

Racial Justice Statement Task Force

Meeting on Wed., June 24, 2020, at 7 pm

Facilitator: Karen Heuchert; Notes taken by Brenda Tonjes

Other Attendees: Laura Crosby, Jody Ebert, Erin Heilman, Cindy Porter, Grace Porter, Mary Simonson Clark, Taylor Stoddart, John Urbanski, and John Weum . Kim Rathjen also attended at the beginning of the meeting.

The people in this group bring a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some of them already have training on racial justice, social justice, and equity issues. Most people in this group have no experience in this area. Everyone brings a passion for doing this work.

Kim summarized the prior racial justice meeting and told us that the timeline of this work should be to have council approve the racial justice statement first with the goal of having the congregation vote on it in January. Our discussion continued after Kim left the meeting.

Mary Simonson Clark brought a framework that we could use for the process of putting together the racial justice statement. This process could be a rather lengthy and involved one. We discussed whether we wanted to use this process, and ultimately decided that our goal was more in keeping with getting a racial justice statement in writing sooner rather than later and that we could then continue to rework the statement with the idea that this would be an evolving statement, not just a one and done. Of course, we still want to make sure that we're doing this prayerfully and not rushing just to get something on paper.

This group is concerned with making sure that this statement aligns with Immanuel's vision, mission, and values and with what actions the racial advocacy and education teams are doing so that the statement isn't just words but is an authentic statement of beliefs and actions. It was brought up that the statement should start with basic language and that part of the statement should be an acknowledgement of our white privilege. The statement should also contain language that we are continuing to learn and grow in our understanding of racial justice.

We discussed whether we have to wait until the congregation votes on the racial justice statement to actually have a statement in writing. If the congregation does need to vote on this statement, this group would like to try to have a special congregational vote prior to January. We know that the church council supports the work that is being done on racial justice. We think it is our responsibility to present to them how we think this should be handled.

We talked about making the racial justice page easier to find on the Immanuel website so that visitors to the site can readily see Immanuel's stance on racial justice. This would also confirm the transparency about what the Racial Justice groups are doing and enable other members of the congregation to more easily find this information and plug in. We believe that part of the process of this racial justice statement will be bringing the congregation along since everyone is in a different place with where they

stand on their thoughts, feelings, and responses to racism. It is difficult for people to grapple with the thought that they might be racist.

We talked about the Intercultural Development Inventory tool that helps develop intercultural competence. There was some discussion of having the congregation use this, but it is an expensive tool and it would be challenging to have enough members of the congregation use this.

We looked very briefly at the Racial Justice Statements that have already been written by some Minneapolis congregations and what we like about these statements. Specifically, we looked at the statements of Holy Trinity Lutheran, Redeemer Lutheran, and University Lutheran Church of Hope.

ACTION ITEM: John Urbanski will review the church bylaws and check with church council as to whether the congregation does in fact need to vote on this or if it is enough that council approves the statement.

ACTION ITEM: Grace Porter will create a Google doc where all members of this group can share language that they think should be included in the racial justice statement.

We will then review all of this at the next meeting, which is scheduled for Wed., July 8, 2020, at 7 pm.

The meeting ended in prayer shortly before 8:30.