

Anti-Racism Policy
Erin Presbyterian Church
Adopted by Session June 26, 2025

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the pervasive sin of racism in church and society and to commit Erin Presbyterian Church to the work of dismantling racism and facilitating opportunities for racial healing. The commitment to dismantling racism grows out of the Church's commitment to the call to care for the marginalized and to build up the body of Christ.

Scope: This policy applies to church members, teaching elders, ruling elders, employees, and volunteers working in, with, and for the Church.

Definition: As stated in the PC(USA)'s anti-racism policy, racism is "the opposite of what God intends for humanity. It is the rejection of the other, which is entirely contrary to the Word of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. Racism is a lie about our fellow human beings, for it says that some are less than others."

Further, racism is more than individual acts of bigotry or prejudice. It involves systems, institutions, cultural traditions, and structures that support white privilege and white supremacy (or any other form of racial privilege or supremacy). Racism stands in fundamental conflict with the command to love God and neighbor (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:30–31; Galatians 5:14). It threatens the theological conviction that each person has been made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and it violates the truth of our unity in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

Commitments: Although efforts have been made to end racism, we acknowledge there is more work to be done. Therefore, as part of our commitment to create a church which lives into its vision: "To love and accept all as God's children... and to created harmony in a diverse community through compassion, mutual respect, and love."

G-3.0106 requires each Council to adopt an anti-racism policy.

As a congregation within the PCUSA we will:

1. Seek to welcome and be open to all people, treating all persons with respect.
2. Pray that "justice will roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5:24)
3. Value and encourage the diverse gifts of each person.
4. Listen to the voices that challenge us about our practices and assumptions, which may implicitly exclude others' full welcome and participation at Erin.
5. Educate ourselves to seek awareness of our own behavior and biases and the impact on our community of faith and the wider community.
6. Seek resources (curriculum, worship, preaching and music) that are reflective of all ethnic and racial backgrounds, and to celebrate the heritage and listen to the concerns of the wide range of God's people.
7. Respect other religious traditions and strengthen interfaith and intercultural relationships through fellowship, education, service, and worship events.

8. Participate in organizations that challenge us to be part of healing disparities and working for racial justice in Knoxville, as well as in the national and global community.

Retaliation: Erin Presbyterian Church does not tolerate any form of retaliation against any victim, or witness, who reports a violation of this Anti-Racism Policy. Any person who believes that they have been retaliated against should initiate a complaint under this policy.

Complaint Procedure: It is appropriate, but not required, for any person who feels that they have experienced or observed a violation of this policy to address the behavior first with the offending party, if it is possible to do so without unwarranted conflict or danger.

If the behavior is troubling, repeated, pervasive, or offensive, the complaint should be taken to the Pastor, the Clerk of Session, and/or, in the case of employees, to the Chair of the Personnel Committee. All complaints will be investigated promptly and, to the extent possible, with regard for maintaining confidentiality. If the investigation confirms conduct contrary to this policy has occurred, the Church will take immediate, appropriate, corrective action, as determined by the Pastor, the Human Resources Committee, and/or the Session.

Reviews: All officers and staff of the Church will review this policy and acknowledge their understanding and agreement to comply. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Session. The broader church membership, to which this policy also applies, will be made aware of this policy annually, and a copy of the policy provided by the Clerk of Session upon request.