

Racial Justice Team

POP's Racial Justice Team has now completed its sixth year of educating ourselves and our congregation about racism and how to be an anti-racist congregation, actively working to do God's work trying to advocate for change to end the systemic racism so ingrained in our society. Our free lending library is now graciously coordinated by Kathy and Greg Nowak. We continue to encourage the congregation to vote and advocate for justice by providing information about related legislation. Members led prayers for our indigenous neighbors at the Peace Pole.

Immigration is the major emphasis this year. The most significant parts of this emphasis were:

- Several members took Know Your Rights training and material was provided for the congregation to share with immigrants they know.
- Information was distributed at POP about the Immigrant Trust Act and other justice-related legislation to encourage advocacy.
- The team met with Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale, founder/ director of Interfaith Refugee Services and Empowerment (I-RISE) with headquarters at his church, the Reformed Church of Highland Park, and several volunteered and attended I-RISE events there and with the newer Trenton office.
- More members got involved with The Jewish Center Interfaith Refugee Resettlement Committee of Mercer County (TJCIRRC) through whom families were invited and transported to our 2nd Annual Refugee Welcome Picnic.
- We worked with Thrivent which generously provided funding for goody bags, meat, etc.
- The team enjoyed Global Grace Cafe and toured the Highland Park facilities with Fida Ayoubi, Director of Volunteers and Donations, who spoke at POP's adult forum
- The team made an ongoing commitment for POP to "adopt" a Haitian refugee family of seven in cooperation with the new Trenton office. After several required hours of virtual training and with the ongoing invaluable support of I-RISE employees, POP members are helping them adjust to life in NJ, learn English, and gradually become self-sufficient.
- Team members worked in pairs when children were involved (as per POP policy). Originally this was at the Trenton offices while a parent was taking English classes. Recently we've been meeting the parents at their house during schooldays.
- POP generously donated clothing, diapers, household items and more to meet needs from car seats to bus passes to gifts for each of their birthdays and Christmas.
- Team members have done everything from driving them to POP's worship and Picnic, doctors, DMV, work, and interviews to helping with insurance and school forms to taking them to the NJ State Museum, Cadwalader Park, and whatever need arises.
- We've enjoyed birthday parties at the house they share and are welcomed as part of their family.

2025 Racial Justice Team members were Cathy Corcoran, Pastor Froehlke, Nancy Herrington, Joan New, Dennis Oehm, Nancy Reyes, Berta Schott, Lisa Schott. This team meets virtually the first Tuesday evening of each month. New Members are welcome!

Nancy Reyes, Chairperson