

Racial Equity Audit

STAGE TWO UPDATE



Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

HISTORY

The Metro D.C. Synod Council issued a letter on October 7, 2020, that called on the synod and its congregations to dismantle white supremacy within the church and society-at-large.

In May of 2021, the synod council unanimously affirmed a Racial Justice Plan, proposed by the racial equity planning team, and the synod is moving forward with implementation by partnering with a consultant to complete a synod-wide racial equity audit.

After reviewing proposals from several companies, Gold Enterprises, LLC (GELLC) was selected in February 2022 to execute a long-term scope of work which facilitates the “examination of institutional processes within the Synod, including candidacy, discipline, and appeals, to identify how we can insert checks into these processes for anti-Black and racist biases.” Below is an outline of the work GELLC completed in 2022 and what the next steps are in this important audit process.



THE HOW

STEP
1

DOCUMENT REVIEW

Approximately 217 documents provided by the Metro D.C. Synod were reviewed specifically looking at:

- **Policy** – need for consistent and accessible policies. Consideration of who is involved in creation of policies, making sure all policies align with each other and work against oppression.
- **Language** – moving forward, the Synod must focus on conscious and empowering language by making educated and Spirit-led choices.
Equity-based language concerning effectiveness. Concerns about language being exclusive, accommodation versus assimilation, and inclusive of affinity groups.
- **Affinity/Identity Groups** – having clear representation, work against red-lining, and ageism.
- **DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging)** – embedding DEIB efforts into larger goals of Synod. Specifically working against tokenization.
- **Anti-Racism** – active process of identifying, challenging, and confronting racism. Confronting systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, behaviors, and attitudes. Specific identification of whiteness.

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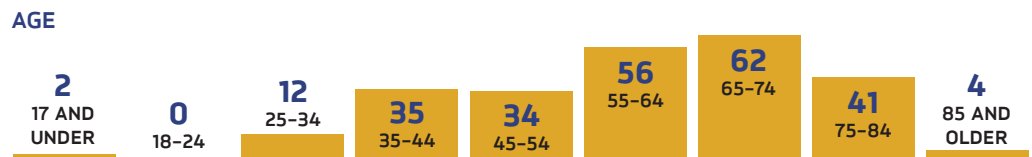
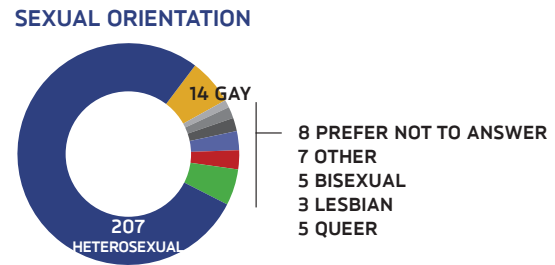
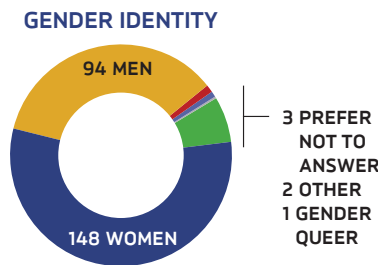
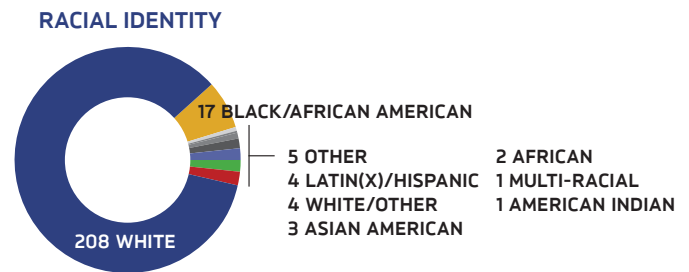
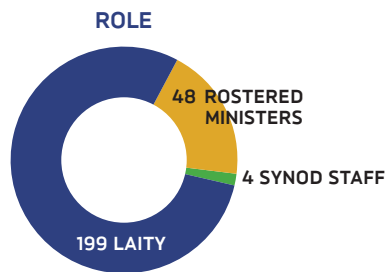
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STEP 2 SURVEY

Survey completed online by **251** individuals
Mostly **upper middle class, heterosexual, white, women, over the age of 50**
No one age 18-24

SOCIOECONOMIC
140 upper middle class
40 middle class

DISABILITY
13 mental illness
11 chronic illness
8 vision/hearing difference
5 long term medical



SURVEY FINDINGS:

<h4>BELONGING</h4> <p>38% laity of color responded they do not feel they belong vs. 19% white laity</p> <p>21% people of color considered leaving the synod due to racial mistreatment vs. 2% of white responders</p> <p>No difference between LGBTQIA+ and heterosexual responders' feeling of belonging</p>	<h4>DIVERSITY</h4> <p>63% felt the synod struggles with racial diversity (108 white responders)</p> <p>9% felt there is too much or slightly too much emphasis on racial diversity</p>	<h4>DISCRIMINATION</h4> <p>No clear evidence of discrimination patterns</p> <p>No clear evidence of ministers feeling unsafe sharing their identities in their communities</p>	<h4>WHY</h4> <p>19% white responders and 31% persons of color find the reasons for the synod's racial justice efforts unclear</p>
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STEP 3 IN-PERSON AND ONLINE LISTENING SESSIONS

29 individuals participated in 1:1 and group sessions. Major themes included:

- **Individual commitment to racial justice**
 - How to take action
 - External help vs. internal reflection
- **Congregational commitment to racial justice**
 - Knowing what to do
 - Rural vs. Urban
 - Pastors need to engage more
- **Metro D.C. Synod commitment to racial justice**
 - Bishop's Leadership
 - Sacred Ground Group Series
 - Authority of Synod/power of influence
 - More engagement with congregations needed

NEXT STEPS

- **Strategic Planning Stage**
January–April 2023

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Culture Shifts
- Focus on Identity/Affinity Groups
- Rostered Ministers
- Policy Updates
- Synod-wide Communications

- **Report to Synod Assembly**
June 3, 2023