



Saint Andrew Anti-Racism Efforts Since May 2020

Saint Andrew Christian Church (SACC), established in 1991, is a progressive Christian church in the Disciples of Christ tradition. Anti-Racism efforts and thinking have been supported and carried out at various times in the church's past. SACC, since June of 2020, has been conducting intentional efforts of anti-racism work through activism and education. This activity was a direct result of the killing of George Floyd in late May of 2020.

SACC did three things initially in response to the killing of George Floyd. **First**, the church staff wrote a response statement that was posted in church communications and social media outlets to condemn the killing of George Floyd and to seek solidarity and stand with voices of people of color to work toward racial justice. **Second**, we joined the efforts of the demonstrations in KC. We



had some members on the ground in the demonstrations. We had some in the church providing supplies like water, Gatorade, granola bars, energy bars, and medic packs. We had some doing delivery of those items to the demonstrations. **Third**, we established a Racial Justice Task Force to coordinate immediate and long-term plans centered on racial justice. The task force was comprised of both staff and members of the church. Many in the church were interested and willing to help.



The Racial Justice Task Force, once assembled, felt communication, education, and relationship forming were all very important. Amid demonstrations in the city, we wanted to keep the church informed on local events and how the church could respond with supplies, support, and action items in the community. We also felt there was work to do regarding our education related to anti-racism. We established a weekly communication that allowed people to digest education and action in simple and

achievable ways. We put in each weekly column these three things: 1) Something to Read, 2) Something to Watch, and 3) Something to Do.

The remainder of the summer of 2020 focused on education and relationship building. We felt the education portion of our efforts were our responsibility and not for people of color to guide or direct our efforts. The relationship building was crucial if we were going to walk and stand with those experiencing injustice. We wanted to form or enrich relationships with people and organizations that aligned with our own beliefs and efforts.

Education Efforts:

1. We provided the weekly communication of what to read and what to watch to offer resources and personalities to become aware of in educating ourselves.
2. We began forming books studies for people interesting in deeper reads with small group reflection time
3. We began offering anti-racism education with our adult education hour on Sunday mornings through Zoom. We have some capable members with great experience and education to offer topics of deeper thought. We also invited people from the local community with passion or organizational connections related to anti-racism.
4. We put together a list of education resources for people to access for further personal education: articles, books, videos, etc. We also made sure we offered resources for adults, families, and children.

**ANTI-RACIST
EDUCATION
RESOURCES**

Relationship Building Efforts:

1. We began to observe and connect with local organizations that were supporting people of color. We found about four organizations that the church had a historical relationship with, current relationship, or new relationship we sought to form.
2. We wanted to learn and discover who were voices of color we needed to pay attention to and support rather than forming our own path.
3. We sought to solidify those relationships in the following way: follow on digital social media, phone conversations, invites to speak at the church, or make donations to organizations to bolster their local efforts in the wider KC area.
4. Clergy of the church began to attend virtual gatherings that had a mix of denominational and racial diversity for support, learning, and relationship building.



Action Items

1. We participated in March KC
2. We participated in a calling for the removal of city commissioner who responded in ways to be unhealthy and racist
3. Participated in the virtual Poor People's Campaign
4. Encouraged people to sign petitions supporting anti-racism efforts
5. Encouraged people to write local, state, and national representatives about matters of racial justice



Once we got through the summer, we began to consider the long-term importance of racial justice and what it would mean for the church to embrace anti-racism as a consistent part of its



ongoing identity rather than a part of its outreach response or an in-the-moment response and later go back to what was happening before. Our desire was for our anti-racism efforts to change the fabric of the church's identity and be woven into how we think and behave as a church community. We began thinking about how to move beyond in the moment responses, though vitally important, to long-term sustainability with racial justice in our church. The Racial Justice Task Force continued its work in two primary ways

throughout the fall season. 1) Voter Registration and Getting out to Vote, and 2) Creating a framework for our long-term effort as a church.

From August through October we communicated highly for people to register to vote and learn about the candidates and issues that would be on the ballot for local, state, and national levels. We had several in the church that did many neighborhood voter registration campaigns to encourage higher voter turnout. We provided voter registration opportunities at all of our outside church functions during the COVID-19 period when we could not be inside.

The other major effort of the fall was embracing a three-fold approach to our anti-racism efforts going forward: education, relationship building, and policy. Our intention is for all three of these efforts to be happening at the same time. They are each explained below.

1. Education – continuing to self-educate as a predominantly white congregation about matters of race and how to respond; continuing to develop appropriate language in talking about matters of race; realizing education is on us to learn how best to join and walk with those in helping to respond in anti-racist ways; education is an on-going effort because we never stop learning
2. Relationship Building – creating longstanding relationships with those in the community: organizations and groups whose purpose is to work towards efforts of anti-racism; building relationship with other church communities that are primarily BIPOC. The intent is for longer relationship building rather than one-off activities

3. Policy – looking at policy from two perspectives:

- Internal look at church policies and procedures and audit for language that could be racist or looking at protocols that have history as white-based ways of governing – if we want to be more open racially to others our operational document is one place to address issues that prevent a full welcome and participation in church life
- Supporting policy changes in our local community to be a more anti-racist community in which the church resides – this includes joining in some of the relationship building groups to accomplish and support this work



SACC is acting on all three aspects of this anti-racist work progressively and intentionally.

We sought to begin the year of 2021 with some bold efforts in training/education for the whole church. We worked with the Greater Kansas City Region to provide an online anti-racism training for our church. We were thrilled to have 63 people from the congregation participate over two Saturdays and 5 hours of virtual contact training time. The training was inspiring to the church and the leadership team from the Region was a multi-racial leadership team offering a wide range of perspectives and insights to our church membership.



We then launched a congregation-wide book study using the resource The Racial Healing Handbook. We had two women in the church agree to lead this study and offer it virtually. They facilitated this study using classical teaching, PowerPoint slides, polls, videos, and small group discussions. We had a total of 41 from the church engage in this book study effort. It was a fantastic book study and involved many people and engaged them with the book and multi-learning approaches.

Since the church study of that book, the two women have offered this study to the Greater Kansas City Region and have filled the study at 40 people with many on the waiting list hoping for another offering. We felt this study would be a way to expand the efforts of anti-racism further into our Region.

We were excited to have one of the book study leaders be invited by the Region to participate in a national co-conspirator conference that was hosted by our denomination virtually. We were excited to have a lay person attend and engage this process. She was able to provide notes, things learned, and her experience at the event to deepen our efforts at the church.

The church spent the months of March, April, and May reviewing our operational documents. We reviewed and are making changes to our by-laws, personnel policy, and financial policy to be more sensitive to language and offer a way of operating that seeks to be more racially inclusive. We have partnered with our General Reconciliation Ministry to have an outside auditor, a person of color, review our changes and offer insights and questions to help us further revise what we did not see as a predominately white church in the changes we made.



Our weekly communication efforts have now been refined in the following ways:

- The 1st and 3rd weeks will be thematic information pertaining to anti-racism efforts
- The 2nd and 4th weeks will be addressing ways for people to get involved in the community through organizations, legislative efforts, or decisions impacting the local community with sensitivity toward anti-racism outcomes

We are proud of the work we have done establishing relationships with local organizations so Saint Andrew can be actively involved in efforts of anti-racism and be seen as a partner, co-worker, and supporter of this work rather than leading this work as a predominately white church. Below is a listing of organizations we are currently working with:

- Becoming Beloved Community
- Kansas Poor People's Campaign
- SURJ (Stand Up for Racial Justice)
- Urban League of KC
- Johnson County NAACP
- Dialogue Institute (Islamic interfaith group)
- Kansas Interfaith Action (KIFA)
- MORE² (Metro Org. for Racial and Economic Equity)
- Advocacy and Awareness Group: Johnson County
- Stand Up KC



Saint Andrew Christian Church recently formed a new relationship with another Disciples of Christ church. We have partnered with First Christian Church of Minneapolis, MN because they are also a predominate white church deeply connected in anti-racism efforts. Our intent is to have the pastors and three members from each church meet every other month virtually for the following reasons: support, learn from one another, challenge one another, create a wider circle of connections as we seek to broaden our anti-racism efforts. The two congregations have

similar theological perspectives on issues of justice, welcome, and openness to others. We feel we are a good match as two white churches seeking to support and strengthen the voices of people of color.

Saint Andrew's Racial Justice Task Force continues to meet monthly to create goals and actions plans for each of our three core areas pertaining to anti-racism: education, relationship building, and policy. We feel we have taken some important steps in our first year of intentional work in this area. We know we have a long way to go. The church is ready, as the pandemic slows, to engage more in the community fighting against racism.



On the following two pages you will see a listing of the Adult Education topics we have covered in the last year. The pages include all the books we have studies in small groups over the past year.

Saint Andrew Christian Church is a community that affirms the following:

Saint Andrew Christian Church is a shalom community; a gathered people, seeking God's peace, justice, healing and wholeness in every part of our lives and world. Celebrating our diversity, rejoicing in our unity, we welcome and affirm *all* children of God of any color, class, sexual orientation, age, gender identity, ability or thought. As members of the family of God, we share our beliefs, doubts, struggles and growth. Recipients of God's boundless grace, forgiveness and love, we in turn offer our gifts and invite the fellowship, gifts, leadership and spirit of all who share God's passion for shalom.



Saint Andrew Christian Church

Intentional Education Components of Anti-Racism



Anti-Racism Presentations for Sunday Morning Adult Education July 2020 to June 2021

<u>Date</u>	<u>Presenter</u>	<u>Title of Presentation</u>
July 5	Avis Smith	Deconstructing Whiteness -- 1
Aug 23	Avis Smith	Deconstructing Whiteness – 2
Aug 30	Avis Smith	Deconstructing Whiteness – 3
Sept 6	Jeff Dazey	Racial Bias and the Death Penalty
Sept 13	Mary Silwance	Environmental Supremacy
Nov 8	Pam Hamilton	Human Trafficking: Racial Disparities
Dec 6	Gwen Grant	Urban League of KC Racial Ministry Overview
Dec 13	Avis Smith	How White Progressives Make Life More Difficult for People of Color
Jan 31	Avis Smith	Systemic Oppression and How White People ‘ Justify It
March 21	Avis Smith	Systemic Racism in Education, Healthcare, Policing, and Criminal Justice
May 2	Avis Smith	Decolonizing the Church – 1
May 9	Avis Smith	Decolonizing the Church – 2
May 16	Darryl Burton	Prison System and Racial Bias
May 30	Darnell Hunt	Learning about the NAACP of Johnson County
June 6	Marcus Winn	MORE ² Group: Racial and Economic Equity
June 13	Avis Smith	Racially Charged: America’s Misdemeanor Problem

Notes: Avis Smith, Jeff Dazey and Pam Hamilton are church members. The other presenters were from the wider community.

AN ANTI-RACIST READING LIST

Anti-Racism Book Studies Conducted in Last Year

Book

Number of Times Studied

<u>Racial Healing Handbook</u> by Anneliese Singh	(three times: once as a wider church)
<u>Caste</u> by Isabel Wilkerson	(four times)
<u>Me and White Supremacy</u> by Layla Saad	(one time)
<u>White Fragility</u> by Robin DiAngelo	(one time)
<u>One Person, No Vote</u> by Carol Anderson	(one time)
<u>How to Be an Anti-Racist</u> by Ibram Kendi	(one time)
<u>We Were Eight Years in Power</u> by Ta-Nehisi Coates	(one time)
<u>So You Want to Talk About Race</u> by Ijeoma Oluo	(one time)
<u>America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States</u> by Erika Lee	(one time)
<u>The Tortilla Curtain</u> by T.C. Boyle	(one time)
<u>The Refugees</u> by Viet Thanh Nguyen	(one time)
<u>An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States</u> by Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz	(one time)
<u>How Does it Feel to Be a Problem?: Being Young and Arab in America</u> by Moustafa Bayoumi	(one time)