

2022 Inclusive Call Process Resolution

Whereas Jesus, in his humanity, was a person of color, and at this moment in history the congregations of the Oregon Synod understand the need within our current pastoral and diaconal ranks for a greater diversity of voices, including especially rostered leaders of color, to accompany us, and

Whereas the Oregon Synod both recognizes and apologizes for the lack within the historic church of meaningful and significant response to society's institutional racism. We admit that many past and present discussions and actions around racial equity appear to have valued past, outdated cultural traditions over embracing improvements in inclusiveness, and

Whereas our congregations wish to follow our Synod's values of Mutual Accompaniment, Agency and Dignity, Integrity, Wisdom from the Edges, Honesty and Humility to address racial equity while seeking to form a wild web of relationships, a communion of communities and cultures, and be more inclusive in our words and actions, reflecting a desire for our relationships to be universally collective and liberation-centered, while we seek the life of the world together in the Spirit Jesus promises, and

Whereas under the laws enforced by Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, in this country it is illegal to discriminate against someone (applicant or employee) because of that person's race, color, religion, sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy), national origin, age, disability or genetic information. Yet even with these laws and the past good intentions of our synod and individual congregations, there has been a consistent under-representation of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) rostered leadership in Oregon, which is currently reflected in our Synod with less than 5% of congregations having BIPOC pastors, and

Whereas the policies and practices within and across the synod and churchwide have produced outcomes that chronically placed multiple racial groups at a disadvantage during leadership calls. It is clear these practices urgently need to be addressed and there exists an opportunity for past marginalized leadership to be invited into a more inclusive pastoral call process, and

Whereas the contributing factors for the under-representation of rostered leaders have been varied, but include:

1. Lack of serious congregational discussion regarding openness to BIPOC leaders during times of pastoral transition and call.
2. Congregations willing to call potentially marginalized rostered leaders do not have a specific section in the current Ministry Site Profile to affirm that openness explicitly. Nor is there a discrete section where potentially marginalized rostered leader candidates researching vacancies can check for an openness to their leadership.

and

Whereas the United Nations has outlined five conditions that must be met for full reparations including *CESSATION* of the act of wrong if it is continuing, together with appropriate assurances and guarantees of non-repetition, demonstrating a sincere willingness to address the wrong, and

Whereas a memorial for churchwide to address and update an outdated ELCA Transition process could be a longer-term solution but, at best, would involve a significant and years-long national effort while allowing the ELCA's outdated process to continue to produce the same inequitable outcomes, therefore be it

RESOLVED the Oregon Synod must act on our knowledge and certainty that Christian faith and inclusiveness is about lived commitment, not simply right belief, and be it further

RESOLVED that the Synod Council encourages the Oregon Synod staff to bring a perspective of diversity, equity, and inclusion when assisting a congregation throughout the call process, and tools and strategies to encourage each congregation in their efforts to create a hospitable and supportive environment, toward a more consistently inclusive mobility or call process. Also, that Synod Council encourages the Oregon Synod staff to include reflections on the impact of such efforts in their reports to the Synod Council, and be it further

RESOLVED that Synod council will encourage the Oregon Synod staff to listen to suggestions from BIPOC laypersons, BIPOC clergy and the Synod Reparations team, when they routinely update the Oregon Synod Transition Manual, to compile and codify a set of practical and actionable changes, based on information and stories from or about the under-represented, designed to equip congregations in creating a more hospitable and supportive environment.

Submitted by the Oregon Synod Reparations Task Force (Alys Allwardt, Mandy Ellertson, Rev. David Eppelsheimer, Rev. Matta Ghaly, Rev. Sara Gross Samuelson, Gerry Grover, Karen Haines, Stephanie Kistler, Jan Mallory, Rev. Solveig Nilsen-Goodin, Shirley Peterson, Gary Schulstad, Gerry Stolp, Heidi Stolp, Debi Stromberg) Creator Lutheran Church, Debra Hibbs, Paul Potter