

Resolution 2017—1

Resolution urging Congregational Engagement in Anti-Racism Training

Rationale:

In remembrance of the 1967 Civil Unrest in Detroit, Michigan, Bishop John Schreiber in May of 2007, called the Synod to a worship of confession for the sin of racism, prayers for healing and observance of the Eucharist. The next year, Bishop Schreiber in response to the annual BRRICK (Building Racial Reconciliation in Christ's Kingdom) worship, called congregations on Reformation Sunday to introduce to members of those communities the "Covenant of Racial Reconciliation" which had been adopted by the Synod Council.

Interim Bishop Ken Olsen called on congregations to ratify the "Covenant of Racial Reconciliation" on Reformation Sunday, October 26, 2008, also known as BRRICK Covenant Sunday. In 2009, Interim Bishop Olsen invited congregations to be present at the annual BRRICK worship in June when the sixty-two congregations which had ratified the "Covenant of Racial Recognition" would be recognized.

In 2010 during the tenure of Bishop Stephen Marsh, BRRICK sponsored "Living Out The Covenant," an event with Dr. James Perkinson. On Martin Luther King weekend 2013, Bishop Don Kreiss sponsored anti-racism training with CrossRoads, and continues to support the work of the BRRICK team.

At the 2014 assembly, Southeast Michigan Synod adopted Resolution 2014—1, to provide anti-racism training annually for rostered leaders, establish a line item in the Synod budget for training and to partner with other ELCA and Synod organizations, i.e. Living Water Ministries, North/West Lower Michigan Synod, to ensure funding.

The 2016 Churchwide Assembly adopted a Memorial that encouraged all rostered leaders to receive anti-racism training bi-annually and that every Synod develop or maintain resources for anti-racism training for rostered leaders and congregations. (<http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/CWA2016.pdf?ga=1.242663617.270845176.1471889350>)

The 1993 ELCA Social Statement *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture*, states that "this church has often addressed words on racism to white members...because our mission and ministry are in a society where white people have been favored and hold unequal power to implement their prejudices—socially, politically, and economically. [And that] skin color makes a difference and white people benefit from a privileged position."

Christ fulfilled the promises of God to "bring good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (Luke 4:18). The church, through its silence, actually supports systems of oppression through white privilege, to which most of us are blind. The temptation to cater to affluence can prevent leaders from ministering in ways that challenge this sin. Ongoing education and support is needed in order for the leaders of the church to openly address the sin of racism, including the advantages that it brings to some and oppression that it brings to others.

Freed in Christ... states "when we rebuild walls of hostility and live behind them—blaming others for the problem and looking to them for solution—we ignore the role we ourselves play in the problem and also in the solution. When we confront racism and move toward fairness and justice in society, all of us benefit." (<http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository?RaceSS.pdf?ga=1.154051192.1582586387.1457463995>)

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages all congregations of the Synod to identify at least one person to attend each Synod-sponsored anti-racism training event. Attendees include, but are not limited to, pastors, deacons, licensed ministers and lay leaders of congregations. Congregations are also encouraged to use the resources of the Synod's BRRICK team for congregational work in the ministry of anti-racism;

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages each congregation of the Synod to place a line item in its annual budget specifically for anti-racism education and to provide funding so the cost of the training will not be a deterrent to attendance and participation in anti-racism training; and,

Resolved, that this Assembly encourages the Bishop:

1. to ensure anti-racism training is listed with the professional leadership conference in the Synod's official *Compensation Guidelines* at Professional Expenses, B. Continuing Education 3. and 4. of the existing guidelines;

2. to direct Synod Staff to encourage Call Committees to list participation in anti-racism training on a regular basis in expectations of the called rostered leaders of that congregation; and to explore ways that the expectation of participation in an anti-racism event can be placed in the Call documents;

3. to explore ways to customize the annual report to the Bishop of a rostered leader under call for this Synod to indicate attendance at an anti-racism event as is done for Continuing Education; and,

4. to encourage Conference Deans to create partnerships with the BRRICK team that would provide opportunities for BRRICK team members to be present at conference meetings and provide ongoing support for leaders engaged in anti-racism ministry.

Submitted by:

Rev. Michael Johnson

Ms. Marilyn Knack

Ms. Robin McCants

Rev. Julianne Smeck

Rev. Kristin Tannas

Rev. Kristin Ulmanis

The Resolutions Committee recommends the adoption of this resolution.