes from book/results of these meetings available on request)

- Committee members started sharing articles and building a database of resources from reading/researching/attending webinars/mtgs including Not In Our Town, EmbraceRace, Salvation and Social Justice, NJ Citizens Action, Standing Up for Racial Justice, etc.
- **Pastor announced/preached on racism/Biblical justice for midwk Lenten services**
- Started monthly newsletter updates on committee, events and suggested resources
- **Reviewed art in POP, books in nursery and in worship bags for diversity**

Mar/Apr (1 in person, 2 virtual) - Discussed ELCA statement/decided name Racial Justice Team

- **Altered acolytes' white robes to take off hood** because of historic racist symbolism
- Started discussing author talks/diversity books at Christian Ed used book sale for fall
- **Public Statement re rising AntiAsian Racist acts**, posted in print, online, website, FB
- **Posted Active Bystander poster** in church, on website (next newsletter)
- Racist Incidents on Social Media w/i local schools discussed so investigating no hate signs/outreach to other groups to try to work together locally on antiracism in schools
- Develop diverse nursery books/Children's Sermon to discuss race/possible collection
- **Obtained *This Far By Faith*** for Pastors/musician to investigate multicultural worship
- Networking begun w/ Trenton Health Team and STAND NJ re inequity in pandemic

May - Virtual Mtgs/Email with UUCP Racial Justice/NIOT leaders re training/wkg together

- **Ordered Anti Hate & Welcome Yard Signs for POP & HND** (also offered to members)
- **21 Day Equity Habit Building Challenge** announced in church, by email, on website
- **Posted ELCA AntiRacism resolutions and declarations** on POP Website
- ELCA SE Synod webinar and NIOT Princeton on White Supremacy included in Challenge
- Researched/discussed indigenous (esp. Navajo Nation) and immigrants inequitably impacted

June Virtual Mtg with Rev. Kimberly Vaughn of NJ Synod Antiracism for guidance in proceeding. She suggested choosing 1-2 focus areas (team later **chose Education as Focus**)

- **Many members involved in peaceful protests** (not just in June), discussed safety/support
- Black Lives Matter sign seen at POP once our others were posted, discussed and supported
- ELCA Bishop Eaton's focus on racism in confession and recorded service
- Reached out to young adults, teens re getting confirmation classes involved in race discussions
- Jul/Aug -Reached out to Black ministers to try to develop relationships/work together on this
- Reached out to Pastor Sammy Arroyo (Hispanic pastor in Hightstown) re education/segregation legislation, to African American Parent Support Group re WWP, to Princeton Racial Literacy re wkg w/ schools + individuals trying to make connections w/i districts (Rville, AHS, Montgomery)
- **Members getting involved in advocacy through Synod (Rev. Lilja), LaConvivencia, etc.**

Sept - Focus on **Christian churches' historic responsibility in systemic racism/segregation**

- **Pastor Froehlke led two forums on reparations**

Oct - **Examining Racism course (by NIOTPrinceton) offered for two adult forums**

- Focus on Upcoming Election, helping members to vote - **Put out How to Vote Flyer to POP,**
- **Discussed public questions and racial implications in Cannabis Legislation**
- **Discussed WW as indigenous land since prehistoric times & local Black cemeteries**
- **Racial justice progress seen in local schools discussed/ advertised for tutors for POC**
- **Offered "Parents Talking about Race"**

Nov/Dec - **NJ Synod ELCA AntiRacism Virtual Summit** (many RJT members attended)

- **Focused discussion on POP Budget and REPARATIONS possibilities** including scholarships (for BIPOC in seminary, higher ed), providing technology, supporting businesses, Indigenous (ELCA Navajo Mission), membership (museums/orgs promoting racial awareness).