

## **Lay the Foundation**

1. How we got here, our mission and vision
2. How we fit in with St Mark's vision and priorities
3. Terminology

## **For "Immediate" Implementation**

1. Oversight and approval
  - a) Covenant Council/Advisory Board  
Racial Equity (RE) Role: The council will approve the plan and self-assessment tool; monitor annual reviews.
  - b) The committees/entities to which various portions of the plan are assigned will oversee the execution.  
Suggestions: Support and oversee RE work, others from our list.
2. Staff
  - a) Staff Team Leaders and other staff. RE Role: assist and serve as the staff liaison to the execution of the plan. They will also include consideration for diversity and racial equity in their individual work areas.
  - b) Staff Parish Relations Committee  
RE Role: Sponsor the racial equity work within the church and staff.  
Suggestions: Diversify the staff, add RE staff training and policies, communicate to members, and other ideas from our list.
3. Pastoral RE Roles
  - a) Include racial equity issues in our worship experience.
  - b) Provide clear and visible support for diversity activities and racial equity within the congregation and community.
  - c) Receive reports from various committees and assist in providing mission and ideas.
  - d) Include worship songs from non-dominant racial groups in main worship.  
Suggestions: video clips with RE insights, pulpit exchange with BIPOC pastors, and other ideas from our list.
4. Worship Committee. RE Role: Include images, concepts, and ideas from non-dominant racial and ethnic groups in the altar, banners, other decorations.
5. Education and Spiritual Growth
  - a) Adult Spiritual Growth  
RE Role: To provide educational opportunities and provide resources on racial equity.  
Suggestions: Courses on white privilege and fragility. Maintain resource list and list of

terms. Others from our list of ideas.

b) Family, Children, and Youth Ministries:

RE Role: Provide educational opportunities for youth and families on racial equity.

Suggestions: Course on raising children to be anti-racist. Provide youth with tools and opportunities to discuss race. Other ideas from our list.

c) Prayer Ministry Team

RE Role: Pray for Racial Equity

Suggestions: add current racial issues to prayer list, other ideas from our list.

6. Outreach

a) Church and Society

RE Role: To provide opportunities to engage in racial equity and social justice.

Suggestions: Provide annual audits and readouts of progress. Show a movie or invite a speaker and have a Q&A session. Monitor local political action opportunities and coordinate participation by interested members of the congregation. Other ideas from our list, e.g., Read the book: The Whiteness of Wealth : How the Tax System Improverishes Black Americans—and How We Can Fix It by Dorothy A Brown, with the Finance Committee, consider co-sponsoring a class or seminar using either this book or material from this book to raise awareness in the congregation.

b) Missions Team

RE Role: To support BIPOC in our community and world through acts of mercy.

Suggestions: Provide opportunities to support financially and opportunities to be in direct relationship with BIPOC. Other ideas from our list.

c) Growth and Hospitality

RE Role: To welcome and encourage BIPOC in our community to engage with and join our church family.

Suggestions: Include BIPOC vendors in fairs, other ideas from our list.

7. Congregational Care - RE Role: Ensure congregational lay visitation volunteers who visit BIPOC members do so in an appropriate manner.

Suggestions: Raise awareness to be sure care is being provided in a sensitive manner. Provide training for lay visitation volunteers re. sensitivity around racial issues.

8. Other Administrative Committees

- a) Finance. RE Role: ensure sensitivity to diversity and racial equity issues in church financial decision-making.  
Suggestion: Read the book: The Whiteness of Wealth : How the Tax System Improverishes Black Americans—and How We Can Fix It by Dorothy A Brown. With Church and Society, consider co-sponsoring a class or seminar using either this book or material from this book to raise awareness in the congregation.
  - b) Trustees – RE Role: ensure church décor and campus reflect multiple non-dominant ethnic/racial symbols
  - c) Endowment committee. RE Role: ensure sensitivity to diversity and racial equity programs when considering how to distribute annual funds disbursement.
9. Individual parishioners - RE Role: Increase personal awareness so each individual lives and models more a equitable life with the compassion Jesus taught us.  
Suggestions: include self-assessment tool or link. Include how to create individual racial equity plans that include learning, tasks, journals, and outreach.

### **Longer Term Activities, Going Out into World**

#### **Community**

1. Reach out to other communities of faith including other UMCs to share ideas about how they are addressing the issues of racial injustice and white privilege.
2. Participate in inclusive social events, educational events, and supportive outreach to our local BIPOC organizations. Support minority owned businesses.
3. Reach out to more diverse communities of faith for fellowship and reconciliation, or to do a joint study or mission.
4. Work with Pima County Interfaith Council (PCIC) on local government regulations/laws.

#### **World**

1. Plan mission trips that also provides a cultural exchange (could be done in Tucson)
  2. Support changing the cross and flame as the UMC logo, explain why this can be viewed as racially insensitive
  3. Include a racial equity project in our mission giving or as a special offering (e.g., a water project for Natives, solar project in Mexico)
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## **Combined list of racial equity suggestions**

We have reviewed lists of ideas from a number of our task force activities and have grouped them and tried to remove the redundant suggestions. Not all of these ideas will make it into the final plan.

### **Communication**

1. Communicate new ideas/recommendations to the correct committee
2. Communicate UMC's stance on racial issues and acts of violence in pastors' emails to the congregation. Include personal reaction.
3. Provide ongoing communication about the RE initiative
4. Group email list/list serve/private Facebook group for membership who may want more info or to respond or comment but not available to serve on committee or task force
5. Messenger items - witnessing as to what we have learned and how that has changed our view and outlook to this problem
6. Market RE activities and events using the Church marquee board, local newspaper, and Website. Quotes from black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) leaders can also be displayed on the electronic board
7. Have other church members meet in the hall for punch and cookies so we can explain what we have been up to and how it has opened our eyes.
8. Provide opportunities to share our knowledge of "institutional racism" and racial equity. Contextualize it in a safe, non-judgmental way. Witnessing as to what we have learned and how that has changed our view and outlook to this problem.
9. As new racial equity terms show up in our society, write a short article on their use for the newsletter if appropriate. Similarly for terms no longer used and why they are offensive. The word "prejudice" can immediately turn some people off. Identify if a word is being redefined or relabeled.

### **Staff**

1. Diversify the staff at St Mark's including pastors
2. Encourage and educate a subset of members (staff, leaders, and well-connected members) so that they can become anti-racist and start spreading the message of racial equity
3. Add Anti-Racism to one or more person's job description
4. Establish policies to examine diversity in the church's vendors
5. Invest in education for staff and leadership so they better understand racism and become anti-racist advocates.

### **Worship and Pastor**

1. Equity minute video clip at worship monthly or quarterly (could be tied to Black History month, Native American month, Asian Heritage month, Hispanic Heritage month).
2. Arrange for speakers to come in to speak on racial equity. Invite BIPOC to church to tell their stories. Have representatives from other diverse communities come to an informal Meet and Greet Gathering to see what actions they would appreciate from us and to see how we can help build the bridge over this big divide. All who desire should come but we probably should have a sign-up so we know we have enough space and snacks. (could be in Church Growth and Hospitality)
3. After education foundation work has been done, have a service of lament and repentance
4. Pulpit exchange with BIPOC pastors.
5. Cultural diversity in worship, such as occasional hymns which have Spanish verses
6. Ask church leaders to provide an educational presentation to the church at large to show support for racial equity (similar to sermon on LGBTQ issue)

### **Education and Spiritual Growth**

1. Repeat previous studies on White Fragility, 21 Day Challenge, and be the Bridge.
2. Possibly modify the 21 Day Challenge to a 14 Day Challenge or challenge with a different format and include BIPOC either locally or remotely. Julie Ragland or Joylee Gathings may have connections. Investigate what the conference learned from its challenge.
3. Continue to educate the congregation on white privilege, white fragility, racial equity and systemic racism.
  - Include historical, current, individual, corporate, governmental systemic racism
  - Q&A sessions, large and small group discussions and activities
4. Have studies on all persons of color including Latinx and Native people of this area; consider other people of color.
5. Educate members on the UMC role in current and past racial injustices. We need to own this and talk about our part in causing racial injustice.
6. Sunday "Lunch and Learn,"/ Book Club/ small group discussions devoted to racial justice topics; UMC Vital Conversations video series features contemporary theologians, sociologists, laity, clergy, and other thought-leaders dealing with challenges of race, culture, and oppression in the church and world today. Each video includes a discussion guide making this an excellent series for small groups <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/vital-conversations-series-1-realities-of-race-and-Racism>
7. Lead a small group study authored by a person of color that is not about racism, e.g., culture, history, traditions. Offer studies that continue to explore racial and collateral issues such as sexism, socioeconomic disparities
8. Resource librarian: share resource information. Maintain a running list of supportive books, videos, classes and contacts. Kit P. has offered to maintain the list on a google drive – (e.g., My Grandmother's Hands by Resmaa Menakem, On Earth As It Is In Heaven – A Faith-Based Toolkit for Economic, Justice by Eric Atcheson, The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor – Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus by Mark Labberton
- Have a link to a list of racial equity terms on our google drive. Such as: [https://ntcumc.org/Racial\\_Justice\\_Glossary\\_NTCUMC\\_1.29.21.pdf](https://ntcumc.org/Racial_Justice_Glossary_NTCUMC_1.29.21.pdf)
- Investigate ways members of the church could write comments or recommendations for a book or movie on our google drive.
- Provide access to RE FAQ and responses that could be used in a variety of ways. Things like Black Lives Matter vs. All Lives Matter, Why should some statues be moved, streets be renamed? <https://www.r2hub.org/library/overt-and-covert-racism> (this can help us when we talk to neighbors and coworkers about what we are learning).
9. Keep updated an overview of how to find and use resources. Including Desert SW conference resources. Post this on St. Mark's Racial Equity (RE) webpage and google drive.
10. Discuss the history of UMC and racism with confirmation classes.
11. Movie night(s) with teens or families (e.g., Just Mercy)
12. Provide a parenting class to assist with discussing race/equity/social justice with children
13. Get younger people involved: youth groups; UA young adults.
14. Provide prayer team with specific prayers for current racial injustice and violence.
15. Work w/prayer team w/specific prayers for people of color.

## Outreach

(some of these are long term and we may want to consult with Julie Ragland on the timing of these)

1. Have church racial equity audits renewed annually to see our progress and set goals
  2. Provide a self assessment/ personal bias assessment tool or link;
  3. Provide ideas on how to create an individual racial equity plan – learning, tasks, journals
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/diversity/documents/10%20Steps%20to%20Non->

[Optical%20Allyship.pdf](#)

- Become aware of language and imagery in our daily lives that may be insensitive or outdated (in our community, on our screens, etc.). Are BIPOC represented appropriately? Why not? Take action as appropriate.
- Dedicate ourselves to nurturing mutual respect.
- Become an antiracist.
- Be aware of whose voice is not being heard. Intervene to fix this.
- 4. Support minority owned businesses; Patronizing businesses owned by people of color. <https://blaxfriday.com/>
- 5. Being more centered in our community - churches, businesses, etc. For example, help with vaccine rollout to neighborhoods of people of color.
- 6. Community action - investigate what action steps we can take? Parades, marches, meet with officials, etc.
- 7. Political Action
  - Identify county ordinances that pertain to racial injustice; Work with Pima County Interfaith Community (PCIC) on local and state government regulations/laws, criminal justice reform, monetary bail reform;
  - Partner with PCIC to hold civic academies and house meetings on regulations/laws.
  - Become politically involved in a current issue.
  - Investigate UMC regulations/laws that are innately racist.
  - Provide a tool kit link for political action. <https://www.umcjustice.org/what-you-can-do/advocacy/take-action/creating-change-together>
- 8. Offer a "Day of Learning" church-wide (St. Mark's to start) that presents a variety of offerings regarding (historical, current, individual, corporate, governmental) aspects of systemic racism. (I'm thinking a similar format as the LGBTQ has prepared); This could be a retreat.
- 9. Fund anti-racist ministry
- 10. Plan mission trips that also provides a cultural exchange (could be done in Tucson); provide volunteer "sensitivity" training
- 11. Include a racial equity project in our mission giving or as a special offering (e.g., a water project for Natives, solar project in Mexico);
- 12. Approve special offerings for racial equity such as programs that assist low income people with posting bond
- 13. Establish Pima College Scholarship program for Nash graduates
- 14. Mentorship program for Nash graduates during middle/high school
- 15. Continue Nash program to assist an ethnic teacher in a mainly ethnic classroom
- 16. Participate in inclusive social events, educational events, and supportive outreach to our local BIPOC organizations.
- 17. Provide opportunities to be in relationship with BIPOC and diverse organizations so that we can support, empower, and advocate for justice. Make sure we have done foundational work to educate and adjust our attitude with regard to Racial Equity.
- 18. Expose members to people of color, for example invite a BIPOC musical group and have a coffee hour afterwards. This could be from another city and put them up overnight in member's homes.
- 19. Invite businesses owned by people of color to participate in church functions, like craft fairs
- 20. Adopt" international graduate students and their families.
- 21. Encourage SM-UMC participation in local community cultural events, educational events, and support Outreach. Field trips to local cultural centers/ places of worship, etc.
- 22. Reach out to more diverse communities of faith for fellowship and reconciliation, or to do a joint study or mission; identify other churches of color to partner with. Visit a church of color to see how we might interact. Refocus on ALL people of color (Native, Latinx, ..)
- 23. Reach out to other communities of faith including other UMCs to share ideas about how they are

addressing the issues of racial injustice and white privilege; Contact w/other UMC's and w/District Lay Leader in this South District..

24. Partner with a Black, Native, or Latinx church. Partner with a church that has primarily people of color;
25. Meet or Zoom with BIPOC members/community to share their stories of the civil rights period, current racial equity activities and the BLM movement, stories of oppression and stories of engagement in addressing the oppression
26. Develop an anti-racism program with another church
27. Possibly start a Be the Bridge Group.
28. The church has to own its part in racial inequality and formally apologize
29. Research what native tribe(s) occupied the land our church is on. Have a ceremony naming the original occupants of the land, the history of our church site. Include a lament for the treatment of native persons.
30. Support changing the cross and flame as the UMC logo, explain why this can be viewed as racially insensitive - this work is in progress at a national level

### **Other Administrative**

1. When considering architectural or decor features in new construction, multicultural aspects should be evaluated.
2. Showing BIPOC artwork in the coffee center or other areas of campus during Black History month, Native American month, Asian Heritage month, Hispanic Heritage month
3. UMC Five Ideas for Stewardship for Churches Seeking to be Actively Anti-racist:  
<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/articles/five-ideas-for-stewardship-for-churches-seeking-to-be-actively-anti-racist>