Presbytery of the Miami Valley:

Draft Anti-Racism Policy

Preamble

As followers of Jesus Christ, we affirm that every person is created in the image of God and deeply loved. In gratitude for God's grace and in obedience to Christ's call to seek justice, we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of becoming a more inclusive and faithful community.

I. Biblical and Theological Foundation

Scripture teaches that God's intention for humanity is unity in the midst of diversity, dignity, and mutual care:

- *"God created humankind in God's image"* **Genesis 1:27**
- *"For Christ is our peace… Christ has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us"* **Ephesians 2:14**
- *"There is no longer Jew or Greek… for all of you are one in Christ Jesus"* **Galatians 3:28**

The Book of Order also grounds us in this calling:

- **F-1.0403 (Unity in Diversity):** The church reflects the rich diversity of the body of Christ and rejects discrimination in all forms.

- **G-3.0106:** Each council of the church shall develop an anti-racism policy to guide its life and mission.

Racism, whether expressed personally, culturally, or institutionally, contradicts the gospel of Jesus Christ. In faith, we commit to the continuing work of repentance, learning, and transformation, trusting that the Holy Spirit reforms us and shapes us into Christ's reconciling people.

II. Acknowledgment and Lament

We recognize that, throughout our history, the church has sometimes failed to see, honor, and uplift the full dignity of all God's children. At times we have remained silent in the face of exclusion or inequality, and we acknowledge that these failures have caused harm.

We lament where we have fallen short of Christ's call to love our neighbors as ourselves. With humility, we seek to learn from our past and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that we may reflect the unity and compassion Christ desires for the Church.

III. Commitments to Action

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley rejects racism in all its forms, whether expressed personally, culturally, or institutionally. We therefore commit to practices that deepen understanding, nurture spiritual growth, and foster the full inclusion of all God's people. While these commitments guide the presbytery's ministry, congregations are encouraged to adopt similar practices as appropriate to their contexts.

1. Formation and Education

The presbytery will :

- Provide regular opportunities for learning about racism, cultural awareness, and the call of the gospel to reconciliation.
- Encourage the use of PC(USA) resources such as **Matthew 25**, **Facing Racism**, our Confessions (specifically the Theological declaration of Barmen, the Confession of 1967 [inclusive language text] and the Confession of Belhar) and additional biblically-grounded materials.
- Equip leaders, pastors, elders, deacons, and presbytery staff, with tools to recognize bias, engage in healthy conversations, and build inclusive ministries.
- Partner with educators, neighboring presbyteries, and community groups to broaden our understanding.

2. Worship, Mission, and Leadership Practices

The presbytery will :

- Incorporate diverse voices and perspectives in worship resources, educational materials, and leadership development.
- Encourage practices in congregations and presbytery committees that reflect the full body of Christ and remove barriers to participation.
- Support congregations seeking to explore new relationships, partnerships, or ministries that strengthen understanding across differences and encourage confession and reconciliation.

3. Representation and Participation

The presbytery will:

- Work through its Committee on Representation and Diversity to ensure its structures, nominations, and leadership opportunities reflect the diversity of the Church as described in **F-1.0403**.

- Review its policies and procedures with attention to inclusion, equity, and accessibility.

4. Community and Connection

The presbytery will:

- Create spaces for open, respectful conversation where leaders and members may share experiences, ask questions, and grow together in faith.
- Encourage congregations to build connections across communities in ways that foster mutual understanding and shared mission.

IV. Accountability and Implementation

To maintain integrity and encourage continued growth, the presbytery will:

- Authorize and empower the Committee on Representation & Diversity to support, guide, and review the presbytery's efforts toward anti-racism and inclusion..
- Provide periodic updates to the presbytery on progress, learnings, and opportunities for engagement.
- Review this policy at least every three years to ensure it continues to reflect the presbytery's commitments and the gospel's call to justice and reconciliation.

Conclusion

We undertake this work not out of obligation, but out of faithfulness. With prayer, humility, and hope, we seek to follow Christ more closely and to embody Christ's love in all we do.

"Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action." **1 John 3:18**

Upon adoption, this policy shall guide the life and ministry of the Presbytery of the Miami Valley, shaping our shared discipleship and our witness to the reconciling love of Jesus Christ.