

## **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF WILLOUGHBY ANTI-RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

### **Purpose**

This policy is written to confirm that the First Presbyterian Church of Willoughby welcomes everyone into our church family and that all forms of racism or discrimination and is not tolerated. The church welcomes everyone to receive God's grace and mercy and believes it is its obligation to demonstrate courage and conviction to end racism and does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations..

### **The Differences Between Racism And Discrimination**

While discrimination is a type of unfair action to protected classes based upon various factors, racism is a form of prejudice that includes negative reactions towards a particular racial or ethnic group, that involves both attitudes and actions that perpetuate inequality and harm based on race. Racism is beliefs, behaviors and systems which can involve that race is a fundamental determinant of human traits, and that certain racial or ethnic groups are superior to others. **In short, Racism is attitude, and Discrimination are actions as a result of that attitude.**

Systemic racism can be embedded in social, economic and/or political systems. Structural racism is the cumulative impact of discriminatory practices and past actions that can disproportionately affect certain communities.

Overcoming racism and/or discrimination is to be able to examine our own biases and engage with others in conversations. By examining our own actions and beliefs and paying attention to how we feel around the people around us of different races and backgrounds.

### **Policy**

It is the understanding of the PC(USA) and Our Church that God intends that as Christians anti-racism is not an option and we all must work against it. As Christians we feel that we must demonstrate that our belief that racism is a sin and this being God's House it is open to everyone. With this belief that we oppose racism we are committed to:

- Resisting racism in all its forms and dismantle systemic racism wherever we can.
- Do what we can to work within our community to overcome racism and discrimination be being open to all.
- Look at our own practices to assure that they are aligned with being open to all.
- Building relationships with people in and beyond our congregation.

- Maintaining an awareness of the impact of FPCW policies and decisions regarding racism and discrimination in our community.
- Identifying and providing tools and strategies to develop antiracist behavior and culture within our church to assure that the
- Providing equality and anti-racism training to all in leadership and to the congregation that will encourage understanding and acknowledge the diversity of our community. Regularly including the church's views regarding racism and discrimination in sermons and music and appropriate.

### **Reporting And Investigating Allegations Of Racism Or Discrimination**

The First Presbyterian Church of Willoughby has established the following guidelines to reflect its values and attitudes towards inclusion and is committed to ensuring an environment free of racism and discrimination for every member, volunteer, employee, or visitor, without regard race, color, national origin, disability, or age or social background.

Anyone who feels that they have not been treated in accordance with these values should immediately notify in writing the Pastor, Session, or Personnel Committee. All allegations are taken seriously and will be thoroughly investigated.

### **Confidentiality**

When conducting the investigation, to the extent possible, there should be great care in maintaining the confidentiality of everyone involved and complete records kept. All information and records should be maintained by the pastor and only not be disclosed to anyone unless there is a specific need and approved by the Pastor.

### **Closure And Documentation**

Upon completion of the investigation and resolution of the complaint, feedback will be provided in a timely manner to the complainant and the individual(s) alleged to have violated this policy.

A complete record of the investigation should be maintained under lock and key. If it is determined that a staff member violated this policy the determination should be placed in his/her personnel file.