

Racial Justice Team 2021 Annual Report

POP's Racial Justice Team has now been in existence for two full years, working toward racial justice and an end to systemic racism at every level. Our focus (chosen in 2020) is education, including educating ourselves, our congregation, and our community to build awareness and acknowledge our own biases and the racism that affects every facet of our lives; we're trying to move POP from knowledge to action and advocacy. Following are a few highlights from 2021: work:

- Established Lending Library POP READS (Prince of Peace Reads about Equity, Anti-Racism, Diversity and Systemic Racism) with over 50 fiction and nonfiction books for all ages on various races, cultures, and issues plus articles from the ELCA and others, available for borrowing (funded by a Thrivent Action Team Project and many donations by POP members)
- As follow-up to the Mass Incarceration course with Pastor Erich Kussman, St. Barts, POP and Abiding Presence, planned speaker from Faith in NJ followed by the God's Work Our Hands project with Social Ministry, filling backpacks for recently released incarcerated individuals (Thrivent Action Team money supplemented POP donations)
- Co-sponsored and advertised virtual speakers and movie discussions with NIOT Princeton, UUCP, THT, WHAM, a Jewish coalition, and others to raise awareness about white privilege and racism and to work together against the white supremacy in our country
- Offered "Troubling the Waters" course, multiple Adult Forums (ie. Ethiopian Christianity) and Book Studies (ie. *Jesus and the Disinherited*) by Pastors Froehlke and Rohrem and Vicar Kayla
- Displayed books and shared racial justice and POP information at NJ Synod's "MultiFaith Festival: Celebrating the Joy of Our Traditions" (supported by Thrivent Action Team Project) held outdoors at POP, welcoming people of other faiths, races, and cultures to our Labyrinth and HND while sharing our faith and mission (which also brought future facility use by attendees)
- Distributed information on current racial justice issues, legislation, opportunities as well as election materials to encourage civic engagement of POP members
- Started articles in Tidings on less-known diverse cultural celebrations to raise awareness
- Met with Pastor Sara Lilja for guidance toward more advocacy (and several members continue to attend weekly LEAM meetings to stay updated and inform team)
- Added music and liturgy from ELCA multicultural resources, included more welcoming and inclusive language in worship, added more prayers, readings, anti-racist issues into sermons and worship, posted African American History calendar to promote cultural diversity
- Team members regularly networked with NIOT, Synod Anti-Racism, Trenton Health Team, STAND, and other groups working for similar goals to expand conversations, disseminate pros and cons about legislation and issues, and to help parents and students of color ensure education is truly inclusive and for ALL students (learning is shared at monthly team meetings)
- Surveyed congregation to gather input on preferences for future reparations (results are being melded with Bishop's Challenge and Synod-wide efforts 2021-2022 for more impact)

Thank these Active Team Members, share your concerns or ideas, or join the team! Pastor Froehlke, Vicar Kayla, Lois and Dave Case, Tim Gjenvick, Gehrig Hebert, Nancy and Dave Herrington, Joan New, Dennis Oehm, Berta and Lisa Schott, Con Sweeney and chair, Nancy Reyes