December 7, 2020

Dear Ones,

At a Sunday forum just over one month ago, I provided an update on our commitment to become an antiracist church and said that we would hire consultants to help us to integrate our commitment to being antiracist into the practices, prayers, priorities, and decision-making processes of the parish.

Our consultants, Mark Ewert and Lorraine Gordon, have met with the vestry, clergy, program staff, and Stirring the Waters – St. Columba’s ministry for racial justice. They will be convening two parish-wide gatherings early in the new year.

At this stage we are forming a task force that will initially work with Mark and Lorraine to develop a plan, and then will lead our efforts going forward. Because this commitment is of utmost importance, the task force will be appointed by me and the wardens. A description of the task force’s responsibilities is attached below. Please click ***here*** if you would like to nominate yourself to participate on the task force. Nominations open through December 22.

I am heartened by and grateful for the widespread ongoing interest in becoming antiracist evident throughout St. Columba’s in recent months. Our individual and collective learning, conversation, and prayer is the good, important work of Christian discipleship. Let us hold one another in prayer.

Advent blessings and peace, Ledlie

**St. Columba’s Antiracism Task Force**

The commitment to becoming antiracist as individuals and as a church is integral to Jesus’ summary of the law, our own baptismal covenant, and St. Columba’s vision to ***Live God’s Love***. The rector and vestry are committed to integrating this intention into every facet of our congregational life. An Antiracism Task Force is being convened to provide leadership and guidance as we begin to honor this commitment.

The Task Force will ~

* Guide the rector and vestry to articulate a long term vision of our becoming antiracist that describes short term goals, differences, and desired outcomes.
* Map out a process for the parish to assess and reflect on the culture, history, and systems of St. Columba’s.
  + Help identify ways that qualitative changes in multiculturalism may be noticed, tracked, and reported on.
  + Report and make recommendations to the vestry as needed.
* Equip, support, and hold accountable parish leaders to integrate antiracism in all areas of parish life, including but not limited to:
  + Christian education/formation for all ages – children, youth, and adults
  + fellowship and pastoral care
  + social justice and community service
  + administration, operations, and staffing
* Create an institutionalized process of continual renewal – as new members join the parish and as staff, clergy and lay leaders are new to their positions, so their commitments are models for the rest of the parish.

While the intention to become antiracist is now being stated explicitly and acted upon by the rector and vestry, members of Stirring the Waters (STW)\* and others have long been committed to this effort. The TF will build from the commitment, wisdom, and witness of STW. Specifically, the TF will

* Partner with STW and build from their commitment to educate the parish on issues of racial justice.
* Partner with STW in their initiatives to promote interracial dialogue and act against racial injustice

Desired Outcome ~

This is one step in a long-term journey. The work of the TF will be complete when it has developed and implemented structures and a system of accountability to ensure that St Columba's continues the work of becoming an antiracist church.

* This may or may not involve creating a standing committee for this purpose.

Composition ~

Nine people – to be appointed by the rector & wardens, self-nominations invited

* At least one member of the vestry
* At least one member of STW (and up to four)
* Missioner for Community Engagement
* Rector, ex officio

\*STW – Stirring the Waters is "A Ministry for Racial Justice that seeks to educate the parish and ourselves on issues of racial justice, and work to understand the impact of racism and racial inequality, confront white privilege, promote interracial dialogue and act against racial injustice."

Invite parishioners to offer themselves for this ministry:

* Your name
* Your preferred contact info
* Why are you interested in serving as a member of the TF?
* What gifts, experience, or perspective would you bring to this task?

*Please respond to each question in one hundred words or less.*