

# Ongoing Service and Advocacy Engagements to Honor Dr. King and his Legacy

Dr. King encourages us to grow in our engagement to create racial justice, civil rights, and a peace-filled, nonviolent community for ALL.

**THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW WE CAN LIVE OUT THIS LEGACY THROUGH OUR COMMITMENTS AS MEMBERS OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA (ELCA).**

1. Implement the ELCA Anti-Racism Pledge in your own life and in the life of your congregation. <https://www.elca.org/racialjusticepledge>
2. Participate in “God’s Work. Our Hands” to build relationships across lines of race and difference to serve God collaboratively.
3. Commemorate June 17 with study and prayer. In 2019, at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, voting members adopted a resolution designating June 17 as a commemoration of the martyrdom of the Emanuel 9—the nine people shot and killed on June 17, 2015, during a Bible study at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C. Congregations of the ELCA are encouraged to mark this day of penitence with study and prayer.

**“And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” -Colossians 3:17**

As church we are called to confess the sin of racism, condemn the ideology of white supremacy, and strive for racial justice and peace. Beyond statements and prayers, we are called to also act and respond to injustices. We invite you to commit to one or more of the actions below:

## **1. Sign the ELCA Anti-Racism Pledge on the ELCA website**

“I commit to study, prayer and action to become an anti-racist individual in an anti-racist

Church.” Share your participation on social media using #ELCA4justice.

## **2. Work to dismantle racial injustice by listening to voices, experiences and the expertise of people of color.**

- Learn about the ELCA ethnic-specific associations and their strategies.
- Share your thoughts on this “listening” on social media using #ELCA4justice and creating a hashtag for your congregation.

## **3. Learn the history of racial injustice in America and the ways racism and white supremacy impact every aspect of our life together.**

- Use The Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) Education Materials: <https://eji.org/public-education/>
- Do the 30-Day Anti-Racism Challenge: <https://westendhouse.org/30-day-anti-racism-challenge/>
- Share your learning with one other person in your life.
- Comment on your learning on social media using #ELCA4justice.

#### **4. Support/participate in the Anti-Racism Ministry within the Southwest Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.**

- Join, support or attend the SWPA Synod Authentic Diversity and Justice (ADJ) team meetings and work with the ADJ to start a team in your congregation. Contact Rev. Ryan Pusch, Chair (rpusch001@luthersem.edu).
- Study the ELCA social statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture” and the “Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Descent.”
- Participate in the anti-racism training process of the SWPA Synod of the ELCA. Contact Rev. Brenda Henry, ADJ Task Force (brenda.henry@gmail.com)

#### **5. God’s Work. Our Hands (Make it more than a Sunday with a year-round emphasis.)**

**In addition to service projects, add a focus on advocacy.**

- Use the forthcoming ELCA Advocacy resources on a “Just Society Supporting the Health of All,” which is focused on advancing racially equitable public policies.
- Engage ELCAvotes to encourage and ensure voting rights for all.
- Advocate with Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in PA throughout the year.

#### **6. Start where you are by joining community organizations working for racial justice in your own neighborhood.**

- Antiracism and Equity in our Community (University of Pittsburgh)
- The Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council
- The YWCA

#### **7. Reach out to build or deepen relationships with Historic Black Churches.**

- Consider using the congregational resource “Understanding One Another,” co-authored by the ELCA and the African Methodist Episcopal Church, or our Joint Statement of Mission with the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church as a way to get started.
- Contact Rev. Martin Rafanan (mjr9201@gmail.com) for opportunities to work with AME and AMEZ congregations in the Hill District of Pittsburgh.

#### **8. Explore and use the anti-racism resources of our ecumenical partners through the A.C.T. Now to End Racism initiative of the National Council of Churches.**

#### **9. Participate in Community-wide work in the spirit of nonviolence and public service.**

- Center for Living Kindness of the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh
- Christian Associates of Southwest PA
- Education: Pittsburgh Promise
- Organizing:
  - PA Interfaith Impact Network
  - Pittsburgh UNITED
  - Black Lives Matter - Pittsburgh/SWPA

This is a living document. Visit [www.swpasynod.org/mlk2022](http://www.swpasynod.org/mlk2022) regularly for updates and new opportunities.

Want to share other ways to engage? Contact Rev. Ryan Pusch at [rpusch001@luthersem.edu](mailto:rpusch001@luthersem.edu).

Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Authentic Diversity and Justice Team