

# **Anti-Racism Policy**

*Paoli Presbyterian Church*

## Statement on Racial Identity

Paoli Presbyterian Church affirms, in accordance with Scripture and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that all people are created in God's image, loved by God, and are to be loved by their fellow human beings. As objects of God's love, there is inherent and intrinsic value in every person. We believe that the multitude of races and ethnicities present in our world exhibit a diversity that is to be appreciated and celebrated, and weave together to produce a tapestry of creation that reveals and reflects our Creator's artistry.

## Statement Against Racism

Paoli Presbyterian Church denounces racism of all kinds, including, but not limited to - words, jokes, actions, systems, and institutions that demonstrate or insinuate hatred, discrimination, violence, prejudice, or condescension on the basis of race or ethnicity. We believe racial divisions and actions are products of human sin, ignorance, hatred, and fear. These divisions do not belong in the Kingdom of God or Christ's church.

## Statement on Racial Reconciliation

Paoli Presbyterian Church believes it is the work of the church to build bridges of common humanity to brothers and sisters of all races and ethnicities, reconciling what has been divided and healing what has been broken by history, culture, and the effects of racism in our world. We actively participate in this ministry of racial reconciliation in hope and in joy, by the grace of God and with Christ's help.

## Disciplinary Action

If a complaint is made that a congregant, staff-member (non-pastor), or visitor has acted or spoken in a racist manner, that individual will be subject to the following disciplinary procedure:

- First offense - meet with pastors/staff and two Session representatives
- Second offense - meet with entirety of Session
- Third offense - the judiciary procedures of our Book of Order go into effect, and consideration of removal from membership and banning from premises is considered, at the discretion and judgment of Session

If a pastor is accused of acting or speaking in a racist manner, the matter will immediately be brought before Session. At Session's discretion, the judiciary procedures of our Book of Order may go into effect immediately.

## The Importance of Context

In all matters, careful consideration will be given to the context of the words and actions in review. This can include age, position, behavioral history, situation, motive, and intent of the individual accused. The acknowledgement of the importance of context when dealing with discipline does not in any way suggest a tolerance of racist behaviors and attitudes.