

How to Write an Anti-Racism Policy

from Rev. Laura Walters

Last month the session of Grace First in Weatherford Texas met with Laura Walters, Grace Presbytery's Coordinator of Community Engagement and Public Witness to work on their Anti-Racism Policy. As you may know, all PC(USA) churches and mid-councils are now required to have some form of an anti-racism policy.

We began the day asking some good questions: Why do we need to do this now? Why does it need to be an anti-racism policy? What even is an anti-racism policy?

We talked about what this policy isn't: A long, drawn-out document covering everything having to do with racism. It's not a perfect document. It does not have to cross every "T" or dot every "i." It's not a document of things you shouldn't do (although some of that may be addressed.)

We talked about what this policy is: It is a living document that is crafted by each institution in their particular place and their particular time. It's a document that meets you where you are. It lists the next best steps for your congregation to address issues of racial injustice. It's a how to love your neighbor document. Essentially, this is a policy of yeses, not nos. It's a policy of what you CAN DO! It can be simple, but the work won't be easy.

After several hours of good conversations, wrestling with terms and questions, and more conversation, the session was well on their way to a fitting, solid policy. Most importantly, they agreed to convene again to complete the policy and set a date in a few months to review the policy and assess the need for change.

The session at Grace First is made up of a great group of folks who represent the diversity of a congregation located in a small Texas town. They reported there were many positive comments about the process led by Rev. Walters. They all felt comfortable as they wrestled with the ideas, memories, and hope of their church. It's a huge feat! They should be proud.

If you would like Laura Walters to help in developing an anti-racism policy for your church, please email her at laura@gracepresbytery.org.