

**Holy Trinity Institutional Racism Consultation
Frequently Asked Questions DRAFT
August, 2020**

1. Why did we have this consultation on institutional racism?

Holy Trinity has invested lots of time and energy on social justice in general and racial justice in society in particular. Less time has been invested in organizational or institutional racism – disparities that are more systemic and specific to the culture of our Holy Trinity congregation.

2. Where can I find the report on Holy Trinity Institutional Racism?

Look on the Holy Trinity website under “members.” There you will find a shorter summary and the full report. If you have any difficulty opening the report you can contact the church office.

3. How did we pay for the consultation?

We received an Imagine Grant from the Minneapolis Synod that paid for most of the consultation. Some funds were used from the Racial Justice budget that is built into the Public Voices and Organizing budget.

4. How and when have the results of the Consultation been shared with the wider congregation?

In the last five months Alicia Sojourner’s presentation has been shared with the Racial Justice Group, the pastors and staff, the Church Council, a group of formal and informal leaders such as committee or work group chairs, and the general congregation. Prior to the pandemic there were face-to-face presentations. Once the pandemic started the presentations were through Zoom. Over 100 members have participated in one of these presentations. The written report from the consultation is posted on the Holy Trinity website.

5. How do we welcome the person wearing the MAGA hat and the person wearing the BLM t-shirt and make them both feel safe and comfortable? Or at least safe? Is that our role?

If we believe that we are all made equally in God’s image then, yes, our role is to include all who wish to come. If we are committed to inclusiveness, individuals from both of these groups should be encouraged to participate in Holy Trinity worship and activities. While it may not be comfortable, our role is to listen to their perspective, try to understand how they got to their perspectives, look for common interests and appreciate diversity within our midst.

6. How can the Personnel Committee access specific assessment details relating to the Personnel Profile domain for review and potential follow up? For instance, improving employee policies and procedures to move HT further along the equity continuum.

This question has been directed to Alicia for a response. The survey we took and the focus groups do not always prescribe how to narrow the gaps in inclusions and equity. The consultation also suggests that policies and procedures can become more equitable and inclusive not just by rules, but also by visions of what kind of racially just organization we want to be.

7. How can we learn to spot our own micro-aggressions and stop using them?

This is a great question for a workshop. Micro-aggressions are subtle and often unintentional behaviors that communicate bias; things that make another person an "other" or outside the norm of the dominant culture. When we say "You are so articulate" to a person of color we may intend it as a compliment, but it can easily be received/have an impact of how we believe it is unusual for a Black/Asian/ Indigenous person to be intelligent. We get better at "spotting" micro-aggressions by questioning our biases, leaning towards empathy, receiving feedback when we slip up and by apologizing for our mistakes.

8. How do reparations fit into Alicia's report?

This is another topic worthy of much more time than a paragraph in an FAQ document. Reparations were not specifically a part of the consultation. However, we know that racism has done tremendous physical, mental and social damage to people of color. A part of healing is acknowledgement of the damage and being open to new ways of interacting. It feels like we are a fairly democratic organization. Where is there a hierarchy?

There are elements of democratic or consensus decision-making at HT. However, some decisions are made by our pastoral leaders, some decisions are made by our elected Church Council, and we often make decisions using either a formal or informal version of Robert's Rules of Order. The consultation indicates that we could improve on transparency with decision making.

9. Can we meet individually with Alicia or call her with our questions?

Alicia is under contract with Holy Trinity for her consultative work. We pay her for all of her services. If you or a HT work group have questions for her, you can direct them to the Racial Justice Group or one of the pastors and we'll assist you as best we can with finding more information through Alicia.

10. As the chairs of a committees, how would you suggest we share information about the consultation with our groups?

As a leader you can share your own understanding of the Consultation on Institutional Racism and how it fits into the specific work of your group. You can also direct your group members to either the short or long version of the Report on Institutional Racism that is posted on the HT website under "Members."

11. What do we do next?

There is not a formula for what to do next, but we are taking several new actions. There are opportunities for education and action within Holy Trinity and in our community. A number of initiatives for our congregation to become a more equitable organization are already in motion with staff, in our Council and in the formation of two "equity action teams." Watch for more opportunities and pray for ways you can become part of the journey.

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