

1 **TPPC Session Racial Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Lens**  
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3 As followers of Christ at Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, we have been called to dismantle  
4 racism by promoting a continual process of repentance, healing, and reconciliation, rooted in the  
5 love of God. Our values include “[a]ctively seeking peace, justice, and the stewardship of God’s  
6 creation, including racial equity . . .” And we have resolved to “[w]eave diversity, inclusion, and  
7 equity work into all the regular practices and activities of the church at every level, following the  
8 example of our Lord Jesus Christ.”  
9

10 Our calling to dismantle racism, known as Committed Racial Mindfulness, began in 2015; you  
11 can read more about it in our Committed Racial Mindfulness Overview (attached). As one part of  
12 following that call, we commit to intentionally building a racial justice, equity, diversity and  
13 inclusion lens into our congregation’s planning, policies, priorities, and governance process.  
14

15 A racial justice, equity, diversity and inclusion lens is the set of questions we ask ourselves  
16 regarding a particular decision or practice and the broader congregational context –  
17

- 18 • to identify and address white dominance within our culture
- 19 • to identify and address barriers experienced by people of color
- 20 • to take into account the perspectives and experiences of people of color in order to avoid  
21 unintended adverse consequences
- 22 • to integrate explicit consideration of racial equity in decisions including policies,  
23 practices, programs and budgets, building upon the progress we have started to make at  
24 TPPC
- 25 • to learn how to do these things more effectively and to answer to the best of our ability  
26 the questions that follow, in the spirit of transformation toward the beloved community.  
27

28 **Racial Equity Questions for Session to Ask and Review as it Makes Decisions**  
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30 **PEOPLE**

- 31 • Who is positively and negatively affected by this issue/policy/program/practice/decision?  
32 How so?
- 33 • For this issue/policy/program/practice/decision, what results are desired, and how will  
34 people of color be affected?
- 35 • How are we accounting for everyone’s emotional safety and their need to be/feel valued?
- 36 • If we don’t know the answers to these questions, how do we try to find out?  
37

38 **PROCESS**

- 39 • How is the Session and its committees and ministries meaningfully including or  
40 excluding people of color who are affected by this issue/decision?
- 41 • Are people of color that are affected being actively engaged and heard when decisions are  
42 being made?
- 43 • Are there policies, processes and/or relationships in place that contribute to including  
44 diverse perspectives and participation by people of color or excluding them?
- 45 • Is multiculturalism and diversity being treated as a norm or are white culture preferences  
46 being given priority?

**\* PRELIMINARY DRAFT -- FOR DISCUSSION JUNE-JULY 2023 \***

- How will Session ensure these questions get asked and answered at every critical juncture in the decision-making process?

**OUTCOMES**

- Does the policy, practice or decision worsen, ignore, or improve existing disparities?
- How are human and financial resources distributed as a result of a policy, practice, or decision?
- How are we measuring progress toward racial equity? What are the metrics?
- Has the church become more diverse in its membership over time?

**Examples of TPPC Ministry Team Assessment Questions**

The ministries of the church are organized as Session committees or ministry teams. Most motions before Session come up through the ministry teams and committees. And on their own, the ministry teams and committees do significant work for the church. Thus, an important component of a racial equity lens initiative is how the ministries and committees conduct their own work and how they deliberate and bring motions to the Session.

Below are some examples of questions that might come up in various ministry teams and committees that could help inform Session decision making. These are just hypothetical examples -- the actual questions that need to be asked and answered will vary based on critical issues at given points in time. In addition to the Session committee listed below, using a racial equity lens also applies to other church bodies such as the Women’s Association, Men’s Group, Youth Group, and Jashemski Scholarships.

**Christian Education** - Is education around racism and racial justice taking place at TPPC with adults, children and youth? Have anti-racism trainings been held regularly within the church staff and leadership or within the congregation?

**Committed Racial Mindfulness** – Does the active membership of our CRM Ministry reflect the diversity of our church and our community? Is the CRM Ministry responding to the needs and wishes of black and brown members of our congregation? Is the CRM Ministry offering meaningful engagement, education and advocacy to all members of the congregation? Has the congregation had an opportunity to give feedback on a given plan?

**Congregation and Community Engagement** – Are fellowship activities at the church inclusive of a wide range of cultural experiences and expressions? Are we as a congregation engaging directly with the majority of our Takoma Park community that are people of color? If not, how can we address this issue?

**Finance** - Are there opportunities for the church to invest in community funds that champion businesses owned and operated by people of color? How are budget preparation and decision making fostering our anti-racism commitment?

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1 **Personnel and Leadership Development** – Have we pursued a diverse applicant pool for open  
2 pastoral positions? How might we be intentional about reaching a diverse candidate pool? Do  
3 people of color on staff share in decision-making around church policies, practices and staff or  
4 organizational culture?

5  
6 Do we have a plan to develop the leadership of staff and church members who are people of  
7 color? What would the components of such a plan be?

8  
9 **Property** – How are we using our buildings to support and provide space for people of color and  
10 their organizations? Are we asking tenants and other organizations that use our buildings to  
11 affirm their support for racial inclusion and justice?

12  
13 **Social Witness and Action** - How many church mission partners have persons of color as  
14 executive directors, staff, or program leaders? How often do we consult diverse voices to inform  
15 our perspective on the needs and concerns of people of color in our community and opportunities  
16 for our church to be relevant? Does our church have a long-range community engagement plan  
17 as part of its mission?

18  
19 **Worship** – How often does a person of color preach and/or teach a class in a year? What might a  
20 step be to grow this? What percent of music in worship is sourced from composers of color, and  
21 draws from diverse musical traditions? What might be a step to grow this?

## Committed Racial Mindfulness Ministry

*Committed Racial Mindfulness (CRM) began in 2015 with the ‘Resolution for Committed Racial Mindfulness’ and is now in 2023 designated as an official ministry of the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, titled the Committed Racial Mindfulness Ministry (CRM Ministry)*

### 1) CRM Ministry Mission

The CRM Ministry seeks to build Beloved Community according to the teachings of Jesus by revealing and overcoming conscious and unconscious manifestations of racism, white supremacy and discrimination, and by advocating for restorative justice and redemption.

### 2) CRM Commitment

We believe that racism and white supremacy are against the will of God. Therefore, we acknowledge and lament that white supremacy and racism are embedded in the foundations of our nation and the world, are deeply entrenched in the institutions, systems and mentalities of our society, and are used to justify and perpetuate pain, injustice and unequal distribution of resources, opportunities and potential.

We are committed by our faith in the Gospel of Jesus to promote compassion, justice, and peace. Thus, we are called to oppose and eliminate expressions of racism, white supremacy and discrimination in our lives and communities, our nation and the world.

### 3) CRM Guiding Principles

We believe that racism, white supremacy and discrimination are against the will of God, therefore:

- *Silence is not acceptable; Some things must be said.*
- *Ignorance is not excusable; Some things must be learned.*
- *Avoidance is not defensible; Some things must be faced.*
- *Inaction is not responsible; Some things must be done.*

We strive to build Beloved Community and promote justice, redemption, and peace by nurturing core characteristics of loving and caring:

- *Commitment* to tackle injustices and to promote and pursue racial justice.
- *Comprehension* to see and understand racial dynamics in and around us.
- *Compassion* for listening, understanding, responding and supporting others.
- *Courage* to speak and to act for change within our spheres of influence.

## 4) CRM Ministry Responsibilities and Structure

### CRM Ministry Responsibilities:

The primary responsibilities of the CRM Ministry are to:

- (i) center and support CRM as a priority mission of TPPC and
- (ii) sponsor and support CRM-relevant activities, and
- (iii) evaluate congregational progress related to our mission.

### CRM Ministry Structure:

- The CRM Ministry shall be led by an Executive Committee composed of two annually-appointed members from Session and an undetermined number of volunteers from the congregation who commit to be involved in leadership of CRM Ministry.
- The CRM Ministry shall form its own organization and roles to fulfill the responsibilities and program needs of CRM Ministry.
- The Session-appointed members shall report about the CRM Ministry to Session on a monthly basis.

### CRM Ministry Representatives of other Ministries:

The CRM Ministry shall organize training for CRM representatives of other ministries and shall convene regular meetings with CRM representatives of other Ministries to review strategies and progress of toward integration of CRM as critical to the priority mission of TPPC.

## 5) CRM Ministry Program Possibilities

CRM Ministry may shape its program and activities from a range of possibilities, as illustrated by the following:

- a. **Promoting CRM as TPPC priority.** Planning and coordinating the centering and integration of CRM in the whole of TPPC, in collaboration with CRM Representatives of other ministries and communication with TPPC advocacy groups and representatives.
- b. **CRM conversations for sharing, learning, caring and growing.** Hosting group meetings for study and sharing/caring conversations and experiences to share and educate ourselves about racism through discussion of experiences, books, news articles, and current events.
- c. **Congregational Events.** Sponsor congregational events for raising congregational awareness and commitment to racial justice, such as worship, guest preachers and speakers, seminars, etc.

- d. **Publicity.** Publicize CRM and promote racial justice through messaging and communication to inspire our congregation and the greater community.
- e. **Formal Training & Seminars.** Sponsor CRM training and relevant seminars, lectures and learning events hosted by TPPC for our congregation and the broader community.
- f. **Participate in training & events by other groups.** Publicize, promote and encourage participation in relevant training and seminars offered by other organizations.
- g. **Affiliation with other groups.** Develop relationships and coordinate collaboration and affiliation with other congregations, advocacy groups and special initiatives that have similar missions.
- h. **CRM documents and resources.** Manage document and information resources relevant for CRM Ministry and its programs.
- i. **Promote CRM.** Host and promote any other CRM-related activities which the CRM Ministry determines will promote the mission and ministry of CRM.

## **6) CRM Ministry Financing**

CRM Ministry shall submit an annual budget to support its annual plans to Session for approval. CRM Ministry may also, with Session approval, solicit donations for its program and for specific activities.