

CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN ALABAMA-NW FLORIDA  
(Disciples of Christ)

**“Do you think racism is a thing of the past? Think again.”**

**A Guide for Congregations Committed to Giving Witness to**

# **True Community**

**By Embracing an Anti-Racist, Pro-Reconciling Identity  
in the Spirit of Jesus Christ**

*“There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Galatians 3:28, NRSV)*

2007 Disciples Identity Statement

*We are Disciples of Christ, a movement for wholeness in a fragmented world. As part of the one body of Christ, we welcome all to the Lord’s Table as God has welcomed us.*

\*\*With this booklet, you can develop strategies to understand modern racism and its impact on Christian community and to offer suggestions for addressing racism in order to bring healing, understanding, and true community to God’s people.



The Anti-Racism Team in Alabama-Northwest Florida believes that achieving True Community will include the following:

*Praying - Studying - Organizing - Relating - Giving - Working*

**You can strengthen your congregation's anti-racist, pro-reconciling witness to the good news through focused attention to the suggested areas listed below. Your congregation can add its own ideas in the blank lines.**

## Praying

\_\_\_\_\_ Make intentional efforts to include prayers for racial reconciliation and true community in prayers from the pulpit.

\_\_\_\_\_ Add prayers for racial reconciliation and true community to published prayer lists.

\_\_\_\_\_ Include a portion of time at Elders' meetings to pray for racial reconciliation and true community.

\_\_\_\_\_ Find the Regional Prayer Calendar at

<http://www.alnwfldisciples.org/Calendars/PrayerCalendar/tabid/46738/Default.aspx> each Sunday, offering specific prayers for reconciliation with those congregations whose members are largely from a different racial/ethnic background.

\_\_\_\_\_ Ask members of the church to write prayers for racial reconciliation and true community that can be used in worship and posted in newsletters, bulletins, and on web-sites.

\_\_\_\_\_ Include prayers in corporate worship that ask for God's reign and God's justice to prevail on earth and for systems of oppression to be eradicated.

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## Working

\_\_\_\_\_ Promote opportunities for members of your congregation to network with other churches and community organizations in programs that benefit persons who are adversely impacted by racism.

\_\_\_\_\_ Become informed about legislation before local, state, and national governments that may bring further division to communities and put persons of color at a disadvantage. Organize letter-writing campaigns and similar efforts to speak out in advocacy for those who are least able to defend themselves. Visit the website <http://www.alabamairise.org/legislative.html> to locate contact information on state and national legislators.

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For more information, please contact the Regional Minister at 205-425-5245 or <jpmoble2@aol.com>.



## Giving

- \_\_\_\_\_ Create a line item in the congregation’s budget to support the work of the True Community Team.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Promote the annual Reconciliation Offering, personalizing the appeal by reminding parishioners of the efforts to build true community and racial reconciliation in the Region.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Promote opportunities to participate financially in global ministries of the church, many of which are with nations still impacted by centuries of racism.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Offer individuals an opportunity to give over-and-above gifts to support mission projects that grow out of the relationship that is established with a congregation whose members are mostly of a different race/ethnicity.

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## Studying

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have adult Sunday School classes engage in Bible study that relates to reconciliation and true community (visit the Regional website <www.alnwfldisciples.org> and find “Anti-Racism Ministries” under the “Ministries” tab to find a variety of resources, including biblical, theological, and historical studies.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Offer a retreat for church leaders and other interested persons for the purpose of studying and discussing resources related to racial reconciliation and true community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor an anti-racism training event, using partners from the Region, that helps members confront the reality of racism and its impact on the church and on communities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invite representatives of local groups and organizations to speak to groups within the church about current issues that impact certain populations adversely.

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# Organizing

\_\_\_\_\_ Commission a True Community Team of about 5 to 7 persons for the purpose of helping the congregation, as a whole, engage in efforts to dismantle racism and build true community.

\_\_\_\_\_ Modify existing documents (e.g. constitution/by-laws) to provide for a True Community Team within the structure of the church.

\_\_\_\_\_ Provide ways for rotation to occur on the True Community Team so that it will function well beyond the time of service of the original members.

\_\_\_\_\_ Seek relationships with other community groups and organizations that are working toward unity and justice.

\_\_\_\_\_ Evaluate all decision-making processes to determine whether they are accountable to under-represented groups in the church, considering geography, age, economic status, gender, race, and ethnicity.

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# Relating

\_\_\_\_\_ Seek out a partnership with a Disciples congregation whose members are mostly of a different race and ethnicity from your own and invite them to be in a special relationship with you as you work toward the vision of true community. In particular, have the True Community Teams from each congregation join together for fellowship, worship, and planning of ways to engage the two congregations in mission and service.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourage field trips of youth, young adults, and older adults to visit in congregations of a different race and ethnicity to experience their worship and church traditions.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with a congregation whose members are mostly of a different race and ethnicity to plan for a pulpit and/or choir exchange.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with a congregation whose members are mostly of a different race and ethnicity to plan a fellowship event, such as a picnic, fish fry, or ice cream social.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with a congregation whose members are mostly of a different race and ethnicity to plan specific mission projects that will impact the communities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with a congregation whose members are mostly of a different race and ethnicity to sponsor jointly an anti-racism training event for the district or Region. This could also be an ecumenical training event that includes nearby congregations, both Anglo and congregations of color.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with organizations in your area to learn about issues that impact certain populations adversely.

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Our Congregation, \_\_\_\_\_, commits to being an instrument of true community by addressing the brokenness that is caused by the sin of racism and being a voice for reconciliation, in the spirit of Christ. We covenant to use this guidebook in our efforts. Updates and announcements about anti-racism/pro-reconciliation efforts in the Region may be sent to the following email address:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Board Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Minister

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Return this covenant to:

Christian Church in Alabama-Northwest Florida, 861 Highway 52, Helena, AL 35080