

Racial Equity Audit

UPDATE #2



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

The Metro D.C. Synod Council provided a 2-page update of the Racial Equity Audit process to the Synod in January, 2023. Since that update, the team met with Gold Enterprises, LLC for a retreat to review survey results in detail, discuss the audit of Synod materials, and create an initial action plan.

The Strategic Planning Team consists of the following teams:

- Culture Shifts
- Identity Groups
- Rostered Ministres
- Policies
- Communication

While all of these teams will work together towards racial equity and inclusion in our Synod, each team came up with their own goals and priorities based on the audit and survey results.

Two overarching Synod wide goals from the Strategic Planning Team are a new RIC Welcome Statement (to be presented at Synod Assembly) and a focus on initiatives to engage Young Adults.

CULTURE SHIFTS

The Culture Shifts team operates under Nitza Hidalgo definition of culture, which has three levels:

The Concrete: The most visible and tangible levels of culture (such as festivals, holidays, celebrations, and the liturgical calendar).

The Behavioral: This clarifies how we define our social roles, the language we speak, and our approaches to nonverbal communication.

The Symbolic: Our values and beliefs.

- Increase number of Rostered Ministers who participated in Sacred Ground training by 20% per year until 90% of RM have been trained in DEI efforts
 - 1a. Roll out a pilot of SG to congregation (5 congregations) with a year
 - 1b. Increase # of facilitators (5%)
- Begin to create materials/program to provide to congregations to begin Racial Justice Work

GLOSSARY

RIC: Reconciling in Christ. Reconciling Works advocates for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church.

Antiracism: Antiracism is the active process of identifying, challenging, and confronting racism. This process requires confronting systems, organizational structures, policies, practices, behaviors, and attitudes. This active process should seek to redistribute power in an effort to foster equitable outcomes.

DEI: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion also sometimes adds a B: Belonging

Equity: Providing different levels of support based on an individuals or group's needs for comparable outcomes.

Inclusion: A state of belonging, when persons of different backgrounds and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers and collaborators.

Racial Equity: When race is no longer a predictor of outcomes, leading to more just outcomes, in policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages. (CSSP, 2019)



IDENTITY/AFFINITY GROUPS

An identity/affinity group is a collection of individuals who share a common identity characteristic. The Synod relies heavily on specific affinity groups to support this work, possibly because it is driven by folks who identify as a part of these. E.g. youth and young adults, Black and African Americans, LGBTQIA communities, and individuals with a disability status.

- Emphasize the development and acceptance of RIC in the Synod Congregations
- Enlarge definition of DEI/Antiracism to be included in Congregations Constitutions
- Empower Synod youth gathering to lift up goals of Antiracism and DEI Initiatives
- Develop Synod-wide networks of minoritized groups similar to ELCA
- Connect the struggles of minoritized groups to the readings and preaching of the Gospel

ROSTERED MINISTERS

Rostered Ministers (RM) are Pastors or deacons who have completed the Candidacy Process and have a call in the ELCA. This group is made up of RM's from the Synod, with a focus on how to support our rostered leaders.

- Research the support provided to candidates by Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries/Proclaim to see if similar structures could be developed for non-White candidates.
- Develop a resource library of proven-effective cross-cultural materials already in use in congregations of the synod (print material, statements of intent, curriculum, etc.).
- Develop a list of rostered (or not) leaders in the synod who have demonstrated skill in cross-cultural communicating and ministry.
- Converse with synod staff (mobility/candidacy, DEM, and youth staff in particular) to hear their concerns with churchwide materials and policies through the lens of our own equity audit report.
- Draw up a job description for a synod-wide recruitment person (could be volunteer or paid) who could help congregations develop their "could God be calling you?" habits and practices.

POLICIES

The Policies team will consider the potential development of new policies, and review current policies. This team will also consider creating a formal procedures in place for anyone who has a complaint and keeping them informed concerning how the complaint is being processed.

- Presentation during breakout sessions at Synod assembly that looks and reviews policy Synod language
- Review of Synod policies

COMMUNICATIONS

The Communications team works with Synod staff, rostered leaders, lay leaders, and community organizations regularly to share information with members of the Synod.

- Build a wider following of ministry leaders to communicate with.
- Redesign synod style guide with DEI focus: including terminology.
- Actively share and engage in both community and nationwide events for racial equity, inclusion, mental health awareness, LGBTQIA+ acceptance, climate justice, etc. on Synod communications platforms