

## **Racial Justice Statement Task Force**

**Meeting on Wed., July 8, 2020, at 7 pm**

**Facilitator: Karen Heuchert; Notes taken by Brenda Tonjes**

Other Attendees: Laura Crosby, Cindy Porter, Grace Porter, Mary Simonson Clark, John Urbanski, and John Weum .

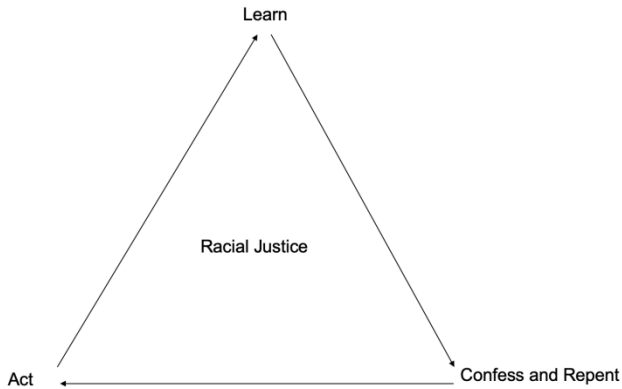
Karen opened the meeting with prayer and thanked everyone for their input since the last meeting.

John U. summarized his findings regarding how this group needs to proceed with approval for a final racial justice statement. Although it is not required to have the congregation vote on this statement, John suggests that we give the congregation ample time for review and input of the statement. The plan would be to present an initial statement draft to council at the Aug. 2020 meeting. Once approved by Council, the statement would be presented to the congregation online or by mail for feedback. Then at the Sept. 2020 Council meeting, a decision would be made as to what the next steps are. This group would like to be in a position to recommend to the Council how to proceed and to seek Council's approval with the recommended process. There are strong feelings that a racial justice statement needs to be in place sooner rather than later, with the idea that it will continue to be revisited to reflect what Immanuel is doing.

There was more discussion regarding where the racial justice statement and other racial justice information should be located on the Immanuel website. Karen noted that she had talked to Martin Rathjen about this, and that he had made some changes. Many members of this group are interested in having the racial justice statement located in the same place as the vision, mission, and values with a link to the other racial justice work that is being done at Immanuel. Concern was also expressed about being able to find this information easily, particularly if you are looking at the Immanuel website for the first time and are interested in learning more about Immanuel and what Immanuel is all about.

Discussion proceeded regarding the language of existing racial justice statements at other Lutheran churches. There was agreement that the statement adopted by Immanuel needs to be concise with action language and that it should incorporate Immanuel's vision, mission, and values. There was a lot of discussion about what specific language should be included in the racial justice statement.

Ultimately, the group decided to just get started with putting something on paper. John W. presented the group with an initial draft that he had written, and the group spent a good amount of time discussing the language of that draft, as well as reworking and adding to the draft. The main things that stood out for the group with respect to racial justice were the need to learn, confess and repent, and then act. We talked about how inaction equals injustice and how all of us need to actively fight against systemic racism. A visual triangle was created with learn, confess and repent, and act being at the corners of the triangle and racial justice being in the center of the triangle.



ACTION ITEM: Before the next meeting, members of this group will continue working with the language we ended up with tonight and add comments to the existing Google Doc by using the suggest feature so that none of the work done tonight is removed and so that we can continue discussing and reworking the statement at our next meeting.

ACTION ITEM: At the next meeting, we will look at the existing language and the comments added by this group and then continue refining the racial justice statement with the goal of having an initial draft to present to Council at the Aug. 11, 2020 meeting.

ACTION ITEM: At the next meeting, we will discuss and decide the process we want to recommend to Council for how to proceed with approval of this statement. We will also get input from Kim Rathjen regarding this.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wed., July 22, 2020, at 7 pm.

The meeting ended in prayer around 8:10.