

Racial Justice Statement Task Force

Meeting on Wed., July 22, 2020, at 7 pm

Facilitator: Karen Heuchert; Notes taken by Brenda Tonjes

Other Attendees: Laura Crosby, Erin Heilman, Mary Simonson Clark, John Urbanski, and John Weum.

CORRECTION TO MEETING MINUTES FROM JULY 8, 2020: John U. clarified that his recommendation is that there be congregational input, not a congregational vote on the final racial justice statement. This committee is in agreement that it is important to have input and feedback from the congregation. This would involve having the Council approve the racial justice statement and then seeking input and feedback from the congregation.

We reviewed the wording of the racial justice statement from our previous meeting, and the editing suggestions that had been made since that meeting. Then we looked at John W.'s second draft of the racial justice statement. We continued reworking this statement until we reached a final statement.

We talked about the triangle that we had come up with previously where one corner says "Learn," one corner says "Confess and Repent," and one corner says "Act." We talked about whether the triangle should instead be a circle or an infinity symbol. We also talked about whether there should be more action words. We agreed that the "Learn" corner of the triangle should instead be "Listen and Learn."

We talked about the next steps and recommendations for Council in reviewing this final statement. John U. again recommended that we present this plan to Council prior to their Aug. 11, 2020 meeting, requesting them to review and approve the final racial justice statement. We are essentially asking for Council to approve the intent and idea of this statement, not the specific wording.

If the Council does not approve the statement, then we would ask that they send it back to us with feedback as to why they are not approving it, so that we can rework the statement and again ask for Council approval. If Council approves the statement, then we would urge them to move forward by approving a process whereby all members of the congregation have the ability to review the racial justice statement either online or by mail. We would want the congregation to indicate whether they agree or disagree through a numbering type scale indicating how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement. We would also invite input and feedback as to what about the statement would need to change for the congregation to support this statement. We would recommend a short timeframe for this feedback with a suggestion that it be completed by early September.

Once the congregation feedback process is complete, Council would then review this feedback at their September meeting and determine if the congregation's feedback allows a vote to adopt the statement, if additional time is warranted for review of the statement, or if the congregation's feedback indicates that they are not ready to adopt this statement. Ultimately, the goal would be to be able to have the Council adopt this racial justice statement as quickly as possible, but certainly before the annual meeting in January 2021.

Once the racial justice statement has been adopted and is put on Immanuel's website, we would like that page to also include links to our service partners who support racial justice, as well as links to racial justice education opportunities so that people who want to assist with the fight against racial injustice can easily access available resources and opportunities. We would also like to have the triangle or similar artwork referenced above placed with the racial justice statement for visual effect.

This is the last scheduled meeting of this committee. However, this committee is prepared to meet again as needed because we are committed to the evolving nature of the racial justice statement. The statement represents our first thoughts, but not our last thoughts.

ACTION ITEM: Karen will send the racial justice statement to the rest of the committee members for their information. She will also send the statement to Kim Rathjen and Tony Szczepaniak, the Council President, so that Council members can review the statement prior to their meeting on August 11, 2020.

ACTION ITEM: Committee members who are also Council members will be prepared to answer any Council questions on behalf of this committee at the Council meeting on August 11, 2020.

ACTION ITEM: Karen will work with the triangle to play around with some ideas of turning it into artwork and then will pass it along to someone to actually put their artistic touches to it.

The meeting ended in prayer shortly around 8:15.