

Anti-Racism/Diversity and Inclusion Declaration

Approved by the Plymouth Church Council, July 11, 2016

We believe that God is the God of all people and that all people are equally valued and reflect the image of God. We believe that God has given a variety of gifts in the diversity of humankind and that church and society are more whole and more nearly reflect the reign of God when these diverse gifts, life experiences, and perspectives are present and valued. We believe that as the church and as members thereof, we are called to actively promote and build equity and inclusion in church and society, and to confront discrimination and the devaluing of persons based on race and ethnicity. This stance parallels our confronting discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, creed, disability, and other characteristics used to deny a person or group's essential humanity.

We know that racism is a sin deeply embedded in U.S. society that nurtures a system of implicit bias, discrimination, devaluation, and often violence against people of color, especially African Americans.

We know that the predominantly white church is part of this systemic societal racism and must repent of this sin in word and deed.

We know that the people who make up the Plymouth Church community are of good will and seek the just, equitable and peaceful realm God intends on earth. They too, however, have been socialized in the dominant culture and need proclamation, guidance, education, and opportunities for transformation in order to be an effective force for change in their own lives, families, communities, and society.

Therefore, Plymouth United Church of Christ, Grand Rapids, Michigan is specifically committed to being an anti-racism organization as well as an Open and Affirming congregation. This means that we will actively seek to be aware of, and counter, implicit bias and any practices that tacitly or actively support discrimination and devaluation of people of color in all aspects of our church life and ministry.

This commitment to being an anti-racism organization will be reflected in our policies and practices, preaching, communications, and public witness. It will be reflected in our appreciation of the Black Church's worship and music tradition. It will be reflected in education, growth, and transformation programs for adults and children. And it will be reflected in our openness to discuss and confront issues of race and color in church and society.